

## Editorial

In the Catholic Church, a Bishop is an ordained minister who holds the fullness of the sacrament of Holy Orders and is responsible for teaching the Catholic faith and ruling the Church. The office of bishop traces its origin to the apostles, who were endowed with a special charism by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. This special charism has been transmitted through an unbroken succession of bishops by laying on of hands in the sacrament of Holy Orders. The role of a bishop is a pastor of a diocese and to serve as a diocesan bishop. Bishops are placed over particular Churches, which they rule with ordinary power under the authority of the Pope. Final appointment of a Bishop is subject to the approval of the Pope. Before taking possession of the office, a Bishop makes a profession of faith and takes an oath of fidelity to the Holy See.

A Bishop requires outstanding in solid faith, good morals, piety, zeal for soul, wisdom, prudence, human virtues endowed with other qualities which make him suitable to fulfill the office of episcopacy. Among the primary duties of the Bishop is to visitation of his diocese. Pastoral concern and vigilance dictate that the bishop visits each part of the diocese frequently.

The Church in Bangladesh will remember the year 2011 for the erection of a new diocese and transfer of bishops. Coadjutor Archbishop Patrick D’Rozario CSC took canonical possession in January and in October he took charge of the Archdiocese as Archbishop of Dhaka. Bishop Moses Costa CSC was moved from Dinajpur to Chittagong and his installation took place in May. Bishop Bejoy D’Cruze OMI was moved from Khulna to Sylhet as its first Bishop and installation took place in September. Fr. Sebastian Tudu was announced as Bishop of Dinajpur in October and his consecration is scheduled for January 2012. Heartiest Congratulation and we wish you all the best.

Christmas is a feast of joy. The reason behind this joy at Christmas as stated by Prophet Isaiah, “For there is a child born for us, a son is given to us”. And this child is our Savior, Messiah and Lord. Now He wants to be born in our hearts. Let this Christmas be an occasion to welcome Infant Jesus as Savior and Master. Let us all become instruments of sharing peace, joy, happiness and love. As we greet our friends, relatives and well wishers ‘Merry Christmas’, let us allow that person all blessings of Christ to create a new world of peace and joy.

We wish all our valued readers and benefactors Merry Christmas and a Christ-filled and Prosperous New Year 2012.

### **Sylhet Diocese: Bishop Bejoy moves to New Diocese**

On July 8, 2011, the Holy Father Benedict XVI erected the new diocese of Sylhet, Bangladesh, separating it from the Archdiocese of Dhaka and making it a suffragan of that Metropolitan See. The Pope named Oblate Bishop Bejoy D’Cruze OMI as the first bishop of the new diocese. Bishop Bejoy had been bishop of the diocese of Khulna since May 2005.

Bishop Bejoy was born in Dhaka on February 9, 1956. He made his first vow in 1983 at the Bandarawela Novitiate in Srilanka. He was ordained a priest in 1987, a year after his perpetual profession. After several years of pastoral ministry, he joined the formation team in Bangladesh in 1992 as Rector of Oblates Juniorate and became the Superior of Scholasticate 2000. The following year he was appointed Superior of the Oblate Delegation in Bangladesh, a post he held when called to the episcopacy. He holds a licentiate and doctorate in dogmatic theology from the Gregorian University in Rome. His doctoral thesis is entitled: Prophethood in the Bible and the Quran with special reference to Jesus and Mohammad. He was also a professor at the Holy Spirit Major Seminary in Dhaka.

Bishop Bejoy is the Chairman of the Episcopal Commission for Catechetics and Biblical Apostolate and Chairman of the Episcopal Commission for Christian Unity and Inter-religious Dialogue of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB).

The new diocese of Sylhet includes the four civil districts of Sylhet, Sunamgonj, Habigonj and Moulvibazar. Provisionally, the parish church of Lokhipur, 100 km from Sylhet, will be the Cathedral of the erected diocese. The diocese has a population of over eight million, of whom 17,000 are Catholics. There are six parishes, two diocesan and fourteen religious priests; there are three religious Brothers and 30 religious nuns.

St. Thomas parish church of Mugaipar, established in 1951, was entrusted to the Oblates in 1979; it was the second parish in Sunamgonj district. St. Joseph’s parish church of

Srimongol, the first parish, was established by the Holy Cross Fathers in 1950. The Holy Cross Fathers still work in that parish. All other parishes and quasi/sub-parishes were established by the Oblates who continue to care for them. On the day of the announcement of the new diocese, the Oblates officially inaugurated the seventh mission centre with an Oblate residence at Rajai. Heartiest Congratulation to Bishop Bejoy!

### **New Diocese & Installation of Bishop Bejoy D’Cruze**

Thousands of Catholics attended the installation ceremony of Bishop Bejoy D’Cruze OMI as the first Bishop of newly created Sylhet Diocese in the northeast of the country. The installation mass was presided over by Most Rev. Paulinus Costa, Archbishop of Dhaka which was held at the Immaculate Conception Church in Lokhipur under Moulvibazar district. Nine Bishops including the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Joseph Marino as well as significant number of priests, religious and around five thousand Catholics attended the historic event of the local Church.

Archbishop Joseph Marino read out the Apostolic Letters from the Holy Father that canonically erected Sylhet as the country’s 7<sup>th</sup> diocese on July 8 this year and Bishop Bejoy D’Cruze installed as first Bishop of the diocese. Sylhet diocese which covers four civil districts – Sylhet, Sunamgonj, Hobigonj and Moulvibazar was carved out from Dhaka Archdiocese, making it a suffragan of the same Metropolitan Church. The Catholic Church in Lokhipur shall be the temporary Cathedral under the patronage of the Divine Mercy. In his homily Archbishop Paulinus Costa read “I would like to invite Bishop Bejoy to emphasis on education, financial independence, participation in social activities and evangelization and promoting religious vocation as the major challenges for Catholics in the diocese.”

In the afternoon a reception was accorded to Bishop Bejoy D’Cruze attended by the Bishops, Md Mustafijur Rahman, DC of Moulvibazar, Akbor Khan, local MP, Hafizur Rahman, TNO and so on. All spoke highly of Bishop Bejoy and expressed their willingness to cooperate with the new Bishop in all possible ways.

The following day, October 1, a civic reception was accorded to Bishop Bejoy D’Cruze in Sylhet attended by Most Rev. Patrick D’Rozario CSC, Most Rev. Theotonius Gomes CSC, Most Rev. Michael D’Rozario CSC, Bodoruddin Ahmed Kamran, Mayor of Sylhet City Corporation, Advocate Promod Mankhin, State Minister for Cultural Affairs of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh and other religious leaders. The program was chaired by Most Rev. Paulinus Costa. In his speech Bishop Bejoy said that “There are 17 thousand Catholics in Sylhet Diocese. Most of them are very poor. The Holy Father has appointed me as their Shepherd and spiritual leader. With the cooperation of all concerned I wish to serve them better.”

It may be mentioned that Pope Leo XIII made Dhaka as diocese on September 1, 1886 and Bishop Augustine Joseph Louage CSC arrived in Dhaka as the first Bishop. The new diocese of Dhaka included the territories of the present day Dioceses of Chittagong, Silchar (Assam, India) and Prome (Myanmar). Chittagong was separated from the

jurisdiction of Dhaka in 1927. Dhaka upgraded as Archdiocese in 1950 and Archbishop Lawrence Graner CSC was appointed as Archbishop of Dhaka.

On May 15, 1987, Pope John Paul II erected the Diocese of Mymensingh from Dhaka Archdiocese and on July 8, 2011, Pope Benedict XVI erected the new diocese of Sylhet from Dhaka Archdiocese.

Earlier upon arrival in Lokhipur on September 29 Bishop Bejoy was received by the tribal groups according to their cultural traditions.

### **New Archbishop of Dhaka**

Pope Benedict XVI, on October 22 accepted the resignation of Archbishop Paulinus Costa and made Coadjutor Archbishop Patrick D’Rozario CSC, the new Archbishop of Dhaka. The resignation of Archbishop Paulinus Costa came upon his reaching the age of 75, which is Church’s retirement age for a Bishop or Archbishop. Archbishop Paulinus Costa was the Bishop of the Diocese of Rajshahi for nine years before becoming the Archbishop of Dhaka on September 9, 2005.

Archbishop Patrick D’Rozario CSC was the first Bishop of Rajshahi for five years (1990 – 1995) and later Bishop of Chittagong for 15 years (1995 – 2010) before becoming the Archbishop of Dhaka. Pope Benedict XVI appointed Bishop Patrick D’Rozario CSC of Chittagong as Coadjutor Archbishop of Dhaka on November 25, 2010 and thereafter Archbishop Patrick moved to Dhaka and took canonical possession on January 25, 2011.

Archbishop Patrick D’Rozario was born on October 1, 1943 at Padrishipur, Barisal and was ordained a priest on January 8, 1972. He was consecrated as Bishop of Rajshahi on September 12, 1990 and later installed as Bishop of Chittagong on April 19, 1995.

### **Civic Reception and Thanksgiving**

The Archdiocese of Dhaka arranged a Civic Reception to Archbishop Patrick D’Rozario CSC and Thanksgiving to Archbishop Emeritus Paulinus Costa DD on December 12, 2010 at the Archbishop’ House. The program began with the Holy Eucharistic celebration presided over by Archbishop Patrick D’Rozario CSC. All the Bishops and emeritus Bishops of Bangladesh and Bishop Rolando Tirona of Infanta, Philippines and Bishop Lumen Montero CSC of Agorta and Bishop Stephen Rotluwanga of Aijol diocese of India participated in the solemn concelebrated mass. A good number of priests, religious and around 5,000 people were present both in the mass and in the civic reception. Archbishop Patrick said that on the occasion of the 125 years jubilee of the Archdiocese he takes charge of the Archdiocese as the 10<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Dhaka. In his homily Archbishop Patrick shared with the faithful how he looks at the Archbishop of Dhaka and described the manifold activities he has to accomplish as shepherd and head of the Church. Dhaka Archdiocese as the Metropolitan Diocese will cover the migrants, foreign faithful, state affairs, inter-religious dialogue and inter-church relationship. Some of the priorities he pointed out were: Archdiocese should be a body of Christ, Union with Christ like vine and branches, Participation of the faithful through Family and Small Christian Communities, Spirituality of Communion with the least, the last and the lost. He also sought cooperation from the religious

communities working in the Archdiocese, cooperation from the diocesan priests and the faithful to make the Archdiocese more vibrant and service-oriented.

A civic reception took place immediately after the mass. Those of who spoke in the civic reception were Advocate Shajahan Mia MP, State Minister for the Religious Affairs of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Rashed Khan Menon MP, Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee of the Ministry of Education, Advocate Mahbub Alam, Attorney General of Bangladesh, Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman, Former Adviser of the Care Taker Government, Air Vice (Retd.) Altaf Hossain, former Home Minister, Ms. Meher Afroz Chumki MP, Shamem Mohammed Afzal, Director General of Islamic Foundation, Bishop Moses Costa CSC, Secretary General of CBCB, Swami Avoyando Moharaj of Ram Kirishna Mission, Ms. Sabita D'Costa, representing the Catholics in Bangladesh, Mr. P. R. Borua, Senior Vice President of Bangladesh Buddhist Community, Rev. Leor P. Sarkar, Secretary General of UFCB, Bishop Theotonijs Gomes CSC, Chairman of the Organizing Committee, Fr. Jyoti F. Costa, Convener of the Central Organizing Committee, Archbishop Paulinus Costa DD, Archbishop Emeritus and Archbishop Patrick D'Rozario CSC. All the speakers congratulated Archbishop Patrick D'Rozario CSC, new Archbishop of Dhaka and expressed heart-felt thanks to Archbishop Paulinus Costa for his dedicated services in the Church. They also emphasized the contribution of the Catholic Church in various sectors of Bangladesh including education, health care and social development. A cultural program followed by the civic reception consisting of dance, song which exhibited the heritage of the Archdiocese.

### **New Bishop of Dinajpur**

On 29<sup>th</sup> October 2011, His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI appointed Rev. Fr. Sebastian Tudu, until now Vice Rector of Holy Spirit Major Seminary, Dhaka, as the new Bishop of Dinajpur.

The Bishop elect, Most Rev. Sebastian Tudu, was born on 17 June 1967 in Changura (Satan) in Gaibandha district in the Diocese of Dinajpur. He is the son of the late Paskal Tudu and Golapi Hasdak, who is still alive.

Bishop Tudu started his school in his village and moved to Mariampur parish school (1977-1983). He then entered St. Joseph Minor Seminary and attended his high school studies at St. Philip's High School in Dinajpur (1984-1986), and at Dinajpur Government College (1986-1988). After completing high school he joined Notre Dame College for a Bachelor of Arts Degree course, while residing at St. Joseph's Intermediate Seminary, Ramna, Dhaka (1988-1990).

From 1991 to 1998 he attended Holy Spirit Major Seminary in Dhaka for priestly formation and in 1999 he was a deacon in Kellabari, Dinajpur. He was ordained priest at his home parish of Mariampur in Dinajpur diocese on 30 December 1999, where he is incardinated.

After ordination, he held the following positions:

1999 to 2002: Assistant Parish priest in Dhanjuri Parish;

2003-2007: Pontifical Urbaniana University for a Doctorate in Missiology;

2007 to 2009: Assistant Parish Priest in Ruhea Parish;

2008 - 2010: Diocesan Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies;

2009- 2011 Vice Rector of Holy Spirit Major Seminary.

In regards to the appointment, the Apostolic Nuncio, His Excellency Most Rev. Joseph Marino, extended the congratulations of the Apostolic Nunciature for the new mission entrusted to Bishop Sebastian Tudu by the Holy Father. He assured the new Bishop elect of his prayers asking the Good Lord to give him his grace in the service to the Church in Dinajpur.

The Diocese of Dinajpur has been vacant since 25 May 2011 after the transfer of Most Rev. Moses Costa, CSC, to become the Bishop of Chittagong. Since then and up until now, Dinajpur has been under the care of Very Rev. Fr. Joseph Marandy, as the Diocesan Administrator.

### **Seminar on Liturgy**

EC – for Liturgy and Prayer organized a seminar for the Commission members and representatives of dioceses on Christian Liturgy at the Holy Spirit Major Seminary on July 25 – 27, 2011. Altogether 56 participated in that program. The purpose of the seminar was to deal with Liturgical Norms and Instructions and some major liturgical concerns and issues that are frequently on the floor of discussion. Resource persons were: Bishop Theotonijs Gomes, Chairman of the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy and Prayer shared on Liturgy in the life of the Church and our thoughts in the present moment. In his sharing Bishop Theotonijs explained that Eucharist is our spiritual food, centre of Christian faith and communion of the faithful. He invited all to foster in the liturgy the sense of the sacred, greater devotion and prayerfulness. Emphasis was also given to the universal nature of liturgy, and the over-all spirit of silence in the celebration of the Eucharist, sense of sacredness related to vessels, cloths, vestments and other objects. Fr. Patrick Gomes, Secretary of the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy and Prayer shared on Eucharistic Celebration: Norms and Practices. He shared about the recent circular of the Commission pertaining to certain aspects of Liturgical Norms from the “General Instruction of the Roman Missal” to bring discipline in the liturgical matters. The Commission with the approval of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Bangladesh did not change so much of our present practices, but rather indicated the precise form and common practices of the norms and rubrics underlying our practices. Two experimental practices are seen as very isolated practice by us only and not reflecting general practice in the Church are changed: (i) the “Prayer for Peace” before communion is to be said only by the Main Celebrant, not by all; and (ii) no special procession of the Word of God and blessing for readers, except regular procession for Gospel reading after the first (and second) reading. Bishop Theotonijs Gomes CSC offered the concluding Eucharistic Celebration.

### **Workshop on Family Counseling**

EC – for Family Life organized a workshop on Pastoral Counseling in the Family Life at the CBCB Centre on July 27 – 29, 2011. Altogether 65 participated in that workshop from six dioceses. Some priests, religious nuns, commission members and interested in counseling were the participants. The workshop began with a prayer service.

The opening Holy Eucharist was presided over by Bishop Ponen Kubi CSC, Chairman of Episcopal Commission for Family Life followed by sharing the objectives of the

workshop by Fr. David Gomes. Resource persons of the workshop were Bro. Benoy S. Gomes CSC and Fr. Bejoy E. Pereira. Bro. Benoy shared what counseling is all about, Qualities of Counselor, Listening of the Counselor, Strategy of Counseling, Triad Practice, Demonstration etc. On the other hand, Fr. Bejoy E. Pereira presented a model of counseling for the couples, Practical demonstration of Counseling. There was also counseling for the drug addicts in the family by CH-NFP. The concluding mass was offered by Bishop Ponon Kubi CSC.

### **Seminar and AGM of BDPF**

Bangladesh Diocesan Priests' Fraternity organized a day long seminar for the Diocesan Priests of Bangladesh on July 19 at Holy Spirit Major Seminary, Banani, Dhaka. 130 priests and all the Bishops (except Bishop Moses Costa who was out of the country) of Bangladesh were present in the seminar and AGM. The seminar began with a short prayer and words of welcome by Fr. Tapon D'Rozario, President of BDPF. Coadjutor Archbishop Patrick D'Rozario CSC formally inaugurated the seminar while other Bishops present there lit the candles. The newly ordained priests in 2011 were given a hearty welcome and reception by BDPF. The main speaker of the seminar Fr. Joyanto S. Gomes spoke on "The BDPF: Its light and shadows: past-present-future". Fr. Gomes' talk was presented by the multimedia. In his sharing Fr. Gomes gave a brief narrative of the life, spirituality of the diocesan priests, opinion of the diocesan priests by the religious and laity which he collected through interviews. He concluded his talk presenting some challenges which the priests are to face with courage and fortitude. Archbishop Patrick D'Rozario, Bishop Gervas Rozario, Fr. Philip D'Rozario, Fr. Romen J. Boiragi, Fr. Sunil Daniel Rozario shared their experience of being united with BDPF and expectations from the diocesan priests.

Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held in the afternoon. Bishop Gervas moderated the AGM. Fr. Paul Gomes, Secretary of BDPF read the activity report of the previous year, presented the accounts of BDPF. Later on, open discussion was held on various aspects of BDPF.

The climax of the day was the Eucharistic Celebration in which priests ordained by the late Pope John Paul II celebrated their silver jubilee of the priesthood. Archbishop Paulinus Costa DD was main celebrant of the Holy Eucharist. In his homily the Archbishop thanked the priests celebrating jubilee for their hard labor in the vineyard of the Lord. He also invited the priests to maintain good relationship with the priests. It may be worthwhile to mention that 18 deacons were ordained to priesthood by Pope John Paul II during his historic visit to Bangladesh on November 19, 1986. Of them 10 were diocesan priests. Fr. Gabriel Corraya, Fr. Topan D'Rozario, Fr. David Gomes, Fr. Simon Hacha, Fr. Boniface Murmu, Fr. Robert Gonsalves were present. Bishop Ponon Kubi CSC was also ordained on the same day. The program ended with dinner.

### **Seminar on Catholic University in Bangladesh**

Bangladesh Catholic Education Board (BCEB) and Task Force for Catholic University in Bangladesh organized a half day seminar at CBCB Centre on August 19, 2011. Local Catholic Church leaders have officially unveiled the long cherished plan to open the first Church-run University in the country.

About 100 people including Archbishop Paulinus Costa DD, Coadjutor Archbishop Patrick D’Rozario CSC, Bishop Theotonius Gomes, Bishop Gervas Rozario, some priests, religious and lay people attended the seminar. Coadjutor Archbishop in his welcoming speech told the gathering that opening a Catholic University is a great long cherished dream for the Bangladesh Church. “It’s a revolutionary step signifying the maturity of the local Church, opening new horizons of service from the Church.

Keynote paper on Bangladesh Church in Education: University Level with special emphasis on Identity, Mission and General Norms of a Catholic University was presented by Bishop Theotonius Gomes. “Our option for a University under the education program of the Catholic Church in Bangladesh means not only up-grading our participation within the national education structure, but more importantly is a new structural development from Church’s part in Catholic vision and mission in education.” Bishop Theotonius Gomes divided his presentation in four parts: (a) a short historical analysis of school and university education of the Church; (b) Philosophy of Education of Jacques Maritain; (c) Apostolic Constitution on “Catholic University” (Blessed Pope John Paul II in 1990) and (d) Catholic University in Bangladesh.

The name of the proposed University will be ‘Notre Dame University’ and it will be administered by the Holy Cross Priests under the authorship of the local Catholic Church. Holy Cross Congregation is the largest religious order serving in Bangladesh, mainly engaged in the field of education. After the presentation of keynote paper two panelists i.e. Fr. Hemonto T. Rozario spoke on Catholic University in Bangladesh and Development and Projection. Dr. Thomas Costa spoke on Bangladesh Christian Community and Higher Education. Later on open discussion took place. The participants could share their own ideas and opinions on these particular topics. The seminar ended with a short evaluation and thanksgiving followed by dinner.

### **United Forum of Churches, Bangladesh (UFCB)**

An Inter Church Forum and signing of MoU as United Forum of Churches, Bangladesh (UFCB) was held on August 30, 2011 at the Archbishop’s House, Ramna, Dhaka among 10 representatives of three established Churches in Bangladesh. The members of this Forum are Catholic Church in Bangladesh (CBCB), National Council Churches, Bangladesh (NCCB) and National Christian Fellowship, Bangladesh (NCFB).

The objectives of this Forum are:

- a) to share internal and global concerns of the Christian Community in Bangladesh;
- b) to voice officially the opinion of the Christian Community in Bangladesh on different national issues;

- c) to present the concerns of the Christian Community to the Government of Bangladesh ;
- d) to respond to the different government policies and actions affecting the life and activities of the Church;
- e) to act in unity on the above matters are Christian Community in Bangladesh;

It may be mentioned that the Archbishop of Dhaka either on his own or at the request of the President of the NCCB or of the NCFB may call the meeting. The address for communication is: Archbishop's House, 1, Kakrail Road, P.O. Box 3, Dhaka – 1000, Bangladesh.

United Forum members agree that in case of need, to call bigger number of delegates from the above groups for study, reflection, consultation on specific issues.

United Forum acknowledges that the above mode of operation has been current among the Churches in Bangladesh for many years, and the members commit to continue and develop further in order to gain greater benefits of the Christian Community.

United Forum members agree that the Forum will be effective for a period of three years from the signing date. It will be considered automatically renewed if no member group proposes otherwise.

The MoU of the United Forum was signed by Archbishop Paulinus Costa (President of the CBCB), Coadjutor Archbishop Patrick D'Rozario CSC (Vice President of the CBCB), Bishop Theotonijs Gomes CSC (Auxiliary Bishop of Dhaka), Mr. Joyanto Adhikari (President of the NCCB), Rev. David A. Das (Secretary General of the NCCB), Mr. Tapan Chowdhury (President of the NCFB), Rev. James Saberio Kormaker (General Secretary of the NCFB), Bishop Paul Shishir Sarkar (Moderator, Church of Bangladesh), Rev. Ashim Baroi (General Secretary of the BBBS) and Rev. Leor P. Sarker (General Secretary of the BBCF).

### **Seminar of Catholic Nurses**

A day long seminar was held at the CBCB Centre organized by the Catholic Nurses Guild on October 14, 2011. Coadjutor Archbishop Patrick D'Rozario CSC was present as chief guest and addressed 65 male and female nurses at the event marking World Standards Day on October 15. Archbishop Patrick said, "Catholic Nurses render pastoral care through their health service to patients. We thank you for your frontline contributions but would like to call upon you to deliver better services in line with Church's teachings." The Prelate further spoke about the general role of Catholics in the country's health care institutions. "The Church fully acknowledges your great efforts ... and believes you can improve on the delivery of your services. I would like you to maintain and step up your efforts as we have seen in other institutions that standards have fallen." Archbishop D'Rozario told nurses to call on priests to administer pastoral care or the sacraments for their terminal patients and advised nurses of other faiths to do the same for their patients by calling on other religious leaders.

Teresa Rebeiro, President of the Catholic Nurses Guild said that while nurses in the country have improved their academic and technical proficiency, there is still a concern about a decline in the standards of health care. In various hospitals and clinics, Christian nurses have taken major roles and have earned a reputation for their services. If they work well, others will follow their lead. Fulkumari Rozario, an attendee of the seminar and a practicing nurse said, "I have learned today that attending to a patient's needs is more than a professional duty. It is also a spiritual duty. Even under unfavorable conditions, I will try to evaluate my patient's state of mind more accurately and encourage others to do the same." There are 12,000 Catholic Nurses working in the country, and about 4,000 of them are employed in various health institutions in Dhaka, according to data from the Guild. (Source: ucanews).

### **Annual Retreat of the Diocesan Priests of Bangladesh**

Bangladesh Diocesan Priests Fraternity (BDPF) organized retreat for the diocesan priests in Pastoral Centre, Rajshahi in two groups. The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) and TOR Franciscans attended the retreat with the diocesan priests. The theme of the retreat was 'Shepherds after the Heart of Christ the Good Shepherd' and preacher was Fr. Francis Alencherry, SDB. The number of deacons, priests and Bishops were 78 and in the first (October 3 – 7) and second (October 10 – 14) retreats 103 respectively. The overall atmosphere of the pastoral centre was very conducive for retreat. Fr. Alencherry who was in the General Administration of the Don Bosco in Rome and Provincial of Kolkata province is now the parish priest at Utrail Parish under Mymensingh diocese preached an inspiring and excellent retreat suitable for modern time. .

### **National Youth Day Celebration**

The 26<sup>th</sup> National Youth Day celebration organized by the Episcopal Commission for Youth was held at St. Augustine's Sub parish at Kewachola on 3 – 7 October. Around 300 youth representatives, volunteers and animators were present in the celebration. The theme of the event was 'Keep your roots deep in him, build your lives on him, and become stronger in your faith as you were taught' (Col. 2:7). This year Dhaka Archdiocese was the host diocese to arrange this national event and welcomed the youth delegates upon their arrival. The celebration began with the adoration of the Holy Cross which was later placed in front of the altar. The program included a rally, hoisting of the national and youth flags, unveiling the logo of the youth day, inauguration of heritage corner, sacrament of reconciliation, creative prayer services and Holy Eucharistic celebration. Fr. Bablu Sarkar of Khulna diocese led the session on the theme. He insisted on the two values: value of the gospel (which is self surrender) and worldly values (which is self centered). He invited all to follow the value of the gospel and to form their lives for the service of the people. Archbishop Paulinus Costa DD of Dhaka celebrated the opening Holy Mass and Bishop Moses Costa the closing Mass. Bishop Moses in his sharing said that world youth day was divine inspiration of late Pope John Paul II for the universal Church and Youth Day celebration is the world fountain of light. Fr. Patrick S. Gomes, national youth coordinator and his team organized the event in cooperation with

the Dhaka Archdiocesan Youth Commission led by Fr. Qunjon Quiah and Sr. Mary Hima SMRA.

### **Church-run institutes win top award**

Four Church-run educational institutions in Dhaka won a prestigious government award on November 2 for their outstanding achievements this year.

Notre Dame College, St. Joseph Higher Secondary School, Holy Cross College and Holy Cross Girls' High School ranked 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> respectively in this year's Top 20 Educational Institutes Award given out by the Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board. All four Church institutions are run by the Holy Cross Congregation.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid handed out the prizes to the winning institutions' headmaster and senior representatives at the board's office in Dhaka. He said teachers are playing a great role in implementing the government's Vision 2021: Digital Bangladesh campaign and called on them to offer encouragement to other schools to impleore their achievements. He added that the nation can't move forward if only a few institutions are doing well. Vision 2021 is an ambitious campaign by the government to make Bangladesh fully digitalized by 2021.

Board chairman Fahima Khatun said all the institutions met the necessary criteria needed to be eligible for the award which included: "study environment, academic performance, attendance and discipline."

The Church school heads said the award will inspire everyone at their institutions and also is a wake-up call to move forward (Source: Ucanews).

### **Archbishop calls on Prime Minister**

Archbishop Patrick D'Rozario CSC led a delegation to call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office on December 18, 2011. The delegation greeted the prime minister on the occasion of the Christmas and said the people are enjoying the highest level of communal harmony under her able leadership. They also informed the primier that the schools run by the Catholic Church are running well and the Church now is planning to set up a university in the country. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina also greeted the Christian community on the occasion of Christmas. She reaffirmed that the present government is committed to ensuring the equal rights of the people of all faiths. 'The people of all religions are now enjoying freedom in performing their religious rituals as the govenment has ensured a peaceful environment.' Recalling the dark chapter of atrocities carried out on the religious minorities during the BNP-Jamaat regime, the prime minister said BNP-Jamaat cadres not only attacked the AI supporters but also made attacks on the minority people. Other members in the delegation were Bishop Theotonius Gomes CSC, Bro. Bejoy Harold Rodriques CSC and Major General (Rtd.) John Gomes.

## **Christmas Reception at Bangabhabon**

President Zillur Rahman hosted a reception for the Christian Community at Bangabhabon on the auspicious occasion of Christmas on December 25. Archbishop Patrick D'Rozario CSC, ambassadors, representatives from different foreign missions, distinguished persons of Christian community, priests and religious, religious leaders and professionals joined the reception. The President welcomed the guests and exchanged greetings with them and enquired about their wellbeing.

A decorated Christmas tree was set up while a group of young singers performed the Christmas carol at the reception. A Santa Clause was roaming around with the chocolates. Later, President cut a big Christmas cake with the members of Christian Community.

State Minister for Religious Affairs Advocate M. Shajahan Miah and State Minister for Cultural Affairs Advocate Promode Mankin were present on the occasion.