

CBCB Newsletter

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Editorial

We are almost at the end of the Jubilee Year (June 2008 – June 2009) of the Apostle Paul, declared by Pope Benedict XVI on the auspicious occasion of the bi-millennium of his birth which historians have placed between 7 and 10 A.D. All of you must have witnessed the enthusiasm of the faithful on this special year where people are more regular to read the epistles of St. Paul, making pilgrimages to the churches in the dioceses. Many liturgical, cultural and ecumenical events are being held in Rome, particularly at the Papal Basilica of St. Paul. In the dioceses all over the world, bishops have designated pilgrimage churches and shrines where the faithful can gain the gift of indulgence. People from all walks of life are trying to visit at least one of the Churches designated to St. Paul. In order to make known the immense wealth of the writings of St. Paul, his life and missionary journeys special publications, posters highlighting his glorious life are being brought out in the dioceses, educational institutions and formation houses. Retreats, seminars are being arranged on St. Paul for different groups of people. This shows how the whole Church is being inspired by St. Paul and his teaching. One particular aspect that receives special attention of the Jubilee is the Ecumenical Dimension. Pope Benedict explains: “The Apostle to the Gentiles, who was especially committed to taking the Good News to all people, left no stone unturned for unity and harmony among all Christians.”

Paul preached at every stage of his missionary journey and sought the conversion of individuals aiming at in a larger goal which was to form communities of believers. Paul felt obliged not just to found but to nurture communities, not just to give birth to but to rear them, not just to plant but to cultivate them. When these communities were formed, nurtured and firmly established then only Paul could say that his mission was completed. He revisited the communities he had founded, wrote pastoral letters for them and also communicated with the people with letters even when he was jailed.

Easter Sunday is our greatest feast. With the Psalmist, we proclaim, “This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice in it and be glad” (Ps 11:24). But the apostle Paul challenges us to celebrate this feast “not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness” (1 Cor 5:8) but firmly believing that God has raised Jesus from the dead. We must be truly an Easter people. In moments when people are preoccupied, even stunned, by troubles and difficulties, unable to see the promise of life, we share with them the love with which Jesus showered us. He sacrificed for us as a paschal lamb, and God gave him new life! Let us all be the first batch of dough (1 Cor 5:7), and we face the early morning of the first day of the week (Jn 20:1) a hopeful people. We wish all our valued readers and benefactors a Happy Easter. May the Risen Lord inspire and guide us to journey with St. Paul, the Minister of the Word of God as we come to the end of the Pauline Year.

Catholic MP in Bangladesh & Reception

Advocate Promod Mankhin of Biroidakuni parish under Mymensingh diocese won in the parliamentary election as a candidate of the grand alliance led by Awami League from Mymensingh – 1 Constituency held on December 29, 2008. It is worthwhile to mention that Mr. Mankhin won the parliamentary election for the third time. He, a former headmaster of Biroidakuni High School and a former Regional Director of Caritas Bangladesh joined the political arena in view of serving the people especially to voice the minority in the national level. Most Rev. Paulinus Costa DD, Archbishop of Dhaka arranged a colorful reception in his honor and for Christmas Reunion at the Archbishop's House on January 16, 2009. Among those attended the reception were the Archbishop, Bishops, diplomats, high officials, priests, religious and lay people. Archbishop Paulinus Costa in his welcome speech highlighted the significance of Christmas and congratulated Advocate Promod Mankhin who represents the Catholics in the parliament. Mr. Promod Mankhin in his speech shared his joy of receiving a warm welcome by the Church authorities and encouraged the Christians to come forward in politics as a means of serving the people and the country. The distinguished guests cut the Christmas cake and the program ended with the fellowship meal.

Priestly Ordinations

The Catholic Church in Bangladesh was blessed by an abundant harvest in the vineyard of the Lord in 2008 and 2009. A total number of 26 deacons were ordained priests from October 2008 to February 2009. Of them 8 diocesan priests from the Archdiocese of Dhaka, one Holy Cross, 2 Oblates, 2 diocesan in Mymensingh diocese, 2 diocesan in Khulna diocesan, one diocesan in Dinajpur diocese, 6 diocesan, one Oblate and one Jesuit in Rajshahi diocese, one in Chittagong. One more deacon will be ordained in Dinajpur later. It covers priestly ordinations in all six dioceses. The highest number of priests were ordained this year in the history of Bangladesh. The main reason behind that the diaconate ordinations of two groups were held last year; one in February and the other one in August. In consultation with the Major Seminary authorities the Governing Body of the Holy Spirit Major Seminary decided to hold diaconate ordination at the end of the first semester of sixth year.

Jubilee Celebration in the Hill Districts

The 50th anniversary of evangelization in the Hill Districts of Chittagong diocese was celebrated with utmost solemnity and joy in the presence of all the Bishops (except Archbishop Paulinus Costa who performed the priestly ordination ceremony), priests, religious, dignitaries and the faithful on February 19 – 20, 2009. Late Fr. Leo Gomes was the first pioneer to bring the Good News in the Hill districts. And the Church of Fatima Rani was built in Banderban. In the course of time many more Churches were built. Right now there are six parishes in the Hill districts. Eleven priests, 40 nuns and 220 catechists are serving the parishes. Bishop Patrick D'Rozario, Bishop of Chittagong was the main celebrant of the Holy Eucharist. People from all the parishes of the Hill districts made a pilgrimage attending the jubilee celebration held at Banderban. The parishes in the Hill districts are: Fatima Rani Church (Banderban), Church of St. Joseph (Rangamati), Shanti Raj Church (Thanchi), Church of Our Lady of Presentation (Bolipara), Shanti Rani Church

(Alikadam). The Catholic Church at Khagrachori, a sub centre of Rangamati parish is going to be declared as a full fletched parish in May this year.

Bro. Flavian Laplante, Servant of God

The Catholic Church in Bangladesh has begun praying for the beatification of Brother Flavian Laplante CSC who has now been declared a “Servant of God”. The first phase of the canonization was launched on February 13, 2009 in Diang, Chittagong. As you are aware of the fact that the granting of the title “Servant of God” by the Vatican is the prelude to the stages of the canonization process by which a candidate may be declared venerable, then proclaimed blessed and finally canonized a saint. Bishop Patrick D’Rozario CSC celebrated the Holy Eucharist. Bro. Flavian, a Canadian missionary spent most of his time in Diang working with the Muslims, Hindus and Christians. He became a friend of the poor fishermen. Fr. Hugu Cleare CSC, Superior General of the Holy Cross Congregation was present on that auspicious occasion. It is worthwhile to mention that the first “Servant of God” in Bangladesh is Archbishop Theotonius Amol Ganguly CSC whose canonization was launched on September 2, 2006, the day also marking the 29th death anniversary of the prelate, the first Bengali Archbishop of Dhaka.

75th Anniversary of Arrival in Bengal

The Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration, popularly known as Monastery Sisters celebrated the 75th anniversary of their arrival in Bengal on November 7, 2008 at St. Michael’s Monastery in Mymensingh. The Holy Eucharistic Celebration was presided over by Bishop Ponon Paul Kubi CSC, Bishop of Mymensingh assisted at the altar by Bishop Theotonius Gomes CSC and Bishop Michael D’Rozario CSC. A good number of priests and Sisters were present on that memorable occasion. Two Monastery Sisters made their first profession and a Sister made her perpetual profession on that same occasion. The Poor Clares Sisters of Perpetual Adoration arrived first in Dhaka in 1933. Then they moved to Mymensingh in 1967. Mymensingh became an independent diocese in 1987. Bishop Francis A. Gomes was the first Bishop of the diocese and Bishop Ponon Kubi CSC succeeded him at his retirement in 2006. The Monastery Sisters moved to Dinajpur diocese in 2008 at the invitation of Bishop Moses Costa CSC. With the inaugural of the second one Bangladesh is privileged with two monasteries of the Poor Clares in two different dioceses.

Bishop Gervas for a Seminar on Social Communication

Bishop Gervas Rozario, Bishop of Rajshahi and Chairman of Episcopal Commission for Social Communication attended a seminar in Rome on March 9 – 13, 2009 for Bishops with Responsibility for Social Communications at Episcopal Conferences. The theme of the seminar was ‘New Perspective on Church Communications’ Changes in the technologies and culture of communications: A theological and Pastoral Reflection. This special seminar was organized by the Pontifical Council for Social Communications. The subject matter discussed in the seminar were: New Media and Forms of Communications – A technological perspective, Fimoteca Vaticano – 50th Anniversary, New Media: Experience and Social Dynamics – an anthropological perspective, The New Culture of Communications: Pedagogical perspectives on Contemporary Media, New Media:

Implications for families and children, Church Communications: Opportunities and Challenges around the World, Theology and Communications, Institutional Communications and the Church, Aetatis Novae in the Context of the Post-Conciliar Documents, After Aetatis Novae: The New Challenges for Communication Systems, Resources for Communications, Vatican Communications, The Teaching of Benedict XVI: Insights for a Theology of Communications, Imagining the Future for Church Communications etc. Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Secretary of State addressed the Bishops responsible for Social Communication in their respective Bishops' Conference. "the media are now a mature reality", Cardinal Bertone said, "at times excessively invasive or capturing but nevertheless inseparable from daily life" and are increasingly presented as "an environment in which contemporary man lives and interacts with others and with reality." For this reason the Church is anxious to keep in step with the revolution in computer science that characterizes the world of communications today. (Thanks to Bishop Gervas Rozario for the above news)

Chaplain of Caritas

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB) appointed Fr. Gabriel Corraya as Chaplain of Caritas Central Office. The job descriptions of the Chaplain identified are as (a) a guide for moral and spiritual formation of staff (b) availability to listen to the staff (c) to bring to the attention of any person's irregularities / misbehavior (d) a liaison person between Caritas and the bishop of the diocese (e) advisor to Caritas matters. Meanwhile, diocesan chaplains will be also appointed for the regional offices of Caritas.

Appointments of Inter diocesan Institutions 2009

The CBCB appointed Fr. Alfred Gomes as Spiritual Director at St. Joseph's Seminary, Ramna, Fr. Bablu C. Corraya as assistant to Director of Christian Communication Centre, Luxmibazar, Fr. Albin Gomes as Director of Christian Communities Program (CCP). As stated above, Fr. Gabriel Corraya was appointed as Chaplain of Caritas Central Office.

Bishop Gervas to India

Bishop Gervas Rozario, bishop of Rajshahi diocese and Chairman of Episcopal Commission for Social Communication, Fr. Kamal A. Corraya, Secretary of the said commission and Mr. Saifuddin Sobuj, Producer of Radio Veritas attended the meeting of Radio Veritas Bengali Service in Krishnagor, India on 8th of February 2009. The following day they also attended a listeners' gathering of Radio Veritas program at Murshidabad. They left for India on February 6 returning on February 10.

Statistics of Seminarians in Bangladesh

The day-long Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Episcopal Commission for Seminary was held on January 27, 2009 at the CBCB Centre. Along with the members of Seminary Commission almost all the Rectors of the seminaries of Bangladesh were present in the meeting. It is a matter of great joy and we express our profound gratitude to God for the

gift of vocation in the priestly and religious life. Statistics of the seminarians are given below:

Oblate Juniorate at Mohammadpur.....	48 seminarians studying in IA & BA
St. Joseph's Seminary, Ramna	115 seminarians studying in BA
Maria Mansion, Chittagong	13 seminarians studying in IA
Holy Rosary Minor Seminary, Padrishipur...	51 seminarians studying in High School
Pope Paul VI Seminary, Bonpara	45 seminarians studying in High School
St. Francis Xavier's Seminary, Khulna	45 seminarians in High School and IA
Ganguly Bhaban, Notre Dame College	32 seminarians studying in IA
Jisu Nam Griho Inter. Seminary, Suihari	42 seminarians studying in IA
St. Joseph's Minor Seminary, Dinajpur	27 seminarians studying in High School
St. Paul's Minor Seminary, Jalchatra	101 seminarians studying in High School
St. John Vianney Seminary, Testuribazar	24 seminarians studying in IA
Christo Darshan Gathan Griho, Mathis House	23 seminarians studying in IA
Pobitra Krush Sadhana Griho, Rampura	21 seminarians studying at the Holy Spirit Major Seminary (HSMS)
Oblate Scholasticate, Noyanagor	07 seminarians studying at HSMS
Holy Spirit Major Seminary, Banani	53 seminarians studying at HSMS.

CBCB Meeting

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB) had the first meeting of 2009 at CBCB Centre from March 4 – 6, 2009. Archbishop Paulinus Costa and all other Bishops were present in the meeting. The main discussions of the meeting were: Evaluation of Caritas Bangladesh by the external experts, Seminary matters, FABC Matters. The governing body meeting of the Holy Spirit Major Seminary was held on March 5, 2009. Fr. Gabriel Corraya, Rector and ex officio consultant and Fr. Emmanuel Rozario, dean of studies attended the meeting. Fr. Sebastian Tudu of Dinajpur diocese will join the staff of the major seminary after Easter this year.

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.

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.

Bishop Theotonijs Gomes to Europe for meetings

Bishop Theotonijs Gomes CSC attended the meeting of Climate Change and Justice in Poznan, Poland on December 6 – 8, 2008 after which the Plenary meeting of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity in Rome on December 9 – 13, 2008. Bishop Theotonijs also

took part in the special meeting of the Board of Directors of CIDSE in Soesterberg, Holland on January 14 – 15, 2009.

Bishops Meeting with the Episcopal Bodies

Like other years in the past the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh had Annual Assembly with the Episcopal Bodies on March 6, 2009 at the CBCB Centre. Archbishop Paulinus Costa, all other Bishops, secretary / director of Episcopal Bodies and one representative of each Episcopal Body (altogether 32 members) were present in the assembly. There are 14 Episcopal Bodies of the Catholic Church working in various fields of the country. The names of the Chairman and Secretaries are given below. These Bodies are divided as related to Apostolates as follows:

(i) Episcopal Commissions Related to Apostolates:

(a) Episcopal Commission for Liturgy and Prayer

Chairman: Bishop Ponen P. Kubi CSC & Secretary: Fr. Patrick Gomes

(b) Episcopal Commission for Catechetics and Biblical Apostolate

Chairman: Bishop Bejoy D'Cruze OMI & Secretary: Fr. Pio Mattevi SX

(c) Episcopal Commission for Family Life

Chairman: Bishop Ponen P. Kubi CSC & Secretary: Fr. David S. Gomes

(d) Episcopal Commission for Christian Education

Chairman: Bishop Theotonijs Gomes CSC & Secretary: Fr. Benjamin Costa CSC

(e) Episcopal Commission for Health Care

Chairman: Bishop Theotonijs Gomes CSC & Secretary: Fr. Francesco PIME

(f) Episcopal Commission for Justice and Peace

Chairman: Bishop Patrick D'Rozario CSC & Secretary: Fr. Albert T. Rozario

(g) Episcopal Commission for Christian Unity and Inter-religious Dialogue

Chairman: Bishop Bejoy D'Cruze OMI & Secretary: Fr. James Cruze CSC

(h) Episcopal Commission for Social Communication

Chairman: Bishop Gervas Rozario & Secretary: Fr. Kamal A. Corraya

(ii) Episcopal Commissions Related to Persons:

(a) Episcopal Commission for Youth

Chairman: Bishop Moses Costa CSC & Secretary: Fr. Patrick S. Gomes

(b) Episcopal Commission for Laity

Chairman: Bishop Patrick D'Rozario CSC & Secretary: Mr. Atul F. Sarkar

(c) Episcopal Commission for Clergy and Religious

Chairman: Bishop Gervas Rozario & Secretary: Sr. Mary Dipti SMRA

(d) Episcopal Commission for Seminary

Chairman: Bishop Moses Costa CSC & Secretary: Fr. Gabriel Corraya

(iii) Episcopal Organizations

(a) Caritas Bangladesh

President: Bishop Theotonijs Gomes CSC & Exec. Director: Dr. Benedict Alo D'Rozario

(b) Mission and Promotion of Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS)

Chairman: Archbishop Paulinus Costa & Secretary: Fr. Tapan C. D'Rozario

The Assembly began at 8:30 A.M. with a short prayer and words of welcome by Most Rev. Paulinus Costa, President of the CBCB. Most Rev. Moses Costa CSC moderated the Assembly assisted by Fr. Subroto B. Gomes, Assistant Secretary General.

All the Commission secretary / director reported the preliminary information of the commission, activities of 2008, challenges and problems faced and solution envisioned, plan of action for 2009 etc. All these were presented on multi media which was prepared by the CBCB Secretariat. Later on open discussion was held on the activity report and plan of action. A few priorities were pointed out based on the discussion. These are Family Counselling Centre, Catholic Nursing College, Liturgical Rites, Formation of responsible Laity, Association of Catholic Schools, Teachers Training College, Restoration of Adibashi culture and heritage. We are glad to inform you that Archbishop T. A. Ganguly Teachers Training College will go on functioning soon. This will be the first Teachers Training College of the Catholic Church in Bangladesh.

Marriage Encounter

Thanksgiving Ceremony for Sr. Pauline Nadeau CSC

Sr. Pauline Nadeau CSC who initiated the ministry of Marriage Encounter in Bangladesh was given a farewell on March 20, 2009 at the CBCB Centre. She left for Canada for good the following day. Sr. Pauline Nadeau CSC started Pa-she-ke, a centre mainly for counseling of the couples. A good number of couples were trained to help other couples now. A few years ago she retired from family ministry and started to live in Diang mostly in prayer and contemplation before leaving for Canada. Almost all the couples who were somehow connected with Sr. Pauline were present to express their thanks and gratitude to her.

Marriage Encounter Weekend

The first weekend of Marriage Encounter of this year was held at CBCB Centre, Mohammadpur on March 5 – 7, 2009. Eight couples attended this weekend. Fr. Ignatius Gomes SJ and other board members of Marriage Encounter Bangladesh conducted the sessions.

Episcopal Commission for Youth

Fifth National Christian Cricket Tournament – 2009

With great joy the Episcopal Commission for Youth, which is responsible mainly for the formation of the Christian Youth of the country, organized the Fifth National Cricket Tournament – 2009, beginning from February 7 – 28 at Notre Dame College play ground. The theme of the tournament of this year was **“We bear witness to love and friendship.”** The inspiration for choosing this theme has emerged from the message of the Holy Father to the youth on the occasion of the World Youth Day 2008 held in Sydney.

The opening match between Hashnabad Jopomala Rani Songho and Toomilia Saint John’s was formally inaugurated by Rev. Msgr. Kurian Mathew Vayalunkal, the secretary of the Apostolic Nunciature in Bangladesh as the chief guest on February 7 at 9:00 A.M. The final match of the tournament was held on February 28 between Christian Youth Association of Tejgaon (CYAT) and Hashnabad Japomala Rani Songho. CYAT became champion beating Hashnabad. It scored 138 runs in 23.5 overs whereas Hashnabad scored 107 in 21.5 losing all the wickets.

Most Rev. Paulinus Costa DD and Fr. Benjamin Costa CSC were present as the chief guest

and special guest respectively in the opening ceremony of the final match. Fr. Bokul S. Rozario CSC was present as chief guest in the prize giving ceremony. 12 teams from different parts of the country participated in the fifth national Christian cricket tournament.

The proximate objectives of this game were to discover talented Christian cricket heroes from all over the country; to inspire them to introduce to the cricket-environment in the national level; through this tournament, the Commission intended to cultivate in the youths the Christian and religious values; each match either began or ended with a small prayer addressing the Holy Spirit.

The remote objective was to share the concern of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB) for the integral growth of the youths of the country with lay volunteers, both Christians and non-Christians and also with the Christian youths. (Reported by Fr. Patrick S. Gomes, Secretary of EC – for Youth)

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