

CBCB Newsletter

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Editorial

The Editorial Board in the third issue of CBCB Newsletter wishes all our valued readers and benefactors a Christ-filled and Prosperous Year 2009. Christmas is a unique birthday celebration and it is not in a particular place but throughout the entire world. Ordinarily we present gifts to the one who celebrates his birthday but Christ on His birthday gives us the gift of Himself. It is a mystery of love in which we recall and recreate the event of God's own Son taking flesh and coming to live among us as Emmanuel. Therefore the Christmas happiness need not come from expensive gifts, lavish parties or colorful decorations but from small gestures such as a kind thought, a small smile, a warm touch, and a joyful greeting. Are we ready to discover joy in ordinary things or situations? You know people failed to accept Jesus because they were pre occupied with their own concerns. It was the poor shepherds who got the message. When Jesus knocks at the door it is our duty to open our hearts to Jesus. Thus Jesus makes a difference not only in our personal lives but in our family lives. In order to open our families to Jesus, we need to realize that every member of our family is a God-given gift to us. Jesus also enters into the world. Our world today is characterized by a sense of godlessness and God forsakenness as if God does not matter to them any more. Let this Christmas be an occasion to welcome Infant Jesus as savior and master. He wants to be born into our hearts. Let us become all instruments of sharing of peace, joy, happiness and love. As we greet someone as 'Merry Christmas', let us allow that person all blessings of Christ to create a new world of peace and joy.

SMRA Congregation marks 75 Years

The Associates of Mary, Queen of the Apostles (SMRA) known as 'The Toomilia' Sisters celebrated 75th anniversary marking the foundation on September 26, 2008 at Toomilia. The SMRA is the largest and the first Bangladeshi women's Congregation belonging to Dhaka Archdiocese. There are 218 Sisters of whom 186 are Finally Professed and 32 are temporarily professed living in 26 communities. 33 members of this Congregation passed away in the course of time. The architect and pioneer, Bishop Timothy John Crowley CSC and Sister Rose Bernard CSC founded the Congregation in Toomilia on March 05, 1933. Mary, Queen of the Apostles is the Patron saint of the Congregation.

Except four or five all the SMRA Sisters were present on this auspicious occasion of Jubilee Celebration. Archbishop Paulinus Costa, DD presided over the Eucharistic celebration assisted at the altar by Archbishop Joseph Marino, Papal Nuncio to Bangladesh and Bishop Theotinius Gomes CSC, Auxiliary Bishop of Dhaka. Among other Bishops present were: Bishop Patrick D'Rozario CSC, Bishop Bejoy D'Cruze OMI, Bishop Moses Costa CSC, Bishop Michael D'Rozario CSC, Bishop Linus Gomes SJ. A good number of priests, heads or representatives of different Congregations working in Bangladesh and parish representatives took part in the jubilee celebration.

Archbishop Paulinus Costa in his homily thanked the SMRA Sisters for their dedicated services not only in Dhaka Archdiocese but for their presence and dedicated apostolate in all six dioceses of Bangladesh. The Archbishop urged the Sisters to commit themselves more in the field of evangelization.

The SMRA Sisters are well known in the country for their apostolate among the children, youth and women through education, health care, social and pastoral services. 104 Sisters are working in the primary and high schools, 51 Sisters of them 3 are medical doctors are working in 11 dispensaries / maternities / hospitals. The Sisters are also working in an orphanage, other social institutes and for the down trodden tea estate people.

After the Holy Eucharist Archbishop Paulinus Costa, Sr. Mary Anita SMRA, Superior General and Sr. Mary Dipti SMRA, immediate past Superior General jointly unveiled the cover of the Souvenir which contains messages, life and mission of the SMRA Congregation. A colorful cultural function was also arranged marking this important event.

Inter-Church Training Program

Episcopal Commission for Inter-religious Dialogue and Christian Unity organized a training program on inter-Church at Pastoral Training Centre, Barisal on September 24 – 27, 2008. Sixty participated from all six dioceses of Bangladesh. Bishop Bejoy D’Cruze OMI, Chairman of the said commission and Bishop Theotonius Gomes CSC, Auxiliary Bishop of Dhaka were among the participants. Talks were given by Bishop Bejoy D’Cruze on the Concept of Inter-Church Relationship. He quoted from the Holy Bible where Jesus said, ‘As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be one in us.’ The oneness between the Father and Son also invite us to be one. Bishop Theotonius Gomes spoke on the Theology after the Vatican Council. People discovered a new perspective of looking at other denominations after the Vatican Council. ‘Salvation is not a monopoly of the Catholics only, people belonging to other Churches may also have salvation.’ Fr. Jacob Swapon Gomes presented a brief history of Christian Unity in the Church. Other spoke in the training program were Mr. Robi Christopher D’Costa, Fr. Leonard Rebeiro, Fr. Gilbert Lague CSC, Bro. Guillian Taize and Fr. James Cruze CSC, Secretary of the commission.

Prayers requested for emeritus Bishops

Bishop Francis A. Gomes, Bishop emeritus of Mymensingh diocese is seriously sick. The right side of his body is paralyzed. He got treatment in Square Hospital in Dhaka. Now he is in Mymensingh Bishop’s House. Prayers are requested for his recovery.

Bishop Michael D’Rozario, Bishop emeritus of Khulna diocese was hospitalized for general debility and confusion of mind. He was in intensive care unit of the hospital.

Bishop Ponen to Japan

Bishop Ponen Paul Kubi CSC, bishop of Mymensingh diocese left for Japan on September 25 to visit friends and donors. He returned to Dhaka on October 6, 2008.

Bishop Bejoy to the Synod of the Bishops

Bishop Bejoy D’Cruze OMI, bishop of Khulna diocese left for Rome, Italy to attend the month long (October 5 – 26, 2008) Synod of the Bishops as official delegate of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB). The theme of the synod was the Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church. There were 253 Synodal Fathers, of whom 32 were nominated by the Holy Father and 10 elected by the Union of Superior Generals. Pope Benedict XVI celebrated the opening Eucharistic celebration on October 5. Bishop Bejoy returned to Dhaka on October 5 after a short visit to Germany.

National Workshop of Laity Commission

The Episcopal Commission for Laity organized a National Workshop for Organizations / Movements / Samity run by the lay people in Bangladesh at CBCB Centre on October 23 – 25, 2008. 70 participants from all six dioceses representing 42 organizations (both from national and diocesan levels) took part in the workshop. The theme of the workshop was “Lay Organizations: Nature and Expectations”. The workshop began with the reporting of the status and activities of the lay organizations in Bangladesh. Ms. Anna Minj and Mr. Theophil Hanjong presented an evaluation of organizations in the light of their knowledge and experiences. Bishop Theotonijs Gomes, CSC spoke on the participation of lay people in the Church highlighting the sacrament of matrimony. Bishop Patrick D’Rozario CSC, Chairman of the Commission spoke on the Church’s View on lay organization. He presented a few directives to make the lay organizations more service oriented. After each of the presentation there was time for question-answer. The participants had group discussion in diocese wise to prepare an action plan for future.

PMS Animators Program in Rajshahi

Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) organized a National Program at the Diocesan Pastoral Centre, Rajshahi on October 23 – 25, 2008. Archbishop Paulinus Costa, DD was the chief guest and Bishop Gervas Rozario, DD was the special guest. 185 children animators from six dioceses attended the national assembly. The national director, diocesan directors and staff of the national office were present at the assembly. The program included talks, sharing of diocesan directors, group discussion, reporting and planning for next year. The theme of the assembly was Evangelization in Bangladesh in the Perspective of St. Paul and Holy Childhood. It is remarkable that 1831 children animators are working hard to promote the work of evangelization among the children of Bangladesh.

International Workshop on Drug Treatment Organizations

Caritas Bangladesh and BARACA (Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Centre for Addicts) jointly organized a three day International Workshop on “Drug Treatment: Sustainability, Quality and Diversity” at CBCB Centre, Dhaka. This workshop was arranged in cooperation with the Caritas Germany International Development and the funding aid of the German government. His Excellency, Frank Meyke, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany was the chief guest and Md. Yusuf Ali, Additional Director General of the department of Narcotics Control was the special guest at the opening ceremony while Archbishop Joseph Marino, Papal Nuncio to Bangladesh and Abdul Quiyum, Joint Editor of the Daily Prothom Alo was the special guest. Both the ceremonies were presided over by Most Rev. Paulinus Costa DD, Archbishop of Dhaka. Among others who spoke on the occasions were: Dr. Ephrem Melanitz, a specialist in German drug

addict rehabilitation, Angela Gartner of Caritas Germany, Dr. Benedict Alo D’Rozario, Executive Director of Caritas Bangladesh, Bro. Robi Theodore Purification CSC, Director of BARACA and Fr. Kamal A. Corraya, Chairman of BARACA Managing Committee. The German ambassador in his enlightening talk expressed that “Drug is one of the causes in the present world to spread HIV / AIDS and to accumulate wealth illegally”. He hoped that the participants attending this workshop will properly be equipped with better treatment of the drug addicts. Archbishop Joseph Marino emphasized on the practice of values in the family which is always a priority of the Church. He invited the participants to form children with the sense of morality, spirituality of the parents and greater awareness of the neighbor on values. The participants were from Cambodia, Indonesia, Germany, India, Pakistan and eleven specialists on drug treatment and rehabilitation from Bangladesh. 27 centers and institutes for treatment of the addicts from Bangladesh also participated in the workshop. The workshop ended with a slogan “Let us work hand in hand to establish a drug free society.”

CBCB Meeting

The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB) had the third meeting of the Conference at CBCB Centre from November 11 – 13, 2008. Archbishop Paulinus Costa and all other Bishops were present in the meeting. The Bishops had a meeting with the major superiors on November 12 to discuss the ways and means to strengthen co operation and collaboration among the Priests, Brothers and the Sisters. The Bishops had another meeting with the canon lawyers to accelerate the work of marriage tribunal. It was recommended to form diocesan tribunal to speed up the marriage cases. Initial work will be taken care of by the diocesan tribunal and the judgment by the regional tribunal. Most Rev. Joseph Marino, Papal Nuncio to Bangladesh also met the Bishops during the CBCB meeting. The Nuncio shared some important issues with the Bishops. Msgr. Kurian Mathew, secretary to the Nunciature was also present with the Nuncio. As usual, the Nuncio invited the Bishops for dinner at the Nunciature on November 11. Bishop Michael D’Rozario CSC and Bishop Linus Gomes SJ emeritus bishops of Khulna and Baruipur respectively also joined the Bishops at dinner at the Nunciature.

Centenary Celebration

The Episcopal Commission for Inter-religious Dialogue and Christian Unity organized a two day centenary celebration of the week of prayer for Christian unity on November 14 – 15, 2008 at CBCB Centre, Mohammadpur, Dhaka. Representatives from all six dioceses attended this centenary celebration. Equal number of Catholics and non Catholics from each diocese were present as official delegates. The centenary celebration began with a prayer service for the handicapped at Holy Rosary Church, Tejgaon on November 14 at 4:00 P.M. It was attended by the Bishops, delegates from different dioceses and parishioners of Tejgaon Church.

On November 15, 2008 there were sharing by Bishop Theotonius Gomes CSC, Auxiliary Bishop of Dhaka and Ashish Baul followed by group discussion, reporting and open discussion. All agreed that mutual understanding and respect for religions may enrich our relationship with the brothers and sisters of other denominations. The centenary celebration concluded with lunch.

Educational Seminar for Nurses

The Catholic Nurses Guild organized a day long educational seminar for nurses of Dhaka division on November 21, 2008 at CBCB Centre. 160 nurses attended this seminar. It is for the first time that the organizers invited the non Christian nurses to attend the seminar of the Catholic Nurses Guild. It is a matter of great joy that two third of the participants were non Christians in the seminar. The theme of the seminar was “Recent Developments in Health Care and Importance of Lactation Management.” The Resource persons were: Md. Mohammad Ullah, professional practice leader of ICDDRDB and Ms. Fulkumari Rozario, lactation consultant. They spoke on the extended role of nurses in Bangladesh, Ethical and professional code of conduct for nurses and importance of lactation management. The seminar ended with a colourful cultural function performed by the nurses. Ms. Teresa Rebeiro and Ms. Catherine Costa were among the organizers.

A Common Call: Muslims & Christians

The Centre for Inter-religious Dialogue and Inter-cultural Dialogue of Dhaka University and Episcopal Commission for Dialogue jointly organized a workshop for the Muslim and Christian students at CBCB Centre on November 28, 2008. Altogether 130 participated in the workshop. 70 students and a few professors came from the Dhaka University. The rest were the Christian students. The theme of the workshop was A Common Call: Muslim and Christian. The workshop included the talks given by Fr. Francesco Rapacioli PIME on the importance of the workshop and Dr. Nurul Islam on the importance of such workshop in the context of Bangladesh. Sharing of reflections on the letter of the 138 Muslim Scholars addressed to Christians leaders by two scholars: Dr. Azizun N. Islam and Fr. James Cruze CSC. The same reflections were shared by two participants. Final prayers were said by Mr. Mohammad Mahbubub Alam and Rev. Sourob Folia. Fr. Francesco Rapacioli PIME and Fr. James Cruze CSC were among the organizers.

Teachers Training College named after Archbishop T. A. Ganguly

Archbishop T.A. Ganguly Teacher Training College will go on functioning soon. The initial venue of the college will be St. Joseph’s Secondary School premise, Mohammadpur. Appointment of the Principal, Vice Principal and teachers are on the process. This will be the first teacher training college owned by the Catholic Church in Bangladesh.

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