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PATRON :

Rt Rev. Dr Mathew Nellikunnel CST
Eparchy of Gorakhpur
Bishop's House

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OPENING NOTES...

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus,

The mission of a Diocese is to perpetuate Christ's Love and Peace to the people around. As we exuberate in tandem with the whole universe on the birth of Lord Jesus, our Lord and God, we bow in gratitude for the ineffable wonders that the Lord has actualized through our humble instrumentality especially in the vicinity of Purvanchal.

Christmas becomes real when Christ is born in the personal lives of each human being, making the whole universe a heavenly abode. God is in love with us. This is the good news that the Christmas conveys to each one of us. Love is not merely the absence of hatred. It is the presence of justice and truth. It is the presence of fortitude and freedom. Depriving the other of these realities would mean a meaningless celebration of Christmas. It is the need of the hour to revisit our commitment to the cause of the Lord and His Mission.

Christmas invites each individual to be joyful and peaceful. It is the promise of the silent night in which the angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" (Lk 2.14) Our missionary endeavors that we undertake in God's mercy must pave way to the Glory of God and Peace of the people. This is the reason of Jesus' taking the form of a man. It must be the same reason why we intend to act on His behalf. Therefore, the narratives of our missionary journeys in our different places of apostolate would become a genuine witnessing of His glorious interventions in our lives and ministries. We have nothing to boast of our human achievements.

Christmas is an invitation to humility and kenosis. It urges us



to be like the One whom we dare to follow. It reminds us of His beginning in human perspective, challenging us to examine our interventions in the lives of others. Do we become charitable out of our abundance? Do we become disturbed when we are not able to initiate according to our whims and fancies?

May this celebration be an eyeopener to all of us as we reaffirm in faith, love and hope the allegiance that we have to the Babe in the Manger who is there in the silent night posing before us umpteen number of challenges and possibilities.

As we have a new Shepherd for our Diocese, Rt Rev. Dr Mathew Nellikunnel, we pray for God's abundant blessings on him and his ministry. We gratefully remember the 17 graceful years of episcopal ministry of Rt Rev. Dr Thomas Thuruthimattam. May God continue to bless him in his future ministry.

We put on record the hard work and commitment of Rev. Fr Abraham Kolamkuzhiyil in being the editor of this news bulletin for the last few years. We thank him sincerely for his generosity and availability.

Sincere appreciation and thanks to all of you for the great missionary endeavors that you undertake and specially for the generosity you have shown in sharing the joy of the apostolate through these pages. As you read through, may God be glorified for all His wonderful interventions through our instrumentality.

Blessed Christmas.... Happy New Year.....

Fr Suresh K. V. (Gregory)

Fr Aneesh M.



SHEPHERD'S VOICE



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

"Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel which means, God with us." (Mt. 1.23)

As we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I greet you with joy and gratitude for your faithful witness to the Gospel. You are the light of the world, the salt of the earth and the leaven of the Kingdom of God. You are the living stones that build up the Church, the body of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit.

I hope this Christmas finds you well and happy. I know these years have been challenging for many of us, but I want to remind you that you are not alone. God is with you, and He loves you more than you can imagine. He sent his Son, Jesus, to be born as a baby in a humble stable, to live among us, and to die for our sins. He did this so that we could have eternal life and peace with him. That is the greatest gift of all, and the reason for our hope.

In the midst of trials and tribulations, we are called to remember the words of the prophet Isaiah: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone" (Isaiah 9.1). This light is Christ, the Word made flesh, the Son of God and the Son of Mary, who came to dwell among us and to share our human condition. He is "Emmanuel, God with us", who loves us with an everlasting love and who saves us from sin and death.

This is the message of Christmas, the good news of great joy that we proclaim to the world: "For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord" (Luke 2.11). This is



the message that we are called to live and to witness, following the example of Mary, the mother of God and the mother of the Church, who treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart (Luke 2:19).

Therefore, I urge you, dear priests, religious and faithful, to renew your commitment to Christ and his Church, to deepen your prayer and your sacramental life, to grow in holiness and in charity, to serve the poor and the needy, to evangelize the culture and the society, to defend the dignity and the rights of every human person, to promote the common good and the peace, to foster the unity and the communion of the Church.

As you celebrate Christmas, I pray that you will experience the joy and peace that Jesus brings. He is the light of the world, and He can brighten any darkness you may face. He is the wonderful counsellor, and he can guide you in any situation. He is the mighty God, and He can do anything for you. He is the everlasting Father, and He cares for you as his child. He is the Prince of Peace, and He can calm any storm in your life.

As your bishop, I assure you of my prayers, my support, and my affection. I thank you for your prayers, your collaboration, and your fidelity. I entrust you to the protection of Mary, the star of the new evangelization, to the intercession of St Joseph, the patron of the universal Church and St Therese of Child Jesus the patroness of missionaries. May they guide you and bless you always.

Blessed Christmas and Happy New Year!

✦ **Mathew Nellikunnel CST**
Bishop of Gorakhpur



EPISCOPAL ORDINATION OF Msgr Mathew Nellikunnel



After the announcement of the third bishop of Gorakhpur, the diocesan clergy gathered together with Bishop Thomas Thuruthimattam and the Bishop Elect, Msgr Mathew Nellikunnel on 3rd November 2023. During the

Very Rev. Fr Rajesh Puthussery
Cyncellus, Diocese of Gorakhpur

meeting which was also a chance for the bishop-elect to get acquainted with the priests of the diocese, a steering committee was set up with five members for the organization of the Episcopal Ordination scheduled for 5th November.

The steering committee consisted of Fr Rajesh P. (Convenor), Frs Santhosh Sebastian, Roger Augustine, Jaimon Appasseril and Shijo Chettany. Fr Sibi Cherusseril was appointed the coordinator. The steering committee in its further discussions, formed various committees in order to take care of the various aspects of the organization: Invitation (Frs Rajesh P. & Roger Augustine), Transportation (Frs Joshy Vettickal, Biju Pulinthanam, Abin Kochuparambil, Shaibu Valiathuchirayil, Saji Paul CST, Libin Kollithadathil), Accommodation (Frs Jaison Kunnappally, Joseph Kottukapally, Gibi N. Jose, Joby Kattakayam, Mathews Mankuthel, Benny Paul CST, Binoy Palakuzhy CST, Albin CST, Benny Koikakudyil), Venue Management (Frs Sony Kalladanthiyil, Johnson Karimbil, Abraham Kolamkuzhiyil, Shaji Isaac, Baiju Mulavarickal, Roy Vattakara CST, Bro. Bosco MMB), Liturgy (Frs Gregory Kondakasseril, Justin Naduparambil, Aneesh Maliakal, Jithin OFM Cap.), Choir (Frs Sijo Maniparambil, Sijo Kondadumpadavil, Sibichan Kakkaniyil, Praveen Pulinthanath), Felicitation (Frs Jeejo Vazhappally, Jose Kokkandathil, Jerom Puthukulangara, Benny Manjaly, Jojo



Vadakkal CST, Dinu OFM), Food (Frs Sabu Poikathanyil, George Theethai, Francis Maruthumkuzhy, Tobin Shwaryamackal, Mathew Pampackal, Rinso Vadakkal, Sebastian Chettany, Sebastian Chokkat CST, Tomcy CST, Jubish CST), Stage Arrangements (Frs Poly Payyappilly, Wilson Cheruvil, Dominic Panachikalkarot, Thomas Philip, George Kariveppil, Alex Puthenpura, Sobin Mukhalayil, Lijo Edattuchira, Bibin Sajan CST), Video and Photography (Frs Mathew Vellamackal, Justin Cheruparambil), Media (Fr Santhosh Sebastian) and Medical Desk (Fr Wilson Cheruvil and Team).

The steering team members and various committees had many sittings in order to meticulously plan out the programmes. 1100 invitation cards were printed and were sent out to all the cardinals in India, the Apostolic Nuncio, Syro-Malabar Bishops (Auxiliaries and emeritus included), Regional Bishops, Bishops of neighbouring dioceses and bishop friends, Syro Malankara Bishops, Major Superiors of various congregations of men and women, Members of CST congregation, Directors of various national and regional organizations, Priests of various neighbouring dioceses (all the priests of Bijnor, Allahabad, Varanasi, Lucknow and Bethiah), Curia members of the dioceses in the region, priest friends, Major Seminaries (16 of them), Religious who have become from the diocese, Former missionaries of the diocese, Pastors in the city, Friends and benefactors of the diocese (India and abroad), Local Authorities and members of the civil administration, Police officials, DMs and SPs of seven districts, staff of our institutions, relatives and friends of Bishop Dominic, Bishop Thomas and Bishop Mathew and the representatives of the Syro Malabar community in Lucknow.

31 bishops (including the Major Archbishop and Apostolic Nuncio) from various dioceses of the country joined the Episcopal Ordination. The bishops who arrived on the previous day were given a dinner in the Bishop's House campus. About 180 priests (including the major superiors of various congregations) joined the



priests working in the diocese for the ordination. There were about seventy sisters (including the major superiors of various religious congregations) other than the sisters working in our diocese.

The five hours long ceremony of Episcopal Ordination hosted in St Joseph's School, Khorabar premises had the presence of more than three thousand faithful from various missions of the diocese and from the neighbouring dioceses. The ceremony, presided over by Major Archbishop George Cardinal Alencherry started with devotional entrance dance and procession. After the traditional welcoming of the main celebrants, Bishop Thomas formally welcomed all the guests to the Episcopal Ordination. Major Archbishop George Cardinal Alencherry addressed the gathering and entrusted the new leadership of the diocese of Gorakhpur into the hands of God Almighty. At the end of the Ordination ceremony, Apostolic Nuncio to India and Nepal, Archbishop Leopoldo Girelli addressed the gathering and imparted his paternal blessings on the newly ordained bishop. Bishop Mathew addressed the gathering and expressed his gratitude towards all.

After the Episcopal Ordination, the newly ordained bishop celebrated the Holy Eucharist for all, during which Archbishop Raphy Manjaly preached the sermon. The enthronement ceremony took place immediately after the Holy Mass and at the end of it the diocesan priests kissed the ring of the new bishop to adhere their obedience to him.

After the Celebration of the Holy Mass, a felicitation programme was organized in which the representatives of various sectors felicitated the new bishop. During this programme, the Catholic children and children from a few schools performed various cultural programmes.

CHRISTMAS EXUDES JOY**Rev. Fr Abraham Kolamkuzhyil**

A child's sugary smile transports joy and optimism even in the direst situations. A child's simper dissipates obscurity because it escorts in another world. A child is a cause of joy, herald of hope. It fetches virtuous news. So, God sent his darling Son into this world to become one with us and to show us in a perceptible way what God is like, the all tender, forbearing, compassionate Father who longs for total union with all his children without discrepancy. And we know that this child born to us according to the father's plan unfettered from the authorities of sin and malice through anguish, bereavement and revivification, thus enabling us to enjoy being God's favourite children. This is the true meaning of Christmas. God could not give us a better and greater gift than himself. Jesus affirms that he is in the father and the father is in him. (Jn. 14.10)



How much it must have aggrieved God to detriment his only son for us, knowing well what life would grip in store for him. If God was willing to make this expense for our sake, we in turn have an equal accountability towards him. We must love God as he respected us. This is possible only with a profession of faith. Christmas is also a restitution of our declaration of Christ as true God and man. Christmas is the spell of good will and the period when every Christian prosaic of the name struggles to be good and kind to all his fellow men. But this spirit of good will, of sweetheart and gentleness should be

active in our hearts all the year around and all our lives. When Jesus was born people hyped and acclaimed God. These unassuming, authentic deep men reimbursed to their daily task of minding their flocks but they refunded new men full of praise and thanks giving to God for the stunning things he had done for them.

These simple unschooled shepherds show us what we should do today when thoughtful of Christmas and of God's amazing kindness to us mortal men. They couldn't read or write but they could and did use their intelligence. They whispered in God, the creator of the universe, they assumed he would fulfil the promises he had made to Abraham and the chosen people down through the eras. The babe of Bethlehem was superior than Abraham, greater than David and bigger than all the prophets whom God had sent down through the ages. They returned worshipping and ingratiating God for all they had heard and seen. Let us emulate those modest shepherds. Let us return home with transformed mystical asset, keeping ever before our minds what greater things God has done for us. He has elevated us up above and yonder our natural human selves. He has given us a paranormal life and a mystical end and purpose, which is eternal happiness.

Christmas, is the supreme, the enormous, the most far attainment event which ever took place in human history. The good news of peace has been carried to us by no less a person than the son of God himself. And he cannot as a massive prince in the prime of life, as he could have done, but he came in to this world like one of ourselves born of a human mother, taking the form of a slave as St. Paul says - like us in all things but no sin. He could have been born in a citadel, God

could easily be settled that, but he sought it this way. He desired to show us that it is not the things of this world that matter and the wealth, power are unfilled bubbles.

Christmas is an occasion for delight, a season of good will, a time of pleasure even for those who regrettably do not know or comprehend its true meaning. We have a reason to rejoice and be prepared. Christ the true son of God, the second person of the Blessed Trinity, took to himself our lowly human form and became one with us in order to raise us up to the self-esteem of espoused sons of his heavenly father.

Christmas is the birthday of the son of God who has come to be with us. His birthday is also our birthday because we renovate children of God into the son of God. To all those who receive him and believes in his name, he gives power to become children of God. (Jn. 1.12) This is the news of great joy. A light has seemed, a child is born for us, a son is given to us, that we may become offspring of God, children of light. Nothing greater ever occurred. At this inimitable event, the angels looked singing for joy, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men of good will".

Why has Jesus come? "God loved the world so much that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life". (Jn. 3.6). Let us give a joyful and hearty welcome to the Lord who comes to us, to our hearts and minds and lives. He is Emmanuel, God with us. In him God's love and grace have been exposed and coming has made deliverance possible. As long as we are alive, we should live fully and relish the gift of life, delight in doing good and evading whatever takes away from God, so that we may not die but have eternal life. He came that we may have life and have it copiously. (Jn. 10.10) He came to serve and to give his

life to redeem many people. Christmas is a festivity which calls our consideration to life and its final goal that is perpetual life in heaven.

God has become man so that man might become God says St. Augustine. The crib of Bethlehem demonstrates to us in an awe-inspiring way the goodness of the creator. The embodiment of the Word of God summons us to live a sober, pious and impartial life. Christians must be persons who work for the consciousness of what the angels sang. As St. John says, he is the true light that edifies every man who comes into the world. God who is love connects with us, discloses the truth to us, and leads us from darkness to light. For this resolution the word became flesh, shared in our weakness, poverty, pain and transience.

Christ has come as the serenity of the highest hopes and prospects of the human race. If we should enter into heaven, heaven should first enter into us. That is why Christ comes to us. He brings heaven to us. His coming is not merely an event of the past. He comes to us from age to age, from moment to moment. Tagore says, have you not heard his silent steps? He comes, comes, comes.

We must live in the sunlit of Christmas which is faith. We must act in the warmth of Christmas which is love, we must exult in the sparkle of Christmas which is purity, we must tread in the illumination of Christmas which is truth. We must stress our minds and hearts which is Christ. That is the way to live according to the sense and purpose of Christmas.

On the brightest star of Christmas I wish you all a joy packed merry Christmas and a prosperous New year 2024.

THE GOSPEL OF MERCY

Rev. Fr Jose Manjiyil CST

Nirmal Ashram: Nirmal Ashram is in Mithaura Bazar in the district of Maharajganj. It is an interior village in Mithaura Block Panchayat. It is only 12 kms to Masih Sevashram, Nichlaul. From Little Flower School and Carmel School, Dhanewa Dhane, Police Lines, Maharajganj it is about 15 km. Only 20 minutes are required to reach India-Nepal border, ie; Maheshpur and Tuthibari.



A Celestial Experience: Though there is no Christian population except 2 Catholic Priests and 3 Rev. Sisters in this small village, the residents are mostly farmers who are kind and they are Hindus. It gives me a heavenly experience of joy, peace and fulfillment when I meditate over the Infinite Mercy of Jesus, our Lord who showers His grace upon farmers and peasants incessantly who live in huts and half-built brick houses. I do pray for their children and their daily bread and am worried about their bright future through education and skill development. This serene atmosphere of paddy and wheat field gives me sheer bliss when I am present in the newly consecrated Nirmala Mata Church with the Blessed Sacrament at every day – break with chirpings of small birds and tiny insects in the background.

'FIRE' and Enthusiasm: In the hustle – bustle of modern digital life situation, I would like to preach the Good News of Jesus' Mercy (Karuna) and my distracted presence in the

dawn with Blessed Sacrament provides in the heart 'FIRE' and 'enthusiasm' in daily life. This holy hour leads me to a celestial experience that is unspeakable. I try to recall 'my call from Jesus' to spread His Mercy and Kindness where Jesus is not known clearly, not loved dearly and not followed closely as the Lord of mankind. This 'Man of Mercy' instituted Holy Eucharist on the penultimate day of his life after having washed the feet of his apostles who could not know Him and His mercy in depth even after going around with Him for 3 years very closely. Jesus, moving around showed His Mercy, compassion, concern and care to people around. Towards His 'Farewell' he instituted Holy Eucharist as an embodiment of Mercy and to be with us forever.

CRIB EXPERIENCE

Rev. Sr Prema FSJ

The grace of incarnation Francis of Assisi finds also in this that Christ has become our Brother.

He loved and honoured the Mother of God, "We are told, because she made the Lord of Glory to be our Brother in the flesh."

The Incarnation is the model for creation:

There is a creation only because of the Incarnation.

The universe is for Christ and not Christ for the universe.

In the Primacy, Christ is the beginning, middle and end of creation.

He stands at the centre of the universe as the reason for its existence.

**CATECHISM AND BIBLE COMMISSION**

Rev. Fr Rajesh
(Director; Catechism and Bible Commission)

Orientation for Catechism Teachers 2023

The diocesan commission for Bible and Catechism organized a half day orientation for the catechism teachers on Sunday 24th September 2023 at St Joseph's Cathedral Campus, Civil Lines, Gorakhpur. The orientation included two input sessions, discussion on various matters concerning catechism classes and Bishop Thomas' address. The input sessions were conducted by Fr Rajesh, the director of the commission, who spoke to the participants about the need to ground themselves on the Word of God. He elaborately spoke on the importance of the Word of God in catechetical formation of the Catholics and the relevance of it in today's world. He also gave them practical suggestions as to how they could make use of the Word of God in various ways to further the religious teaching. From all the missions and parishes of the diocese, about 130 teachers participated in the orientation programme.

Bishop Thomas, in his address, urged the teachers to be more responsible as transmitters of the Word of God and the faith formators. They should, he insisted, take utmost care to bring into the young hearts and minds the desire to know their faith and appreciate it. At the end of his address, he gave away some gifts for the teachers. The gifts partially included some books on catechetical formation which would be handy for them as catechism teachers.

**Logos Bible Quiz 2023**

The annual event of the Logos Bible Quiz 2023 organized by the Regional Bible Commission for all the Hindi speaking dioceses of North India was enthusiastically organized in Gorakhpur diocese as well. This year more than 600 Catholics of various age groups participated in the First Level Logos Bible Quiz from all the mission stations and parishes of the diocese. It was conducted in the respective missions and parishes on Sunday, 20th August 2023. From among these 600 plus participants three toppers from six different age groups qualified for the Second Level of the Logos Bible Quiz 2023. The names of the qualified participants from the diocese for the Second Level of the Logos Bible Quiz 2023 are:

Group A		
01 Ann Aradhya	Little Flower Mission, Bansi	First
02 Aradhya Simon	St Anthony's Church, Dharampur	Second
03 Joel Joseph	St Thomas Mission, Khalilabad	Third
Group B		
04 Niya Teresa Joseph	St. Joseph's Mission, Khorabar	First
05 Blessy Biju	Little Flower Mission, Salempur	Second
06 Asima Xess	Sant Pushpa Mission, Hata	Third
Group C		
07 Joel Khalko	Little Flower Mission, Bansi	First
08 Smith Ignatius	St Anthony's Church, Dharampur	Second
09 Angel Simon	St Anthony's Church, Dharampur	Third
Group D		
10 Sr Dipti SMI	St Anthony's Church, Dharampur	First
11 Sr Binny Joseph LST	St Joseph's Mission, Khorabar	Third
Group E		
12 Sr Anita Mary FSJ	St Anthony's Church, Dharampur	First
13 Abhilash Philip	St Anthony's Church, Dharampur	Second
Group F		
14 Elsy Chandy	St Joseph's Cathedral, Gorakhpur	First
15 Sr Chhaya SMI	St Anthony's Church, Dharampur	Third

The Second Level of the Logos Bible Quiz 2023 was conducted in St Joseph's Cathedral Campus on Sunday, 24th September 2023. Among the fifteen participants who attended the Second Level of the Logos Bible Quiz 2023, three children qualified for the Semi finals at the National Levels organized at Nav Sadhana, Varanasi. They were:

Joel Joseph	from	Group A
Aradhya Simon	from	Group A and
Niya Teresa	from	Group B

These children participated in the Semi Finals at Nav Sadhana on Saturday 18th November and won the following prizes:

Joel Joseph	Second Prize from	Group A
Niya Teresa	Second Prize from	Group B
Aradhya Simon	Consolation Prize from	Group A

Logos Bible Writing Competitions 2023

26 people from various parishes and missions of the diocese participated in the Bible Writing Competition 2023. Five judges looked at the

handwritten Bibles and evaluated them at the diocesan level. The three winners at the diocesan level were:

Sr Linsa LST	First Prize
Agnes Flora	Second Prize
Sr Jyoti SMI	Third Prize

The handwritten Bibles of these three diocesan level winners were taken to Nav Sadhana at the National level Competitions. Among many handwritten Bibles from various Hindi speaking dioceses of North India, all the three participants from our diocese won prizes and made our diocese proud. The prizes are:

Sr Jyoti SMI	First Prize
Sr Linsa LST	Second Prize
Agnes Flora	Consolation Prize

Mission Quest 2023

The Syro-Malabar Commission for Catechesis and Mission Office organized the Mission Quest 2023 on Saturday 28th October 2023. A few of our Catholics participated in the Mission Quest and six of them won prizes at the diocesan level. The winners are:

	Catechism Children	
01 Amal Jojo	Little Flower Mission, Maharajganj	First
02 Joicy Joseph	Little Flower Mission, Harraiya	Second
03 Riya Tony	St Xavier's Mission, Naugarh	Third
	Adults	
04 Sobin Joseph	St Xavier's Mission, Naugarh	First
05 Sr Joselyn SRA	Little Flower Mission, Harraiya	Second
06 Beena Antony	St Basil's Church, Basti	Third

The diocesan commission for Bible and Catechism is indebted indeed to all those people who participated in these competitions, those who encouraged and supported the participants and to all those who were supportive to the works of the commission.



DIOCESAN YOUTH COMMISSION (YOUTH STRING)

Rev. Fr Johnson Karimpil
(Diocesan Youth Director)

Rev. Fr Justin handed over his responsibilities as Diocesan Youth Director to Rev. Fr Johnson on 18th August 2022. We are extremely grateful to Fr Justin for his guidance and presence which have been a source of inspiration and light on our path. Fr Justin will be gratefully remembered for



his guidance and organizing capability in successfully organizing the Regional Life Orientation Program for the youth which was conducted in our diocese.



On 2nd of October 2022, 25 Youth Representatives along with 5 DEXCO members together with Fr Johnson, the DYD and Sr Jyoti the Youth Lady Animator of St Anthony's Church attended 3 days of **Reginal Youth Convention (RYC)** program which took place in Ajmer from 3rd October to 5th October 2022. It was organized by **ICYM AGRA REGION**. It was an enriching time for our youth to witness God's Love through interaction with the regional youth.



The youth members from different Parishes & Mission Stations actively participated in diocesan bible festival which was conducted in St. Anthony's parish.

Mission Sunday was held on 6th of November 2022 in St. Anthony's parish. The parish youth members played a vital role in putting up stalls and organizing the mission Sunday celebration.



19th Training of Trainers (TOT) was held in Meerut Diocese from 5th to 7th of December 2022. **Steve Ignatius** (President of Gorakhpur Diocese) & **Ronald Cadric** (Secretary of Gorakhpur Diocese) participated on behalf of Gorakhpur Diocese.



The Diocesan Youth organized a Christmas carol at Snehalaya, LSDP Convent and M C Convent on 22nd of December. It was an ever-memorable moment to experience God's love and abundance.

As part of the Lenten observations, the youth from three different parishes had a pilgrimage to Shantivan Ashram, Campierganj on 12th March 2023. The youth strengthened their faith by participating in adoration and Way of the Cross.



The life orientation program of Agra Region was held in the Diocese of Jhansi from 19th May to 7th June, 2023. 6 Youth from our diocese took part in it. Sr Sunita SRA accompanied the youth in the LOP.



Sr Mable LST was appointed as new Diocesan Youth Lady Animator in place of Sr Sushila A C. We Thank Sr Sushila for her committed service for the youth and wish her all the best for her new mission.

Gorakhpur Diocesan Youth Commission organized a half day seminar on Vocation on 6th of August 2023. The theme of the day was: Grace and Mission and the celebration of Diocesan



Youth SUNDAY. It was held in St Anthony's Church, Dharampur, Gorakhpur. The event was attended by 80 youths from different parishes and mission stations.

Rev. Fr Anand, the Principal of St Anthony's Inter College, Pratapgarh as well as the former Youth In-charge of the diocese of Allahabad shared his experiences and guided us all throughout the session.



The Seminar was concluded with the Election of New DEXCO members.

The newly elected committee members are –

President: Aman Messi from Mount Carmel Church, Padri Bazar.

Vice-president: Tejasvi from St Anthony's Parish, Dharampur.

Secretary: Christina Bailey from St Anthony's Parish, Dharampur.

Joint Secretary / media in-charge : Brinny from Mount Carmel Church, Padribazar.

The Former members were –

President: Steve Ignatius from St Anthony's Church, Dharampur.

Vice-president: Andrea Bailey from St Joseph's Cathedral, Civil Lines.

Secretary: Ronald Cadric from St Anthony's Church, Dharampur.

Girl Representative: Christina Maria Mitra from St Anthony's Church, Dharampur.

Boy Representative: Vikas from Mount Carmel Church, Padri Bazar.



We welcome the new diocesan executive committee and wish them all the best. We also thank the former DEXCO members for their wholehearted support and committed service and wish them all the best.



The Annual Training of trainees (TOT) was organized in Navasadhna, Varanasi from 1st December to 3rd December. 9 youths along with youth director and lady animator participated in the program from our diocese. The main agenda of the program was the training of leaders and the regional executive election. Christeena Maria Mittra of St Anthony's Church Dharampur was elected as secretary of ICYM Agra Region. We congratulate her and wish her all the best for her tenure as regional secretary of ICYM Agra region.

FATIMA HOSPITAL

**Rev. Fr Sabu P.
Director**

Cleanest Hospital Award 2022

Fatima Hospital was awarded the cleanest hospital by the Municipal Corporation (Nagar Nigam) of Gorakhpur under the Swachh Ranking for the year 2022. This is the second time Fatima Hospital is receiving the award from the Nagar Nigam Gorakhpur for the exceptional cleanliness



and hygiene standards upheld by the hospital, contributing significantly to fostering a healthy and sanitized environment within its premises.

Disseminated Intravascular Coagulation (DIC) Surgery Performed

A remarkable medical intervention was carried out by our team of doctors, led by Dr Akshay Prasad and Dr Naveen at Fatima Hospital. A 16-day-old male baby was operated at Fatima Hospital who was diagnosed with abdominal distension, bile vomiting, and an exceptionally low birth weight of 1.5 kg, along with oral bleed. The surgery was successful and the baby was discharged home.

74th Republic Day

74th Republic Day was celebrated with the gracious presence of Most Rev. Bishop Thomas Thuruthimattam as the Chief Guest along with Management and Staff of the Hospital, expressing sentiments related



to the occasion, and contributing to the enriching atmosphere. Additionally, Dr Rajesh Pandey addressed the gathering by sharing insights, reflections and messages pertinent to the Republic Day celebrations.

Healing Week

Healing week was observed from 7th to 13th February 2023 and various informative sessions were organised by our doctors, covering various health topics. The concluding day programme was organised with a prayer session in the OPD and message of the day was delivered by Fr Sabu P L.

Basic Life Support and Advanced Cardiac Life Support Training

Basic Life Support and Advanced Cardiac Life Support training was organised for the Hospital Staff in association with the American Heart Association (AHA) and



International Academy of Emergency Medicine (IAEM), Delhi from 15th February 2023 to 20th February 2023. American Heart Association certified trainers provided training to the staff to equip them with nursing skills.

Cervical Cancer Vaccine Camp at the State Bank of India, Taramandal Branch, Gorakhpur on 23rd Feb 2023

We conducted a Cervical Cancer Vaccine Camp at the State Bank of India, Taramandal Branch, where a total of 60 members availed themselves for the vaccine. This initiative aimed to raise awareness about cervical cancer prevention and provide convenient access to vaccination for the employees or members associated with the SBI Taramandal Branch. The camp's success reflects the commitment to public health and preventive care.

Dialysis Machines were donated by Joy Alukkas Foundation

Joy Alukkas sponsored two Dialysis Machines for the hospital, demonstrating their commitment to community health. The machines were inaugurated by Shri Ashutosh Dubey, Chief Medical Officer Gorakhpur along with Mr Kawaljeet Singh, Regional Manager, Joy Alukkas Foundation. The hospital expresses gratitude for Joy Alukkas' philanthropic gesture, emphasizing its significance in advancing medical care for individuals with chronic health conditions.



Blessing of the newly constructed Eye Hospital Building

On March 14, 2023, the newly constructed Eye Hospital Building, the long cherished dream which accomplished after many challenges and hard work, was inaugurated and



blessed. The event was graced by the presence of Most Rev. Bishop Thomas Thuruthimattam CST, Bishop Dominic Kokkat, Mr Tibor Van Staveren (Director Programme Delivery, Asia & America CBM International), Dr Sara Varughes (Managing Trustee, CBM India Trust), Mr Madhavan SA (Lead Inclusive Health CBM India Trust), Mr Shahnawaz Qureshi (Manager CCBM India Liaison office), Mr Ravi Ranganathan (Head Inclusive Health & Humanitarian Response CBM India Trust), Dr Dominic Misquith EH (National Advisor, CBM India Trust), Ms Debnath Bismoy (Multimedia Designer, CBM India Trust), Fr Sabu PL (Director Fatima Hospital), Fr Wilson (Associate Director Fatima Hospital), Fr Shijo (Assistant Director Fatima Hospital), Sr Vimal MSJ (Administrator Fatima Hospital), Dr Vinay Sinha (Medical Superintendent Fatima Hospital), and other fathers, doctors, staff, and students. The unveiling of the plaque was conducted by Mr Tibor along with Dr Sara Varughes, marking a significant moment in the acknowledgment and celebration of the successful completion of the Eye Hospital project.

World Tuberculosis Day

World Tuberculosis Day was celebrated on 24th March 2023. The event featured a compelling message presentation by Dr Sandeep Gupta, Pulmonologist at Fatima Hospital.

The Lamp Lighting and Graduation Ceremony

The event, held on March 25th, included the 14th batch of GNM and DMLT, the 12th batch of DOPT, the third batch of ANM, and the 1st batch of BSc (Nursing) students. Distinguished dignitaries, including



Bishop Thomas Thuruthimattam, Prof. Dr Ganesh Kumar (Principal, BRD Medical College), Fr Sabu PL (Director, Fatima Hospital), Fr Wilson (Education Director, FIMS), Fr Shijo (Assistant Director, Fatima Hospital), Prof. Beena James (Principal, FIMS), Sr Vimal (Administrator, Fatima Hospital), Dr Vinay Sinha (Medical Superintendent), Dr Rajesh Pandey, along with doctors, staff, students, and their families, graced the occasion.

NABH Full Accreditation

We are delighted to announce that, our hospital has achieved a significant milestone – Full Accreditation from NABH (National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers). We received the certificate on 29th March 2023 which has a validity of 4 years. This accomplishment positions us as the first multi-speciality hospital in Gorakhpur to receive such recognition.

Blood donation camp at St Joseph's College, Civil Lines

We successfully organized a blood donation camp at St Joseph's College, Civil Lines on 20th April 2023 where a significant number of students actively participated. Notably, several individuals donated blood for the first time, contributing to the noble cause of saving lives through their generosity.

**World Thalassemia Day**

On 8th May 2023, World Thalassemia Day, our Blood Bank team organized a special program featuring the participation of thalassemia patients, notably Ms Srighta Chatterji, who shared her personal journey. She received an award from Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The program included active blood donation by our doctors and staff, symbolizing solidarity and emphasizing the crucial role of blood donation in thalassemia treatment.

International Nurses Day

International Nurses Day was celebrated on 12th May 2023. The celebration had the theme "Our Nurses, Our Future". The day included various programmes, prize distribution to recognize



excellence, and showcasing the talents of our nurses through captivating performances.

New IP Billing and Sub-Pharmacy Department Block was inaugurated on 13th May 2023.

World Blood Donor Day Celebration and Ambulance Flag Off

On the occasion of World Blood Donor Day, 14th June 2023, theme "Give Blood Give Plasma, Share life, Share often," we were honored to have Dr Mangalesh Srivastava ji, the esteemed Mayor, as our chief guest. Certificates and gifts were presented to our blood donor heroes in recognition of their consistent and invaluable contributions.



In a moment of gratitude and progress, we inaugurated a new ambulance, generously donated by Life Insurance Corporation of India. The inauguration was done by the LIC Regional Manager along with Dr Mangalesh Srivastav Ji, Our Mayor.

Blessing of the New Labor Room

We have blessed the new Labor Room on 15th July 2023.

Independence Day Celebration

Independence Day was celebrated on 15th August 2023 and

Professor Dr Chittaranjan Mishra and Bishop Dominic Kokkat were esteemed guests.



Donation of an Ophthalmology Van and 3 dialysis machines on 25th Aug 2023

ICICI Foundation's contribution to healthcare initiatives through the donation of an Ophthalmic Van and 3 dialysis machines were blessed and inaugurated on 25th August 2023. The Ophthalmology eye care van can bring services directly to the communities, ensuring early detection and treatment of eye conditions, ultimately preserving and enhancing vision. Additionally, the provision of three dialysis machines is crucial in supporting patients with kidney failure, enabling them to receive life-saving treatment.

World Sepsis Day

We have observed the World Sepsis Day on 13th September 2023.

Pharmacy Week

Pharmacy Week was observed from 18th to 25th September 2023 with various programmes and activities for the staff.

Quality Week

World Quality Week was observed from 6th to 9th November 2023 with various programmes, and competitions and prizes were awarded to all competitors who emerged victorious. We also honored employees who have exerted extra effort during the NABH Accreditation process.

PURVANCHAL GRAMIN SEVA SAMITI

Rev. Fr Jaison K.
Director

1. PRAYAAS:

- The program aims at empowerment of women/ adolescent girls with disabilities including other women/adolescent girls of focus areas, by carrying out socio economic reforms through establishment of village industries, promotion of health and education and other income generation activities.



- No. of wall writings: 518 ahead of the project target, which has spread Awareness in the community and enhanced participation of community members in the project activities.



- 12 screening camps were conducted in which 1245 persons with and without disabilities (unique count) were screened in the camp including 331 women and 273 girls with disabilities.

- Awareness was raised regarding the importance of linkage with Aadhaar card & disability certificate.

Disability Certificate - 792



Availing Disability Pension from Govt. Departments - 682

Travel concession passes - 421

Old age/widow pension - 32

Ayushman Card - 84

Assistive Device - 94

- 08 tailoring units established
- 40 machines procured and established with initial raw material support for the tailoring units.
- 40 women with disability were given training, through 8 tailoring centres for 6 months.

2. Saksham III:

- Livelihood and Food Security of Pandemic Affected Communities with Good Governance & Localized Farming Systems. Stronger



demands by empowered and capacitated community collectives for the realization of welfare and development entitlements for 2350 households and greater accountability and transparency in governance and scheme administration. Greater sustainability and resilience to farming and food systems contributing to greater Agriculture Sovereignty and Food & Nutrition and Livelihood Security of 1550 households.

- Beneficiaries benefited by government schemes:

MNREGA (National Rural Employment Guarantee Act): 76

PMAY (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna): 11



WP (Widow Pension): 4
 OAP (Old Age Pension): 9
 DS (Disability Pension): 30
 PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana: 200
 National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM): 30
 Ayushman Bharat: 150
 Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY): 21

3. Jeevan Dhara:

"A programme on promotion of disability inclusive sustainable WASH practices, enhanced nutrition and livelihood".



- Awareness programme was conducted in all 100 villages through Community meetings, Street Plays and Puppet Shows. 11569 persons were sensitized through awareness programmes.
- Total 400 community mobilization meetings were conducted at village level with active participation of 11488 members. The community is now aware about the importance of healthy WASH practices and are also aware about their health and regular nutritional intake in daily food.
- 16 Camps were conducted in 16 Clusters. Check-up done for:
 Pregnant women 2178
 Lactating women 1095
 Children 2613
 Persons with disabilities 571
 Malnourished -152



- Awareness done and 3000 food supplements were distributed. Lactating/pregnant women, malnourished children/women/persons including children/women with disabilities experienced health improvements.
- 100 OPDs were formed with 770 members. Persons with disabilities have a common platform to discuss common issues and apply for their rights and entitlement.



4. Maa Ki Roti:

In the heart of our community there exists a place where affordability meets compassion, "It's called Maa Ki Roti". Feeding the poor and needy are a Noble and Compassionate act. Maa Ki roti provides food to everyone who is in need of a meal at 10 Rs per meal, wherein they get rice, 2 chapatis, sabji and dal. Maa ki roti works on the following principals- Affordability, Nutrition, Quality, Variety, Convenience, Social Welfare.



5. Childline:

- Childline is a project of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, which is working

24x7 to help children from new-born to 18 years of age in distress and its toll-free number is – 1098. The main supporting organization in Gorakhpur district is run by Purvanchal Gramin Seva Samiti. Three units of Childline are working in Gorakhpur district.

City Childline

Railway Childline

Bus Station Childline

- From April 2023 to August 2023, about 290 children were helped from all three units.
- Outreach programs were organized every day, during which Childline handbills were distributed in different areas of Gorakhpur district and awareness was created by explaining in detail about Childline services.



6. Snehalaya Open Shelter Home:

Snehalaya Open Shelter Home is a shelter home run by Purvanchal Rural Service as per Child Care need and protection (CNCP), the said shelter home provides shelter to children aged between 10 years to 18 years as per the orders of the Child Welfare



- Committee. Informal education and vocational training are provided to the children living in the shelter home. The capacity to provide shelter to 25 children in Snehalaya Open Shelter Home has been determined by the government.

7. BMZ:

- "Promotion of community-based sustainable inclusive Dairy farming."



Kushinagar. Our aim

is to support and empower poor dairy farmers, PWD in our community by facilitating their involvement in dairy farming and creating sustainable livelihoods and involving them in government schemes, programs. We are pleased to announce that, we have made significant progress in our project. We have successfully initiated the establishment of a

Cattle Feed Unit,

Processing Centre

Farmer Producer

Organisation

(FPO)Registered

Office



Milk Collection Centres in the villages in collaboration with our dedicated team and the support of generous donors. These facilities play a vital role in enhancing the dairy farming practices of our community members.

- The cattle feed unit ensures that our farmers have access to high-quality and nutrient-rich animal feed, optimizing the health and productivity of their livestock. This results in increased milk yield and better income generation opportunities for the farmers.

- Additionally, our processing centre enables farmers to transform milk into various dairy products such as Paneer, Khoya, Peda (sweet). These value-added products have a higher market demand and provide significantly higher profit margins for our farmers.
- Furthermore, the milk collection centres have proven to be a vital link between the farmers and the market. We have successfully established a strong presence in the business-to-business (B2B) market, enabling us to sell our dairy products to various businesses and institutions. This expansion not only increases the market access for our farmers but also ensures a consistent income stream for them.
- One of the most rewarding aspects of this project is witnessing the positive impact on the lives of our poor dairy farmers and Pwd. We are delighted to see them happy and actively involved in dairy farming activities. Their enthusiasm, hard work, and dedication have played a crucial role in the success of our project.

8. Saffal:

- Farmers are made aware about seed selection, seed treatment, Soil treatment, use of Trico- drama and organic farming and 172 farmers used Trico drama for seed treatment and soil treatment. 172 Farmer used their knowledge for farming and their crop production is better.
- 102 farmers adapted organically method and used minimum chemical fertilizer.



- Average 10-15 quintal vermi compost production continues. Farmers used vermi compost in their crop and save 10-15 thousand rupees each.
- Total 16 Farmers prepare and use jivamrit, Dashparni. 16 Farmer used organic input to help minimized (chemical) fertilizer.

9. IDYCD:

Purvanchal Gramin Seva Samiti and Jan Vikas Samiti, Varanasi, State Holder Consultation on Employability of Persons with Disability

workshop was organized in the auditorium of Purvanchal Gramin Seva Samiti, Gorakhpur. The chief guest of this workshop



was Dr Kamlesh Verma, District Disability Empowerment Officer. Along with this, to make this workshop a success, Father Jason, Director of PGSS, Father Sabu, Director of Fatima, Mr Neeraj Madhukar from CRC Gorakhpur and Sad Gautam from Indian Overseas Bank Fatima Hospital Branch were present. Mr Satish was present in the program. Mr Musa Aadmi from Janvi Vikas Samiti was also present to help in organizing the program. The program started by lighting the lamp, after which all the guests were welcomed by Mr Mubarak Ali, Secretary of Navjeevan Divyang Jan Seva Samiti. While giving information about the program,

Father Jaison said that this program is novel and the detailed information was given as to how employment should be provided to the disabled



people on the basis of their qualifications and from where they can get such help. After this, it was told by Mr S K Gautam Indian Overseas Bank Fatima Hospital that you can get employment through the bank by taking reed, just for that you will have to prepare your complete plan of employment and tell it to the bank. Then Mr Neeraj Madhukar CRC Gorakhpur in his department. It was told about the various training programs for the disabled people being run by the Department and it was said that this training is absolutely free for the disabled people.

10. SPARSH-Db

'Comprehensive Education and Rehabilitation Services for people with Deaf blindness (Db) and Multiple Disabilities'

(Sparsh-Db) Implemented in 3 districts Gorakhpur, Maharaj Ganj & Siddharth Nagar.

- No. of service users in 3 districts- 153
- Home based service in 3 districts-96.
- Centre based services in 3 districts- 47



- Support service in 3 districts -10.
- State level Advocacy was conducted in which 197 persons with and without disabilities and Government officials (CMO, DDEO, CDO, SMSA teachers) participated in meeting.
- 1 State sensitization workshop for NGOs was conducted in which 59 participants participated.
- Awareness was raised regarding the importance of linkage with Adhar card- 123
- Disability certificates- 92
- UDID card- 103
- Travel concession passes- 103
- Assistive devices- 67
- Ayushman card- 32
- Nutrition Support in 3 districts- 142 service users got nutrition.
- Medical Support in 3 districts- 37 service users got medical support.
- 6 Exposure visits of children were conducted in which 223 persons with deaf blindness and his/her parents were participated.
- 6 IGA support in 3 districts.

11. Cluster Based Business organization:

Ansh Laghu Farmer Producer Company Limited Maharajganj is facilitating organic farming on 100 hectares with more than 500 hundred farmers. This FPO received many certificates for different organic products and organic farming through Government and certification agencies. Ansh Laghu Farmer Producer Company Limited provided technical support to interested farmers, FPOs and organizations.



The event witnessed the presence of 05 persons including BODs and CEO from Deoria Gauri Bazar Mushroom Producer Company Limited, Deoria district, Professional Mr Abdul Hameed. The resource



person for the event was Mr Shriram. The event commenced with the CEO and the BODs welcoming and addressing the gathering. This was later followed by a round of introduction of everyone present in the gathering. Mr Shriram Ji shared his knowledge in the field of organic farming with everyone present. He gave information which was relevant to the farmers regarding the process of flour formation from wheat. Queries were taken from the side of the farmers and responded to by the resource person, which made the session interactive. The resource person offered all technical details and also offered to further support by solving agricultural issues over phone.

Participants learned how to treat soil through organic fertilizer, how to prepare different types organic manure, pesticides at home and field. They also learned how to develop buffer zone on their field. They also get knowledge about integrated pest management, storage with organic method and marketing of organic product.



The event was taken further as everyone went to the flour mill which was setup by the FPO itself. There they learned; the overall process



involved in flour making. Henceforth, it really enhanced the knowledge of the farmers regarding the making of flour with less cost involved.

12. Swawlamban:

Swalamban is a disability inclusive programme for economic independence and social empowerment of persons with disabilities. The programme is being implemented in 40 remote villages of Pipraich and Kauriram blocks of Gorakhpur district by Purvanchal Gramin Seva Samiti (PGSS) in association with CBM. The specific objective of the programme is to improve socio-economic & health status of 3000 marginalized community members including 1500 persons with disabilities and promoting disability inclusive education in 40 remote villages of Eastern Uttar Pradesh.



- 388 persons with disabilities enrolled online in various government schemes through village level camps organized in Pipraich and Kauriram blocks of Gorakhpur district.
- 06 Camps for distribution of assistive devices were organized in association with district administration of Gorakhpur in Pipraich and Kauriram blocks of Gorakhpur district. Total 285 persons with disabilities benefitted various assistive devices.
- Accessibility audit of 40 village level government schools

by 25 Leaders of Organization of Persons with disabilities (OPD) in Pipraich and Kauriram blocks of Gorakhpur district was conducted.



- 42 persons including 22 persons with disabilities received training on terracotta art.
- 65 women including 38 women with disabilities received training in jute handicrafts.

13. SBI Gram Saksham:

SBI Saksham works in two districts i.e., Gorakhpur and Siddharthnagar. SBI saksham works with 750 marginal women of SHG with an objective of incorporating them in sustainable livelihood activities by building their skill on modern techniques of goat farming and providing them with Goat and Goat shed.



1500 - Goats Distributed

1500- Vaccinated and Dewormed

1500- Door to Door insurance



14. S.B.I. Sanjeevani MOPD (SIDDHARTHANAGAR)

"Transforming Lives: A Year of Healthcare Triumphs with Our Mobile OPD Van in SIDDHARTHANAGAR Rural Uttar Pradesh"

In the heart of rural Uttar Pradesh, our Mobile OPD (Outpatient Department) van has been a beacon of hope, bringing healthcare to the doorsteps of those who need it the most. As we reflect on the past year, the impact of our initiative has been profound, touching the lives of countless individuals in underserved communities.

Strategic Reach and Accessibility:

Deployed strategically in remote villages and hamlets, our Mobile OPD van has shattered barriers to healthcare access. By reaching areas with limited or no healthcare facilities, we've made a tangible difference in bridging the healthcare gap.

Comprehensive Healthcare Services:

The van has served as a lifeline for rural residents, offering a spectrum of healthcare services. From basic medical consultations to essential diagnostics and preventive care, our dedicated team has been committed to delivering comprehensive healthcare to all.

Health Education and Awareness:

Beyond medical services, our initiative places a strong emphasis on health education and awareness. Conducting informative sessions in local languages, we've empowered communities with knowledge on preventive measures and healthy living, fostering a proactive approach to healthcare.



Community Engagement Initiatives:

Our commitment extends beyond clinical services. Through health camps, interactive sessions, and partnerships with local organizations, we've actively engaged with the community. This collaborative approach has strengthened our impact and ensured that healthcare is a collective effort.

Technological Innovations:

Embracing technology, our Mobile OPD van integrates advancements for efficient healthcare delivery. From digital record-keeping to telemedicine consultations, we've leveraged technology to enhance the quality and effectiveness of our services.

15. Surokhit Shaishav:

- Meet CWPO for timely update children related register and preparation for world disable day.
- Block child welfare and protection committee meeting.



- Block level child parliament federation meeting.
- Core committee meeting and joint patrolling.
- Installed 3 Help Desks in schools for safety of child rights.

16. Tribal Development Fund:

- The training was led by director of Purvanchal Poultry producer Company Limited Mr Bed Bayas Ji. In his session he commented about the business opportunity in poultry rearing, he discussed about the viability of the business that gives output in four ways i.e., egg, flesh, chick & feed.



- The consumption of all the products in Uttar Pradesh is very high in comparison to supply, mostly the demand is filled by the outsiders so there is a chance to all the beneficiaries to find the gap between the demand and supply and avail the business opportunity in the local market.
- To achieve better performance of individual and department by updating and enhancing professional knowledge and skills.
- To promote better understanding of professional requirements in the present and emerging socio-economic and changing environment.
- Creating an enabling environment for continuous learning and capacity building. Strive to match the individual's competencies with the duties they are to perform and

bridge competency gaps for current and future roles through training. Fulfil the short- and medium-term training and capacity building requirements of the department through comprehensive strategic-planning comprising a set of effective measures designed to achieve the desired objectives within a stipulated time frame.

**Organization Excellence
Award 2023 by Caritas
India on 14/10/2023**



SHANTIVAN ASHRAM

Rev. Fr Biju Pulinthanam

There are number of reasons to thank the Lord for the countless blessings that the Ashram had received. Every day especially on Sundays many people are coming to the Shantivan church to pray, they also testify the blessings that they received in public. Many Fathers and preachers came over here for the Sunday ceremony. Many Fathers and Sisters came to the pastoral centre for their spiritual renewal.



With due solemnity we celebrated the Feasts of the Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary and St Therese of child Jesus. On 8th September, the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we had a special prayer Service for the Childless Couples. Almost fifty-five couples had attended the prayer service.

At present Asara, the Special School, has 13 children as members and four Sisters to take care of them. We had a grand celebration of Independence Day, Diwali and the Children's Day. SHO and his team from Campierganj and Tehsildar visited the children in Asara during the occasion of Diwali.

We are blessed with the presence of Mar Sebastian Vaniyapurackal, Rev. Fr Daniel Poovannathil, many Fathers and Sisters from different dioceses who visited us at various times.

ST ANTHONY'S CHURCH, DHARAMPUR

Rev. Fr Poly Payyappilly

Cordial welcome to our new Shepherd Rt Rev. Bishop Mathew Nellikunnel CST: We were blessed to have the presence of His Excellency Bishop Mathew Nellikunnel CST with us who celebrated the Holy Eucharist on 12th November, 2023. We extended a warm welcome to him, congratulated him,



and offered our special prayers for a fruitful ministry of shepherding the faithful of the diocese of Gorakhpur.

Month of October and

Rosary devotion: The month of October was celebrated with special devotion to Blessed Mother Mary. Common recitation of Holy rosary was arranged in the families under the leadership of religious sisters and the ward in charges. The rosary conclusion of the month was celebrated on 31st evening with Holy Eucharist followed by candle procession and concluding of the rosary at the Grotto.



Mission Sunday celebration: Mission Sunday was celebrated on 22nd October, 2023. His excellency Bishop Thomas

Thuruthimattam CST was the main celebrant of the Solemn Eucharist of the day. Soon after the eucharistic celebration, all the faithful gathered in the school campus for mission Sunday. Various food stalls and stalls for different games were organized by the faithful and youth of the parish. We raise our hearts in thanksgiving to God for inspiring us in celebrating the mission Sunday in a meaningful manner.

Logos Quiz competition and Bible writing competition

2023: We are extremely happy to congratulate the participants and winners of Logos Quiz competition and Bible writing competition. Sr Jyoti SMI secured first position in bible writing competition in the regional level while Aradya Simon won consolation prize in Bible Logos Quiz competition.

Cordial welcome to Rev. Dr Fr Sibichan: We, the parish community, extend cordial welcome to Rev. Fr Sibichan as he takes up the responsibility of leading the parish community. We gratefully acknowledge the kind service of Rev. Fr Poly in taking care of the parish community during the last two and a half years. We wish God's abundant blessings for his new ministry.





A GLANCE AT THE VILLAGE OF MITHAURA

Rev. Sr Rita Bharathi FSJ

It is with immense joy, we share our mission experiences. We are called to be missionary disciples, modelled after Jesus, the first missionary. God sent Jesus into the world as a missionary. We are sent by Jesus as missionaries to preach as well as to live the Good News.



It is very fitting that we share our missionary encounters with our people during the time of Christmas. Jesus pitched his tent among the people. Jesus himself was the Good News. We are also challenged to gradually become the Good News to our people in their real life situations.

We are situated in a very remote village called Mithaura. This village is one of the smallest and poorest villages of Maharajganj district in Uttar Pradesh. There are few families in this remote village. In each family there are about three to five children. The people are deprived of proper housing, food and even clothing. They come from a very poor background and live a very simple life. The people speak their native dialect, which is Bhojpuri.

Our Founding Father has visibly demonstrated that it is education alone which could bring transformation in the lives of marginalized women and children. Education is the



ray of hope that would leave a blazing trail in each family. We, the Franciscan Sisters of St Joseph, proclaim the Good News of Jesus through our education ministry, with the unfailing support of the CST Fathers. Education, we believe, will enable our people to experience the fullness of life that Jesus brought to this world.

The people come from an agricultural background. They experience an intimacy with mother earth by being engaged in agriculture. They are insulated from the busy and chaotic life, which we experience in the city. Their daily routine beings at 4.30 am in the morning. They complete their routine work in the family and then go to the fields for work.

The girl children support their mothers in their families and then go to the government schools nearby to pursue their education. The boys on the other hand are given preference to the girls, because they are sent to English/ Hindi medium schools managed by the missionaries, such as, Nirmala Inter-College, Mithaura, Masih Sevashram School, Nichlaur, and Little Flower School, Maharajganj. Therefore, sadly there is a gender difference that impacts the life and future of the girls. The sisters also offer special support to the girls studying in the government schools by taking special classes for them.

One of the striking features of the people at this village is their strong sense of socialization. They value and respect each other. They visit each other often and gather together as a family and experience a spirit of togetherness on all

occasions, both happy and sad. This creates a strong sense of family as well as belonging.

We are joyously engaged in the missionary activity as well as the education ministry. The support and encouragement offered by the CST Fathers is remarkable. They radiate divine presence. We feel happy to collaborate with them, especially with Fr Tomcy Thomas, the Principal, and Fr Jose Manjiyil, the Manager of Nirmala Inter-College.

Education is life-changing experience that makes our children self-reliant and self-sufficient. This is reflected in the following quote: 'Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a life-time' – Maimonides.

We believe that the Spirit of God is guiding us. We shall strive our best to empower our people with our missionary activity, spirituality as well as our ministry.

May God continue to bless all of us!



ST JOSEPH'S MISSION, KHORABAR

Rev. Fr Sony Kalladanthiyil

St Joseph's Mission Khorabar was blessed with multiple moments of joy and happiness. Among them, the most awaited and most important event was the episcopal ordination of Rt Rev. Dr Mathew Nellikunnel CST, the newly elected Bishop of the Catholic Eparchy of Gorakhpur. The mission center also witnessed some other events like celebration of Rosary conclusion, Mission Sunday celebration, Grand Finale of cultural competition and the Inter School Basketball Championship.



The members of St Joseph's mission were blessed to host the Episcopal Ordination Bishop Mathew Nellikunnel CST on 5th November. The Mission was blessed to have the presence of George Cardinal Alencherry, the Major Archbishop of Syro-Malabar Church, and Archbishop Leopoldo Girreli, the Apostolic Nuncio to India and Nepal, along with 3 Archbishops and 29 bishops from different parts of the country. The ceremony began at 9 am followed by public function and lunch. The great event was successful by the hard work of different committees under the leadership of the priests of the eparchy.

The solemn conclusion of the Rosary devotion was held on 17th October. It was the culmination of rosary devotion in the families. The occasion was blessed by the benign presence of Most Rev. Bp Dominic Kokkat CST, the first Bishop of the Eparchy of Gorakhpur. He also prayed for the success of the episcopal ordination, which was to be held in our mission.

Mission Sunday was celebrated on 22nd October in a grand and solemn manner. The day began with a solemn Holy Eucharist followed by enjoying delicious snacks and meals prepared by the members of the mission. There was also auctioning of the various things brought by the members of the mission. It was indeed a great witness of love and sharing.

St Joseph's school Khorabar was indeed happy to host the English medium Inter School Basketball tournament for boys and girls in Primary category. Twelve teams participated in the championship of boys and ten teams in the girls' section. The formal inauguration was done on 20th October, 2023 as per the schedule and was concluded on 21st October. 40 matches were played during 2 days event. St Thomas school Khalilabad and St Joseph's school Khorabar were the champions in boys and girls category respectively.

The grand finale of inter house cultural and literary competition was organized in St Joseph's school Khorabar on 6th November. It was an occasion for the students to perform before their parents and also for the parents to enjoy the display of the talents of their ward. The program was presided by Bp Mathew Nellikunnel CST, the Bishop of the Catholic eparchy of Gorakhpur. Mr Ajay Pratap Singh IRTS, Additional Director General (Retired) Indian Railways Institute of Transport Management System, Lucknow was the chief guest of the day. As the guests of honour, we were fortunate to have Mr Harish Kumar H.T.S and Mr Sanjay Mani from Lucknow. We had Prof. Alok Kumar from the department of English DDU Gorakhpur, and Rev. Fr Francis Kilivallickal CST as the special guests for the cultural evening.

We thank the Lord for all the graces our mission has received and continue to seek the blessings of our patron St Joseph for the mission and for our Diocese.

SMI SISTERS AT DHARAMPUR, GORAKHPUR

Rev. Sr Chhaya SMI

Agra Regional Basic Ecclesial Communities Council

Meeting: Sr Chhaya, along with other five SCC commission members of our parish, attended the Agra Regional Council Meeting which was held at Varanasi on 22nd and 23rd August 2023. The Theme was: The Role of BEC to make Church Synodal; thus, Transforming Society. Most Rev. Bishop Ujjain, Most Rev. Bishop Mascarenhas Ignatius, and Most Rev. Bishop Gerald John Mathias, the President and Chairman of Agra Region for SCC Commission were the Resource persons.



Silver Jubilee Celebration: We celebrated the Silver Jubilee of our dear Sr Prabati Mandi on 30th September. The day began with an hour of Adoration and thanksgiving for the 25 Years of her Religious Life and selfless services she has rendered in our congregation and in the Mother Church. Rev. Fr Shyam and her cousin Sister joined us for the celebration. Most Rev. Bishop Thomas Thuruthimattam CST, Bishop of Gorakhpur, was the main celebrant for the Holy Eucharist along with 6 priests. Our Captainganj community helped us to offer the Mass fruitfully with their melodious singing. We felicitated Sisters, Brothers and Fathers in our parish hall followed by fellowship meals.



St Monica and Mothers' day celebration:

In preparation of the feast of St Monica, the mothers of our parish had the special prayer on Saturday, 26th August. A Half Day Recollection, Holy Hour, Spiritual talk and Confession were arranged for all mothers. Rev. Fr Sabu, the Director of Fatima Hospital, was invited for the input session. On 27th August, we solemnly celebrated the Mothers' day. After the Holy Mass, our youth greeted all the Mothers with a Rose flower and a heart touching song. Thereafter, refreshment was distributed to all. The Liturgy was prepared by Sr Chhaya with the committee members of the Mahila Sangh. The Holy Eucharist was celebrated by Rev. Fr Poly, the Parish Priest of St Anthony's Church.

MOTHER VERONICA: AN EMBODIMENT OF SANCTITY

Ms Smriti Smit Benjamin

A soul so pure, untouched by guile
Steadfast and as a rock, a spirit so agile
Empathy and compassion who wished to restore
Oh Mother Veronica; how much we adore
Uplifting the girl child; the dream she envisioned
With unyielding vigor her life she commissioned
We honor you for your faith unswerving
Enlightening our minds Mother
Veronica ever loving.



BELWANIA MISSION

Rev. Fr Baiju Mulavarickal

Parish Feast:

We celebrated our parish feast, the Feast of St Francis Assisi, on October 8, 2023, by decorating the church and premises as well. For intense spiritual preparation, parish priest Rev. Fr Baiju organized adoration and confession by Rev. Fr Santhosh. Holy Mass started with an entrance dance, an introduction, and solemn singing in the presence of eight priests. Very Rev. Fr Rajesh, the Vicar General of the Diocese, was the main celebrant. After the Holy Mass, we had a procession with lighted candles towards the grotto carrying the statue of St Francis of Assisi, and thereafter there was a fellowship meal. Thank you, Lord, for your infinite love.

**Being with our Mamma Mary:**

The month of October is especially dedicated to the Blessed Mother of Holy Rosary. The rosary is the strongest weapon with which we fight against the evil powers. Experiencing this power, the parishioners joined together in families and in parish for the whole month. We conducted 10 days of solemn Rosary from 21st October onwards. We had a Solemn Mass, Rosary procession and agape on 31st of October.

Mission Sunday:

Mission Sunday was celebrated, reflecting on the mission of the church, our own personal call to mission, and our duty to participate in global mission. The parishioners arranged different stalls and games. The auction was done. Apart from parishioners, school staff, students, and villagers participated. We could collect a sum of money. We all had the feeling of joy that we could participate in missionary activity.

NIRMALA ASHRAM, MITHAURARev. Fr Jose Manjiyil CST
Superior, Nirmal Ashram**Three in one : A Better Health Care Provider**

In order to provide a quality Health Care program, a project is envisaged under the aegis of Nirmal Ashram. Three various programs under 'one project' is the vision for the rural people. If organized well, this project will be an amazing gift to the nearby villages towards quality health management. There will be collaboration with Fatima Hospital Gorakhpur, as a Referral Health care provider. Three in one can be explained in the following way. 3 Components of Health Curative, Preventive and promotive will be included under one single project though all 3 units will have independent existence and administration.

Eye Screening Dept. This dept. will take care of 'Blindness control' among senior citizens, holding hands together with Fatima Eye Hospital Gorakhpur. Three days a week, there will be screening for cataract affected senior citizens, other eye related diseases also will be taken care of. All those who have IOL transplant will be taken by the bus (Conveyance) and surgical interventions will be done in Fatima eye hospital, Padri Bazar, Gorakhpur. As you know Fatima eye care provider is a well equipped with sophisticated modern Technology leading to Eye Transplant and Eye Bank. We will encourage eye donors to sign their promises. Eyes will be donated after their death. Our vision is to create a society or communities

with self dependent senior citizens who are otherwise considered dependant on the members of families, for each and everything. Ultimately senior citizens will enjoy freedom of movement with greater mobility in their old age. Surgical interventions will be totally free of charges except a little fees levied for food, transportation and medicine. Christoffel Blinden Mission (CBM) Germany supports Fatima Hospital financially and technically for the last 25 years.

CHC (Community Health Center) Mithaura Bazar

Nirmala CHC will be another Health care Provider towards Promotion of health for a new healthy generation. FSJ Sisters have come forward to manage CHC as they are doing well in Siddarth Nagar and Hallaur Mission Stations. There is a little difference between CHC and PHC. PHC is a single Physician clinic with facility for minor surgeries funded by government. CHC provides high quality health care services and medical aids for those who are in need and in very remote areas and are not able to pay for their medical purposes. A CHC provides 24 hours medical services without considering the fees. Removal of malnutrition among infants and children will be our priority in rural areas.

Mother and child care, safe motherhood, immunization awareness programs on communicable diseases will be the main focus. Persons with disabilities (PWD) will be given due consideration and encouragement under the guidance of PGSS, Gorakhpur and DISA Basti. This center will have a wider scope than a dispensary or maternal & child health care. All 4

factors of quality health care such as curative, preventive, promotive and rehabilitative will be the main concern in providing better health provides system. If we have facilities we will begin paramedical and training services like pathology pharmacy professional courses with diplomas and degrees which will encourage the youth of nearby villages. This will encourage the families for better health awareness leading to creation of healthier communities around Mithaura Block. We will try to collaborate with Nation building Drive reducing the number of IMR (Infant Mortality Rate).

Nirmala Pain & Palliative Care Centre (NPPEE)

Commercialization, an evil in the sanctuaries of Health care provider is rampant today. Corruption is at its zenith. Drugs, ventilation, unwanted surgeries and organ sale donation and illegal and improper levying of Hospital fees lead poor people bankrupt. Terminally ill patients are made victims of corruption. Ventilators and ICS are misused for profiteering. Administration and doctors together make cob web to trap the patients and bystanders. The relatives of patients hope for the best health of their loving parents, siblings and spend money taking loans from banks. Among the patients majority of them need only the alleviation of their pain. Doctors, even at this time, are greedy of money. They advise unnecessarily for admission in ICU, MICU, NICU, PICU etc. Private hospitals play a satanic role with patients who are suffering from cancer, old age diseases, heart and liver ailments. In this context pain and palliative care center can do miracles in



mitigating pain and reducing expenses. It will be greater solace for poor and middle class families. This centre can prepare acute patients for a peaceful death as there is no cure by any treatment.

Palliative care means a medicine or medical treatment that reduces pain without curing its cause. Short term and long term palliative measures are taken for the alleviation of pain of the terminally ill patients or bed-ridden infirm who don't have any cure but we give only care and concern. Care beyond cure is the principle behind palliative care provides. Such centres are functioning in the various districts of India by NGO's and civil societies. A need assessment study (NAS) is required in Maharajganj district. We should get the co-operation and guidance of civil authorities, chief medical officer should be consulted before we begin this service provider NPPCC.

New Superior of St Mary's Convent Mithaura Bazar and vice-principal of Niramala Inter College Rev. Sr Bharati FSJ took charge in the beginning of the academic year. We gave our salute to Rev. Sr Julie FSJ who rendered her service to Niramala mission station, Mithaura for more than half a dozen years. We wish you all the best Rev. Sr Bharati for your apostolate of education in this undeveloped rural area with a Hindi Medium UP Board Nirmala Inter College.

Annual Athletics Meet in November' 23

In the 3rd week of Nov. 23 Annual Athletics Meet was organized in the grounds of Little Flower Inter College,



Maharajganj and Carmel Inter College for the schools under catholic diocese of Gorakhpur recognized by UP Board of secondary education, Lucknow. There were 12 participating schools. Students from various schools took part with much enthusiasm. For them, it was a grand festival. Students performed so well that they made us think that a few stars will rise up as state and national level after a few years. Nirmala inter college boys and girls bagged a lot of trophies and medals. I express my sincere appreciation for the skill development of children and the efficiency of organizing teachers. This meet proved and supported the idea that physical education is a part of the main curriculum of school education and not a co-curricular or extracurricular subject.

Golden Wheat Fields: Eye catching and splendid golden field scenes were so nice for 2 weeks around Nirmal Ashram. We cultivated wheat in 12 acres of land out of 21 acres we possess and the harvest is plentiful. We sincerely praise the hard work of Rev. Fr Tomcy CST and the hard labour of peasants and other workers. They produced grains in good quality for our food at a low price. We can see an agrarian culture, only in 3 or 4 mission stations in our diocesan area consisting of 7 civil districts. We are proud of our wheat fields as we see and read in the whole Bible both OT&NT. All readers of Purvanchal Prabha are cordially invited to Nirmal Ashram, Mithaura Bazar to experience and enjoy the bliss and joy of FARMING!!! Greenery, growth of paddy and wheat and golden yellow carpets and blankets.

LITTLE FLOWER SCHOOL, MAHARAJGANJ

Rev. Fr Suresh K. V. (Gregory)

The school commenced its New Academic Session of 2023-24 on 27th March 2023 for all the classes. The merit certificates and medals for the academic excellence in the academic year 2022-23 were issued on 28th and 29th of March. There were training sessions by Extra Mark solution and Entab for the teachers on different days to make them updated to be more effective. The Inter – House English and Hindi story writing Competition was conducted on Friday, April 21.



On 29th April, we celebrated the birthday of Our Principal, Rev. Fr Suresh K.V., in a simple manner in the auditorium, organized by the teachers. The Inter House English and Hindi essay competition was conducted on Saturday, 8th May. The Inter-House drawing competition was conducted on 12th May for students of classes 1st to 4th. The Inter -House spell-bee and word-finding competition was held on 13th May for classes 5th to 12th. The school closed for summer vacation on 18th May.

A summer camp was conducted in the school Campus for basketball and football. The camp took place in the evenings from 5 to 7 pm. It started on 19th June and ended on 1st July. We celebrated Environment Day on 7th July at our school. During the assembly special prayers and speeches were

arranged to bring awareness among students about protecting the earth. The Principal, Rev. Fr Suresh K.V led an oath that the students repeated. The 11th class students visited the 'Crocodile Park' in Nichlaur to experience its natural beauty. This event became cherished memory for them as they explored the forest, carrying saplings and banners. The saplings were planted in the school premises.

Inter-House Extempore Competition was organized on 8th July for students from classes IX-XII. Little Flower School, Maharajganj held the Investiture Ceremony on 17th July. This Occasion marked the newly elected council members stepping into leadership roles and taking the oath to fulfill their responsibilities perfectly for the school. The ceremony took place during assembly, where they pledged their allegiance and commitment in front of the entire school. The principal congratulated all the council members in a special manner. The ceremony concluded with the National Anthem. It was truly an inspiring event.

The first term exams started on Monday, 24th July, and continued until August 7th. The time table was provided well in advance. The exams were conducted systematically, and all the teachers wholeheartedly supported and dedicated themselves to ensure the smooth running of the exams. The second term classes commenced from August 8th.

The school has taken on a new venture by introducing play-way classes for children in Maharajganj area. Our Principal, Rev. Fr Suresh K.V took the initiative to establish this Nursery



(Play way). The inauguration was conducted by the Manager, Rev Fr Francis M on 1st August. At present there are 16 students enrolled in the play-way school.

We celebrated the 77th Independence Day of our country on August 15th at 8.30 am. We held an Inter-House Patriotic Dance Competition in the auditorium. Thereafter, we conducted the assembly. A Notice Board competition also was held on that day. The program concluded with a short message given by the Principal, followed by the distribution of sweets to all the students.

Our Parent-Teachers Meeting took place on 26th August. Parents visited the school to assess their children's holistic performance and discuss the results. Most of them were pleased with their children's results. The PTM started at 7.30 am and concluded at 11 am.

Competitions for different classes were conducted on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan Day. They are - Classes I to IV - Rakhi Drawing Competition & Classes V to X - Rakhi Making Competition

Teachers' Day at Little Flower School, Maharajganj was celebrated very solemnly on 5th September. Following the assembly, students wished their teachers in their respective classes. Afterwards, the 12th class students were allowed to conduct one-hour classes in each class. At 10.30, there was a gathering of teachers in the auditorium, where they organized a small but beautiful program. After this program,



everyone enjoyed some wonderful games and prizes and Teachers' day gifts were distributed by the Principal. The celebration was concluded at 4.30 pm with a grand meal. On the same day Notice Board Competition was also conducted.

Remedial classes for weak students started for all classes in our school on 13th September. English Debate competition was held on 14th September for the students from classes 9th to 12th classes. Hindi Debate Competition was held on 16th September for the students from 9th to 12th Classes. English and Hindi Speech Competition took place on Monday, the 18th September, at 10:30 am and 12.20 pm respectively. The Competition was conducted for students from 5th to 8th classes. Everybody attended the competition very actively and with great interest.

On the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, English and Hindi poem writing as well as essay writing took place on 3rd October. The theme given to them was to write about Mahatma Gandhi ji. The competition was arranged for the students from 1st to 12th classes, and the students from all the classes participated in this competition.

Poem recitation competitions in both English and Hindi were organized on 7th October for students from 1st to 8th classes at 11 am. The event took place in the auditorium and those who participated showed great interest and enthusiasm.

The Little Flower School students participated in the Inter School athletic competition and Basketball competitions



conducted in GIDA, Dharampur and Khorabar on 21st October. Some students from Seniors, Juniors and Primary sections were present there. They added to the beauty of the school by winning some prizes. Altogether 77 students participated, including 32 boys and 21 girls for the athletics and 24 boys for the basketball competition from our school.

A few athletic activities were conducted for the kids of KG, and Play way. Additionally, Kho- Kho was organized for Junior Girls. This year, we celebrated the Children's Day on 9th November. Due to the Diwali holydays, we preponed the celebration that day. The event was celebrated solemnly by conducting Fancy dress competition for the students of LKG, UKG, and Play way, along with notice Board competition. Following the program, we also held the Inter House Sports Meet on the same day. It was a wonderful experience, as we successfully completed all the competitions within one day.

The UP Board Inter School Competition for Hindi Medium Schools was conducted in our school on Friday, November 10th, 2023. Rt Rev. Bp Mathew, the new Bishop of the Diocese of Gorakhpur, was the chief guest for the prize distribution ceremony of the day.

UDAAN, the Day of the Differently Abled, was celebrated on 3rd December by the PGSS team in our school. Around 700 differently abled persons participated in different events like Football, Cricket, Kho Kho, Slow Tricycle race, Shot Put, Long Jump, Badminton, etc.



A GLIMPSE OF LITTLE FLOWER SCHOOL, EKLA

Rev. Fr Abraham Kolamkuzhyil

After having accomplished the mission duty of the Chancellor for the past four years, once again Fr Abraham Kolamkuzhyil treaded into the school where he can do his magnanimous service for the people of God.

On 24th June he took charge over the mission as Fr Joshy Vettical welcomed him cordially.

There was a staff meeting on 1st July.

After Summer vacation the school reopened for all the classes on 3rd July. Rev. Fr Jerom, the Secretary of the Catholic Diocese of Gorakhpur Education Society, blessed and initiated the modernized office of the Principal.

The investiture ceremony was held on 15th July. It is a platform to recognize and nurture leadership qualities among students. By honoring students with leadership positions, the school reinforces the importance of leadership and provides them with opportunities to develop essential leadership skills. All the newly elected office bearers took a pledge in front of the children that they would carry out their delegated responsibility sincerely and honestly and become role models to all the students.

The First Term Exam was conducted smoothly from 24 July to 7 August.

The Independence Day was celebrated in our school on 15th August with great enthusiasm and patriotic fervor. The tri-color was hoisted by the principal, Fr Abraham



Kolamkuzhyil. Addressing the students, he prompted them about their duty as the citizens of India. He emphasized the importance to work for the well-being of the people and try to inculcate the moral, social and religious values of the great leaders of our Country. Let our love for the country and the spirit of patriotism remain forever. A colorful Cultural carnival was performed on the stage by the students.

5th September was an occasion marked for Teachers Day to honor Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and also to commemorate the death anniversary of St Therese of Calcutta. They were reminisced us with lot of love and happiness as they were the torch deliverers of our country lifting so many thousands of people from the slavery of poverty and offensiveness of life. All our teachers in the school were given due respect and decency in order to reawaken the light that was put off by the inhuman activities of the people themselves. Students staged certain cultural events in order to appreciate the teachers. All the teachers were happy to receive teacher's day gift from the principal as a token of his love towards them.

30th September was the twin celebration of Gandhi Jayanthi and St Little Flower of Lisieux. There was a prayer meeting prearranged in honor of them with a few cultural programs. It was brought out well as the children were enthusiastic. The celebration culminated with distributing sweets to the students. Indeed it was a day of joy, a day to remember again and cherish.

Our school gives importance not only to the academics but also to the co-curricular activities. Hence, we organized



various literary, cultural and sports competitions as part of the school curriculum among the four groups. Children took part in the competition with a competitive spirit. This will promote unity, love and brotherhood. Above all this will help them to develop their various hidden talents.

The Olympiad Exam was conducted for the students of our school on 17th and 31st of October in academic subjects Maths and Science respectively.

The school has obtained its NOC from the Govt. in order to affiliate to the CISCE Board. It was a red-letter day in the history of St Little Flower School, Ekla for its great achievement. At last we received the NOC letter on 11 November after having waited for many months. Thank God for his benevolent love for us. It was a great day for us. God is gracious and ever to be glorified.

I thank God and all the people involved in this effort and contributed for the growth of the school. Though it is in the infancy period I am quite sure that this school will develop and grow in the years to come. God is the provider of everything and He knows what is needed for us. It is beyond our merits, abilities and capacities. Let us pray that this temple of learning become the abode of many to share their experiences and knowledge.

We started the Second Term Exam for all the classes on 22 November. It continued till 7th December. After the exam regular classes started along with the preparation of Christmas and Carol Singing competition.

ST FRANCIS XAVIER MISSION, SIDDHARTHANAGAR

Rev. Fr Dominic Panachikkalkarot

We celebrated the feast of St Francis Xavier, the Patron of our Mission on 2nd December 2023 with much pomp and gaiety. It was a feast which all were looking forward with much eagerness. Priests, Religious and Laity came from all over the diocese to take part in the feast. Very Rev. Fr Poly Payyappilly, the Proto- Syncellus was the main celebrant for the Eucharistic Celebration. Rev. Fr Gregory Kondakasseril was the homilist. The Eucharistic Celebration was followed by the devout Candle Procession which was a living witness to Christ. The faithful recited Holy Rosary and the choir sang Marian devotional songs during the Candle Procession. It was a heart-touching witness of our faith. The Procession was followed by a variety of heart warming and attractive cultural programs. Thereafter all relished the agape. As regards to Social Work, we run two projects in interior villages by our Social Work Unit. They are SBI Sanjeevani Mobile Medical Unit and SBI Saksham. These two projects are supported by SBI foundation. SBI Sanjeevani Mobile Medical Unit is to build healthy communities through free medical services and SBI Saksham is to provide livelihood programs for the ladies. These two projects run in 20 each villages.



CARMEL INTER COLLEGE, MAHARAJGANJ

Rev. Sr Dhanya LST



Carmel Inter College celebrated solemnly the Carmel Day on 16th July 2023. On this blissful occasion, Rev. Fr Gregory, the Manager of Carmel Inter College, presided over the function and the investiture ceremony.



As every year, 2nd October falls the establishment day of Maharajganj District. Maharajganj Mahotsav was celebrated on this great day, conducting various games & cultural programmes at P.G College, Maharajganj 2023. It was an extreme matter of joy for Carmel Inter College that the glittering stars of Carmel, Soumya Patel of class XII & Ritika

Dubey of class X obtained First & Third position in Poster making & single Dance Events.



Mr R.N. Kharwar, the District Co-Ordinator of Scout & Guide, had convened training programme at Carmel Inter College for classes VI,VII & VIII from 3rd to 5th October 2023.



The UP-State Board Schools in the catholic Diocese of Gorakhpur conducted the Athletics Meet 2023 at Little Flower & Carmel Inter College campus on 10th November 2023. Rev. Fr Jerom, the Secretary of CDGES and Most Rev. Bp Mathew Nellikunnel presided over the Inauguration and Concluding ceremonies respectively. In this competition, Carmel Inter College secured the Second Runner up in Primary and Junior category for Relay Race & Shot Put.

SOCIAL MINISTRY IN MAHARAJGANJ

Rev. Sr Merin LST

We are socially engaged in 42 villages of Maharajganj. We have 35 Self Help Groups (S. H. G), 27 Mahila Mandal groups, 42 D. P. O groups and 10 Kishori groups to deal with the upliftment of the people around.

We undertake 4 projects here at present.

1. **Sparsh Db.:** This is mainly for deaf and blind people aged between 1 to 30 years. Under this project we provide them centre as well as home based services. We teach them with sign language - braille with the help of special educators. Physiotherapy is made available at home with the help of physiotherapists. Medical support and nutrition support are also made assured and available.
2. **I.D.C.Y.D:** In this project we are working with the persons differently abled for their health, education, social empowerment and livelihood. We assist them to make their disability certificate, U. D. I. D card, pension, etc with the help of the government officers. In each village they have groups existing under the title of Nav Jeevan Sangarsh Mandal. Total strength of the members of these groups is 378.
3. **Surokhit Shaishav :** In this project we are working for the protection of children. The main intention of this project is to make children aware of child marriage, child labour, child abuse, child trafficking, etc. They are also instructed with the help line number to stop those social evils. To do this project we have adopted 12 schools. We undertake this project with the cooperation of government officials.

4. **F. P. O. (Farmers Producer Organization).** This project is focused on mainly for the income generation of the farmers and total 87 farmers are part of this project.

Celebrations and Programs: International women's day, International health day, Environment day, Independence day, Literacy day, Children's day, International disability day, Republic day, etc. are celebrated meaningfully in the villages with the collaboration of the people and making them aware of the significance of those days.

DHANGHATA MISSION

Rev. Fr Sijo Kondadumpadavil

On 27th of November 2023, St Thomas School and Mission were blessed by the presence of our newly appointed Bishop His excellency Rt Rev. Bishop Matthew Nellikunel CST for the first time in our premises. On the same day we had organized our second Kids Day celebration for our Parents at 10 am. Very Rev. Fr Pauly,



The Vicar General, Rev. Fr Jaimon, the co- Ordinator of English Medium Schools and Rev. Fathers, Brothers and Sisters were present to encourage the students and teachers. It was marked by a touching skit on Mother Theresa and many other dance performances by the tiny tots. The



meritorious students were also awarded during the ceremony. The programme came to a grand conclusion by 12.00 Noon.

LITTLE FLOWER SCHOOL, BANSI

Rev. Fr Praveen Pullinthanath

The purpose of the education is not to create a group of professionals but to create a good human being; hence we can say intelligence plus character that is the goal of true education. If we are aiming at the holistic development of a child we have to give due importance to curricular as well as co- curricular activities, because education is not something which restricts oneself in the four walls of class room. It is preparation for life or we can say it is life itself.



The mission and vision of Little Flower School Bansi is to prepare the child to face the challenges of his day to day life and to become a successful social being. We firmly believe that education is not simply stuffing the heads of our kids with facts rather than it is a strong weapon which we can use to enlighten the minds of our little ones with values and morals and mould them into a responsible citizen as well as a good human being.

As we know that for living a relaxed and comfortable life we need a sound mind and a sound body. A sound mind can be found only in a sound body, believing in the wisdom of this old proverb, we are also moving towards our aims and goals by giving equal importance to curricular as well as co-curricular activities. Little Flower School Bansi aims at holistic development of our children. We have a dedicated group of faculties who believe that teaching is not a mere profession, but it is a divine call of almighty to frame the future of our nation.

In the beginning of the academic year 2022-23 we had made the master plan for all the curricular as well as co-curricular activities, and this year another golden feather was added to the Little Flower School Bansi, that we are blessed to begin the classes for Senior Secondary students. We believe our senior secondary session is the product of our hard work and it is recognition for our sincere and tireless efforts in education.

11.03.2023 Inauguration of senior secondary Block

Rev. Fr Jerome, Educational Secretary of catholic diocese of Gorakhpur, inaugurated our Senior Secondary block with the presence of our beloved manager Fr. Sebastian Chettaniyil. On the same day we began our classes with 75 students.

20.04.2023 Akshar Ceremony for LKG students

01.05.2023 Mind training & Personality Development class

On this day we arranged a mind training and personality development class for students. The programme was led by one of the famous mind Trainers in India Prof. Mankul. It was a fruitful session in which all our children are inspired and motivated to walk confidently to their aims and goals. There were separate sessions for teachers and parents too.

14.05.2023 Staff Picnic

We had a staff picnic to Kashmir. It was a wondrous journey filled up with adventure and fun. It was a special occasion that fostered our love and unity. It is this same unity and togetherness marked the mile stone in the successful journey of Little Flower School Bansi.

10.06.23 Summer camp for students

Interested students were given special training in different extracurricular activities such as football, basket ball, volley ball, dance, music, and Taikwondo.

04.07.2023 Jubilee Celebration of our leaders.

LFS family was blessed to host the jubilee celebrations of our inspiring leaders in Gorakhpur Diocese, Fr Santhosh, Fr Sebastian, Fr Joshy and our beloved Sister Seline. Rev. Fr Joshy one of the pioneers of LFS Bansi blessed the grotto of Saint Little flower, the patroness of our mission, in our School campus.

15.07.2023 Investiture Ceremony

It was a day filled up with pride, hope and a positive change, a

momentous occasion for LFS Bansi. The newly elected head boy, head girl sports captain and vice-captain and other house in charges took the oath and take their responsible positions in the presence of respected MLA Mr Jai Pratap Singh.

15.8.23 Independence day celebration

We had the Independence day celebration in our school campus. The national flag was hoisted by Gramapradhan of Channargaddi village Mr Habibullah. Our talented kids come up with a feast of cultural programmes which fosters nationalism and patriotism in the minds of everyone.

30.08.2023 Rakhi Making Competition

As a part of Raksha Bhandhan festival we had Rakhi making competition in school campus.

02.10.23 Gandhi Jayanthi Celebration

As a part of Gandhi Jayanthi celebration we had an inter religious prayer in our school campus.

7.10.23 Patroness Day Celebration

We celebrated Patroness day solemnly on 07.10.23. Bishop Mar Thomas Thuruthimattam was the chief guest of the day. We celebrated the day with much enthusiasm and spirit, teachers, non teaching staffs, Respected Fathers and Sisters from different mission stations also attended the function and it ended up with agape.

03.10.2023-05.10.2023 Sports Day

Sports day is the day in which we give our students an opportunity to develop the spirit of a sportsman. We had it with great enthusiasm and zeal.

29.11.23 -3.11.2023 Study Tour

We had a wonderful trip with our students to Chandigarh and Amritsar for five days, under the leadership of our beloved principal Rev. Fr Praveen.



6.11.2023 Children's Day celebration And Prize distribution ceremony

As children's day falls on Diwali holidays, we couldn't make it up. Still we love our children and never miss an opportunity to give them ample experience of learning and happiness. LFS family celebrated children's day on 6.11.2023.

We had some special guests to share the joy of our celebration and inspire our children on that special occasion. Sr Vinaya DST (General Counsellor), Sr Navya (Provincial counsellor), and Sr Jyothis (our former Vice-principal) were also present to bless the occasion. We had tug of war, slow cycle race and wheel barrow race on that occasion. It was a memorable day for LFS family. On that particular occasion the prizes for the winners in the sports day were awarded with the certificates and medals.

20.11.2023 Football Match

Inter house football match was held to motivate and inspire children to develop sportsmanship.

23.11.2023 & 25.11.2023 Debate Competition

Inter house debate competition was held in school campus which motivated and inspired children to develop independent thinking and reasoning capacities.

27.11.2023 Trip for non-teaching staff

LFS family always respects and supports our non-teaching staff. We had a trip for non-teaching staff to appreciate them and to motivate them for all their valuable services. It was one day trip when ended with joy, happiness and gratitude.

Little Flower school had all its activities with a single motto that is character formation of our dear children. The purpose of education is not to fill the world with a group of professionals who strive for their perfection, but to create a good human being who can live in the world with love and respect towards the fellow beings and nature.



LITTLE FLOWER SCHOOL, GORAKHPUR

Rev. Fr Jose Kokkandathil

"EACH NEW DAY OFFERS THE CHANCE TO START AFRESH, TO ACHIEVE THOSE THINGS YOU MOST DESIRE."

- Steven Redhead



MARCH:

Session began for classes X and XII on 15th March. Orientation Programme for teachers of classes LKG – XII was organized on 17th, 18th and 20th March by the resource person Dr Asher in the Primary Building. On 25th March, Initiation Programme for LKG was organized in the senior wing where the Chief Guest was the Manager, Rev. Fr Poly. Classes LKG to XII began its new academic session on 27th March.



MAY:

A tour to Kashmir was arranged for teachers from 10th to 17th May 2023. It was highly relaxing and most delightful trip. Summer Vacation Camp was held from 17th to 31st May. On 10th May, Parents Teacher Meeting was held for the classes I-IX and XI i.e. in both primary block and senior block.

JULY:

On 1st July, welcoming of the new Vice-Principal, Rev. Fr Justin and the farewell of Rev. Fr Johnson was arranged. The feast day of Rev. Fr Poly and Rev. Fr Johnson and along with it the blessing of the new magnificent stage was done on this auspicious day in the Senior Block. On 3rd July, few

representatives of our school community had gone to Bishop's house to give our festal wishes to Most Rev. Bishop Thomas Thuruthimattam CST. Parent Teachers' Meeting for Classes X and XII was held on 15th July.

AUGUST:

Colours' Day was celebrated for classes LKG and UKG on 14th August, 2023. On 15th August along with the celebration of Independence Day we had Investiture Ceremony. This was held in both the wings simultaneously. Students of classes V, VII, IX and XI took the oath for the Office and House bearers for the session 2023-2024. On the occasion of Raksha Bandhan, competitions were organized for classes I – V to celebrate the festival and inculcate creativity in students. Teachers from the senior building were the judges for the same.



On 21st August, a condolence and prayer service was held for a



teacher Mr Vishal Srivastava who was taken to his eternal journey. PTM for Classes I – IX, XI was held on 26th August after the First Term Examination. Report Card of the same was handed over to the parents.

SEPTEMBER:

Teachers' Day celebration in the primary block was held on the 4th September, wherein the Card making competition was also organized on the 'Teachers' Day theme'. Teachers' Day celebration in the senior wing was celebrated on the 5th September by senior students wherein teachers with full attendance and for maintaining different record registers

efficiently and neatly were felicitated by Rev. Fr Poly, and Rev. Fr Jose. Lucknow trip of two days for class IX was organized on 22nd and 23rd September 2023. Little Flower Day and Gandhi Jayanti was celebrated on 30th September. On this occasion, Inter House Cultural and Literary Competitions were held in both the buildings. Judges for the same were Fr Joby, Sr Jainy, Teachers from St Joseph's College of Women, Fatima Hospital and LFS Chargawan.

OCTOBER:

Lucknow trip was organized for class X on 1st and 2nd of October 2023. Blood donation camp for the teachers was organized on 3rd October 2023. Inter House Sports Competitions (Basketball, Badminton and Athletics) was held on 6th October 2023 in the primary wing. Parents Teacher Meeting for classes X and XII was conducted on 14th October 2023 in the senior wing. Inter School Basketball, Badminton and Athletics Competitions were held on 20th and 21st October 2023. Two Days Lucknow trip for the students of class XII was arranged on 29th and 30th October 2023.

NOVEMBER:

Parents Teacher Meeting for classes LKG and UKG was held on 6th November. On 7th November, Inter - Class Literary Competition was held in the primary block. On 9th November primary block celebrated the Children's Day. On 10th November felicitation of the newly appointed Most Rev. Bishop Mathew Nellikunnel CST and the Ruby Jubilee was splendidly celebrated. This auspicious occasion was attended by the former Managers, Principals & Vice Principals of Little Flower School. The cultural programme was highly praised. Academic toppers of all the classes were felicitated. The star event was the inauguration of the stage by His Lordship Rev. Bishop Mathew Nellikunnel CST.



CELEBRATING THE BICENTENNIAL BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF VENERABLE MOTHER VERONICA

Dr Angela Denis

"Unless a grain of wheat falls the earth and dies, it remains alone but if it dies, it bears much fruit". (John 12:24)

It was a journey taken 200 years ago, a journey of hard work, perseverance, dedication that Apostolic Carmel came into being under the leadership of venerable Mother Veronica. The dream that she had seen for the upliftment of the girl child has now been fulfilled.

Mother Veronica continues to inspire and encourage us to live up to the vision and ideals she had placed before us. Celebrating 200 glorious years of her birth, Carmel Girls Inter College Gorakhpur had planned a series of activities keeping in mind the core values of Honesty, Deep faith in God, Respect for life and creation and so on. We started the month of October by conducting an inter Religious prayer service, where in Dharamgurus of all the religions came and spoke on the topic 'Love and Brotherhood'. The dignitaries of different religions quoted the words from Holy Bible, Quran, Gita etc and urged the students to follow the path of Love and Brotherhood.

The next event was the performance of 'Nukkad Natak' in nea by villages on the importance of education of Girl Child. As Mother Veronica really wanted to spread education for the Girl child in India, so our students took this task to spread awareness among the villages that equal opportunities should be given to boys & girls in various spheres of life. his was followed with some fun and games in the form of fete.

The activities culminated in a cultural program namely 'Carmel Ingenium '. The students portrayed their talents and skills in the form of dance drama, skit, and dance. All were based on the core values given by Mother Veronica. Inspired by our Founders Venerable Mother Veronica, we shall keep looking ahead with a clear vision for the future, for standards of excellence in our educational & social apostolate, for a holistic development of our students which shall enable them to face the challenges of tomorrow.



CARMEL INGENIUM

Ms Tania Myrtle John

"A humble obedience will always have its reward."

Each day holds a surprise, but only if we expect it. We can see, hear or feel it. Carmel school, Civil Lines, Gorakhpur, was established by our foundress Venerable Mother Veronica. To glorify the bi-centennial birth anniversary of Venerable Mother Veronica we organized Carmel Ingenium under which we conducted various online events for teaching staff, supporting staff and students. We had an opening ceremony on 19th November 2022 to announce the results of the events. Carmel School has been always a strong pillar for girls' education besides academic upliftment. It also provides community development and community college is a perfect epitome for it, under which fashion designing courses, beautician courses, tailoring, and many other life skills are taught to the needy girls. We always keep one goal and follow our vision and mission to fulfil it. We finally had a closing ceremony of Carmel Ingenium under which we reached out to the poorest of the poor and provided them essentials in the form of social service. We performed nukkad natak to promote awareness among the mass and conducted fete to collect the funds to help out the needy. We had alumuni meet to cherish the moments of the alma mater. In the completion of the special year, we conducted the closing ceremony on 8th November 2023 in which various cultural programmes and the life history of our beloved foundress mother Veronica were portrayed through a small dance drama skit. All the retired teaching, non-teaching and supporting staff were invited to witness the event. Mother veronica who is a true image of God is our guiding star and we her children are following to impart her goal to our students so that they can spread around the fragrance of Carmel. Dearest Mother Veronica, we the Carmelites remember you day and night and try to follow your footsteps.

Experience in Philippines

Rev. Fr Dr Sibichen Kakkaniyil

As I look back the steps that I walked through...

It was during those days while I was making the queries regarding the spiritual renewal programme for the Priests in India, one day in our Mission House at Kizhakambalam that His Excellency Most Rev. Bishop Thomas Thuruthimattam CST, came to discuss about my spending one year in Kerala. He suggested me to enquire through Google about the pastoral renewal program in EAPI at Manila in Philippines. I contacted them through email and got admission there for the program which was about to start on 6th of January 2019. I applied for Visa in its Delhi office and got my visa on January 25th and arranged the ticket for Manila soon and on 28th of January 2019 at 11 pm, that day I flew from Delhi and after four and half hours reached in Hongkong where I had to wait for three hours and got into another flight to Manila and reached there after three hours. From the airport I hired a taxi and it took one hour twenty minutes to reach EAPI which is on Ateneo de Manila University Campus. The guard took me to my allotted room where I slept for sometime as I was very tired and got up for the dinner in the evening. I got acquainted with all the other 62 participants including one more Malayalee, a capuchin priest, who came to attend this course on Pastoral Leadership and Management for Mission.

East Asian Pastoral Institute

East Asian Pastoral Institute, Ateneo de Manila University Campus Katipunan Road, Loyola Heights, Quezon City, Philippines, www.eapi.org.ph is a Jesuit-run residential pastoral institute for sabbatical renewal, updating, and leadership training, located in the Ateneo de Manila University Campus. Every semester, EAPI accommodates men and women from different parts of the world-



laity, religious and clergy, who live together and join the programs for personal renewal, spiritual pause and review of life, for growth and greater effectiveness in their ministries as pastors and leaders of communities. The 62 participants of my batch were from Bangladesh, Fiji, India, Philippines, China, Hongkong, Indonesia, Taiwan, Kenya, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, Samoa, Myanmar, South Korea, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. The professors were from the Philippines both laymen and religious personnel. Our time table was as follows: morning 6.30 Holy Mass followed by breakfast, class till 12 noon and lunch. Afternoon classes run from 2 to 4 pm. After the free time for games and outing we join for evening prayer and dinner. Food was bland, tasty though. January has a moderate weather. May is very hot around 38 degrees Celsius. July till October is rainy season. There is no winter climate. Classes were from Monday to Friday followed by the weekend programs which would culminate on Sunday evening. We used to go out for shopping either at the shopping Centre in Quezon City or Katipunan or at UP town where the UP University (Philippines Government University) is located.

Ateneo University campus is a vast area which has many churches, swimming pools, libraries, and stadium for different games for the students and professors. Lots of beautiful green caped churches are found outside the campus. Coconut trees are very common here and beaches of Philippines are very attractive for the tourists from various countries. During the rainy season there used to be flood in Manila. A big volcano erupted recently in the Philippines which has its crater 5 hours' drive from Manila and as an after-effect, the dust reached to many areas of Metro Manila. As the government officials had already evacuated the victims from its surrounding areas, there was no report of injuries or death.

An outing to the beach 'Puerto Galera'

Once along with the batch mates I went to an island called 'Puerto Galera', where we had boating and swimming with the help of life jackets. A special attraction was the scenery of the ocean floor



where variety of fishes of different colors, ocean floor plants and many other water bodies. We enjoyed varied fish dishes of the Philippines. This outing was part of our outreach programme.

The batch was divided into five groups and each group was responsible for arranging cultural programs and other sports activities. We held many sports as well as cultural competitions.

Jesus youth Group

The priests have ample opportunities to go out for celebrating masses and hearing confessions especially during the holy week. I was invited by a youth association where around hundred teenagers were gathered for mass and counseling. Although their local language was Tagalog, I celebrated the mass and gave sermon in English. Similar to Jesus Youth, this group assembled once a month in different places for mass, meditation, bible and faith sharing. I was fortunate to be with them four times to celebrate mass and share gospel reflections. They were very open and sincere in sharing their life experiences and their enthusiasm to live for the Lord inspired me a lot.

Indian Mass and Crucifixion Scenes

In EAPI, towards the end of every week, all of us would gather together to review the learning experiences. There were also opportunities for cultural masses. The participants from India, Srilanka and Bangladesh gathered together to arrange Indian rite masses with Aarathi and other symbols that represented Indian culture. Bhajans were sung in Hindi and Bangla languages. All the participants recounted that it was truly a heavenly experience for them. After the mass a cultural fiesta was arranged for all by the same group. During the holy week, active participation in the Way of the Cross conducted inside the Ateneo campus was noteworthy. The way of the cross was carried out with beautiful songs, carrying of the cross and sharing of good reflection on the passion and death of Jesus the master. I came to know from the group members who were from Philippines that there was a place called Pampanga in Manila where people, after the example of Jesus



acted out the crucifixion as a penance for their sins, although this practice was not canonically approved by the church in the Philippines.

On 29th of June the course at EAPI came to an end. As I was given permission by His Excellency Most Rev. Bishop Thomas Thuruthimattam CST to do PhD in theology in Manila, I appeared for an entrance examination in Santo Tomas Pontifical University of Manila. I passed the examination and enrolled in this Catholic university for the doctoral studies. I met His Excellency Most Rev. Broderick Pabillo, auxiliary Bishop of Manila and Episcopal Vicar for Guest Priests at Santo Nino Parish, Tondo in Manila. He arranged my stay in a monastery of Blessed Sacrament Fathers in Escolta, Santa Cruz. I shifted my stay from EAPI to this monastery on July 3rd 2019. There was a shrine run by the Blessed Sacrament fathers near the monastery. As soon as I reached there I met the superior, Fr Mickey and he introduced me to the community members. There were 8 priests, one deacon and four guest priests, among them one was from Bangladesh and two from India. I was assigned to offer mass and hear confessions every day in the shrine. What I mostly relished was the social evening held on every Thursday with all the community members of the monastery. All the priests would gather together for a small party with some snacks and cool drinks sharing, and singing songs which fostered the spirit of unity and fraternity among the priests there. The stay at Santo Cruz shrine and the pastoral ministries were so enriching that I was introduced to the culture of the people in the Philippines. The fathers in the monastery were all very good to me and my sincere thanks to all of them, especially to the superior Fr Mickey for the love and concern I enjoyed during my stay there. It took half an hour from my residence to reach Santo Tomas University. In the initial days, as a non thesis student for MA degree, I was asked by the university to submit a thesis within a year which had to be prepared under the supervision of an advisor from the university. Along with the thesis writing there were classes of academic writings, Spanish and the techniques of thesis

writings. As classes were going on, I had to struggle for the extension of Visa. That required me to convert my student visa to a missionary visa with the help of EAPI. I approached the immigration office in Manila and got my visa extended in a month's time. I also had to get my certificates red ribboned by the Indian Embassy.

Syro Malabar Mass Centre

In August, I celebrated Onam with the Malayalee Association here in the Philippines. There was a small church and the parish priest was Fr Jacob, belonging to the diocese of Ernakulam. On every Sunday around forty faithful gathered there for a Malayalam mass in Syro Malabar rite. All the Keralite priests and nuns who pursue their studies in Manila gathered for Onam celebrations there (a festival of Kerala celebrated by all the Malayalees). On the 8th of September, on the nativity of Blessed Virgin Mary, after the mass a procession with the statue of Blessed Virgin Mary began from the Church to the nearby towns with the accompaniment of singing and bands and people on both sides of the road were found keen on welcoming and encouraging the people who were leading the procession.

My appointment at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral of Cubao

As I had applied for a parish in the diocese of Cubao I was asked to meet the Episcopal Vicar for the clergy and guest priests Rev. Fr Ronaldo M. Macale. I had an interview with him and with Rev. Fr Dennis Soriano the Cathedral Parish Priest at Cubao. On 9th of November 2019, I was appointed as a guest priest in the Immaculate Conception Cathedral of Cubao. I shifted my stay to the Cathedral on 9th November which is almost 10 kilometers from the Santo Cruz Shrine. I was whole heartedly welcomed by the Rector, Rev. Fr Dennis Soriano and Fr Raimond the guest priest there. Since I was already introduced to the new culture and situation in Santo Cruz Church I did not have much anxiety. I was already trained to wear black shoes for the mass, to share a short

reflection during the daily mass, being conscious of the timing of the mass. The Immaculate Conception Cathedral of Cubao was situated on the 41 Lantana Street, Quezon city. And the Bishop's House of the Cubao diocese was just a few meters away from the Church. I was blessed to meet and concelebrate Holy Mass offered by His Excellency Most Rev. Honesto Ongtioco the Bishop of Cubao diocese almost every day. Fr Dennis Soriano, along with Fr Raimond and Deacon Edward, took me to nearby places and got me familiarized with the different places there.

It is said that there are about 80 thousand families registered in the parish. On Sundays there are 12 Masses in the church and 7 masses in the sub stations. Priests from the nearby religious Houses help to celebrate the masses on Sundays. Robinson, a shopping mall has a beautiful chapel under the supervision of the cathedral. Offering masses there was a different experience for me. People who stay in the apartments and mall attend the mass celebrated there. At Avida, Gilmore, Anunciata, sub stations of the cathedral also have mass for the people who stay in the nearby apartments. I have been blessed by the Lord to baptize so many children in the cathedral. Blessings of many vehicles, shops, and houses has been an enriching experience for me. Blessings of ashes of the cremated body was something new to me which I did with great devotion attuned with the faith of the locality. Cremation was allowed to those who wanted it. Burial of the bodies was also in practice.

In the basement of the cathedral there is a beautiful columbarium with a small adjacent chapel to celebrate mass keeping the body before the burial or cremation. On November 2nd the day of the memorial for the dead I made a visit to the nearby cemetery a number of built in houses for the people to come and stay occasionally to spend time praying and relishing the memories of the departed relatives. On 2nd of November people thronged in large numbers to the cemetery to pay homage to their dear departed.

The commute from Cathedral to UST had very interesting and



lovely experiences. It begins with a 5 minute ride from the Church to the nearby metro rail station. Then, a 20 minutes ride in Metro reaches me to a station named Legarda and from there it takes again 5 minutes by another tricycle to reach UST. I enjoyed this metro train journey as I could meet and learn from the people how they conversed and spent their time in the train. Most of the travelers used their mobile phones with an ear phone, during the journey.

In December I was able to submit 25 page thesis proposal, "A renewal of CBCI in communicating Christ in a multi religious context of India". In the beginning of January, it was approved by a three member panel appointed by the university. I worked on the thesis further and appeared for an online colloquium in April. The colleges were closed due to corona virus for onsite colloquium.

The thesis defense was done on 10th of August and got enrolled for PhD in the following semester. Online classes are held now for the following subjects, Christology, Asian theologies, Trinity and Reason and Faith on Thursdays and Saturdays. During the lockdown period, I enrolled for Spanish classes in the second shift and passed in the online exam. I also made use of the lockdown time to learn computer operations with the help of a brother, Deith.

Pastoral enrichment

Here in the Philippines the Christmas celebrations start as early as September. They start decorating the shopping complexes, the cities, the buses and trains with Christmas decorations and start playing carol songs. In December, they start Simbangabi (Special masses in preparation for Christmas) and every day they have masses in the sub stations in preparation for the nativity of our lord Jesus. In all the masses the church are full. Lectors take very active roles in reading the first and second readings during the mass. There are selected lay communion ministers whose work is to help the priests in distributing communion to the people. Choirs of youth, children and adults are so vibrant and devotional.



Catechism is taught in the schools as part of the curriculum and so Sunday catechism classes are not required for children. From the middle of March the dreadful news on the spreading of covid-19 made everyone panic. From April the public celebration of masses and listening to confessions were suspended by the bishop. Colleges and schools are still closed. Transportation is resumed with many restrictions. Death toll in the Philippines has reached around 3000 and the number of infected around 20000. During the lock down as the daily celebration of the public mass was suspended, we have started online masses and online adoration every day.

I am really happy here in the Cathedral as Fr Dennis is very friendly and cooperative by taking care of all the priests residing here, including Fr. Raimond the guest priest and our newly ordained assistant parish priest Fr Jepoy. I am reminded of three important events in the Cathedral that took place a few days ago. In the Chrism Mass, due to the lockdown so many priests could not be physically present. Processions were held twice with the statue of Blessed Virgin Mary and With the Blessed Sacrament on the parish territory during the pandemic. It was really an amazing experience to see how great was their faith. During the procession, on either side of the road, people showed great respect and veneration to the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Some were kneeling down while others were extending their hands for the blessings. Holy water was poured on the people who lined up on the road sides all through the procession. The ordination ceremony of Fr Jepoy and Fr Edward was really memorable as their willingness to have it during the lockdown period without any gatherings of the faithful, not even their own parents due to the restrictions on account of Covid-19.

After spending a considerable time inside the presbytery, the four priests here had an outing to Manila city recently, by the Innova car of Fr Dennis. He took us to an Indian shop in the city called UN avenue and purchased some Indian sweets. It was really a relaxing experience... (To be continued...)