

CBCB Newsletter

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Editorial

With the Apostolic Letter of 11 October 2011, *Porta Fidei*, Pope Benedict declared a Year of Faith. This Year of Faith begins on 11 October 2012. The beginning of the Year of Faith coincides with the anniversaries of two great events which have marked the life of the Church in our days: the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council called by Blessed Pope John XXIII (11 October 1962), and twentieth of the promulgation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church given to the Church by Blessed Pope John Paul II (11 October 1992). This year will conclude on 24 November 2013, the Solemnity of our Lord Jesus Christ, Universal King. Pope hopes that this year will be a propitious occasion for the faithful to understand more profoundly that the foundation of Christian faith is the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and decisive direction. “I know him in whom I have believed”. These words of St. Paul help us to understand that faith is first of all a personal adherence of man to God. At the same time, and inseparably, it is a free assent to the whole truth that God has revealed.

Pope Benedict XVI had convoked the 13th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops from 7 to 28 October 2012 to discuss the topic: *The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith*. You are all aware of the fact that six sectors – culture, society, social communication, economy, scientific and technological research, and civic and political life – are mentioned as challenges that Christianity faces today and to which it has to effectively and adequately respond through a New Evangelization. After the Vatican Council, within 50 years, the world has advanced its scientific and technological developments which have its positive aspects and negative aspects too. With these developments and changes in so many sectors, people tend to find no place for God and religion in their personal and civic life. The initiative of the Year of Faith emerges in response to the crisis of faith in the world today.

Blessed Pope John Paul II made the concept of a New Evangelization a central point for magisterial teachings. Now Pope Benedict XVI has given it a top priority by establishing a separate papal council as the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization which is a dicastery of the Roman Curia. The main purpose of this dicastery is to promote a renewed evangelization where Churches are experiencing the progressive secularization of society and a sort of eclipse of the sense of God.

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has prepared a pastoral recommendation for the Year of Faith with activities on the level of the Universal Church, on the level of Episcopal Conference, at the Diocesan level, at the level of the parish/community/association/movement. Let us actively participate in the activities of the Year of Faith and make our faith both personal and communal act.

Consecration of Bishop Sebastian Tudu

The Church in Bangladesh got the first tribal Santal Bishop for the diocese of Dinajpur. The Consecration Mass was presided over by Archbishop Joseph Marino, Papal Nuncio to Bangladesh, held at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral Parish premise in Dinajpur. Two Archbishops, six Bishops, around hundred and forty priests, hundreds of religious and about eleven thousand Catholics attended the historic event of the local church. The motto of the new Bishop of Dinajpur is “Thy Kingdom Come.” In his homily the Nuncio stressed on two elements of sacred ministry in the Church and in a special way that of the office of Bishop: Chosen and Sent. He reminded that Christ has chosen, selected and marked him for the holy office. A chosen minister is sent with specific duties given by Christ which he outlines in the words of Christ, ‘to heal the sick, bring the dead back to life, heal those who suffer from dreaded diseases and drive out demons.’ This holy ministry can be realized only in cooperation with the priests, religious and laity of the entire community of Dinajpur Diocese.

Pope Benedict XVI appointed Fr. Sebastian Tudu as Bishop of Dinajpur on 29 October last year. Bishop Tudu was born 17 June 1967 at Changura village under Mariampur Catholic church of Northwestern 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). Then 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 December 30, 1999.

After ordination, he held the following positions:

- 1999 - 2002: Assistant Parish priest in Dhanjuri Parish;
- 2003 - 2007: Pontifical Urbaniana University for a Doctorate in Missiology;
- 2007 - 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.

After the consecration, Bishop Tudu said, "It's a day of blessing for me. I thank God for choosing me for this important duty even though I am unworthy. I promise to work for the people in the diocese with love and enthusiasm and hope the faithful will support me in fulfilling the needs of the diocese. In the afternoon a cultural program was held in honor of the newly ordained Bishop. All the Bishops spoke on this auspicious occasion. On January 28, 2012 a civic reception was accorded to Bishop Sebastian Tudu at the Bishop’s House. Bishop Moses, Bishop Subrato, Major Syed Jahangir Golam, Mohammed Jamaluddin Ahmed, Deputy Commissioner of Dinajpur, Maynul Islam, Police Super of Dinajpur, Jashimuddin Ahmed, Divisional Commissioner were among others present. The member of Parliament (Dinajpur – 3 Constituency) Igbalur Rahim called on Bishop Sebastian and

spent some time. All spoke highly of Bishop Sebastian and the contribution of the Dinajpur Church in various sectors of development and expressed their willingness to cooperate with the new Bishop in all possible ways.

The Spanish Carmelite Missionaries first evangelized the territory comprising the diocese of Dinajpur in the 17th century. Since mid 19th century the territory became the part of the mission in Krishnagor (now the Diocese of Krishnagor in West Bengal, India). The PIME Missionaries first came to work in the area in 1855 and have been here ever since.

In 1927, the Diocese of Dinajpur was canonically erected comprising the entire North Bengal. The new diocese was entrusted to the PIME Missionaries, and Bishop Santino Taveggia PIME, until then the Bishop of Krishanagor, became the first Bishop of Dinajpur. Their main collaborators were the Sisters of Charity (Maria Bambina). In 1952, the Diocesan Congregation of the Catechist Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the Queen of Angels (CIC) was founded by late Bishop Joseph Obert PIME. The Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate (PIME) arrived in the diocese in 1953. The former Bishops of the Diocese: Bishop Santino Taveggia PIME (1927 – 1928), Bishop John Baptist Anselmo PIME (1928 – 1947), Bishop Joseph Obert PIME (1948 – 1968), Bishop Michael Rozario (1968 – 1978), Bishop Theotonius Gomes CSC (1978 – 1996), Bishop Moses M. Costa CSC (1996 – 2011).

Upon arrival in Dinajpur Cathedral from Shingra Retreat Centre on January 26, 2012 Bishop Sebastian Tudu was received by the tribal groups according to their cultural traditions.

Bishops, Priests, Religious and Faithful in the World

Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Secretary of State, presented the Holy Father with the 2012 edition of the “Anuario Pontificio” or Pontifical Yearbook, and the “Annuarium Statisticum Ecclesiae”.

A note concerning the presentation highlights some of the facts contained in the new edition. In 2011, the Pope erected eight new episcopal sees, one personal ordinariate and one military ordinariate. One Archdiocese and eight dioceses were elevated to the rank of metropolitan see, one prelate, one apostolic vicariate and one apostolic prefecture were elevated to the rank of diocese, and one “sui iuris” mission was elevated to the rank of apostolic prefecture.

The statistical information which refers to the year 2010, reveals details about the Catholic Church in the 2,966 ecclesiastical circumscriptions on the planet. The number of Catholics in the world moved from 1,181 million in 2009 to 1,196 million in 2010, an increase of fifteen million faithful, corresponding to a growth of 1.3 percent. Over the last two years the presence of baptised Catholics in the world has remained stable at around 17.5 percent.

The number of Catholics with respect to the total population varies considerably between the continents. Their number have dropped in South America (from 28.54 percent to 28.34 percent) and in Europe (from 24.05 percent to 23.83 percent), while they have increased in

Africa (from 15.15 percent to 15.55 percent) and in South-East Asia (from 10.47 percent to 10.87 percent).

The number of bishops went from 5,065 to 5,104, a growth of 0.77 percent. This increase involved Africa (sixteen new bishops), America (fifteen) and Asia (twelve), while numbers fell slightly in Europe (from 1,607 to 1,606) and in Oceania (from 132 to 129).

The steady increase in the number of priests which began in the year 2000 has continued. In 2010 their number stood at 412,236, composed of 227,009 diocesan priests and 135,227 regular priests; whereas in 2009 they numbered 410,593 (275,542 diocesan and 135,051 regular). The number of clergy has increased in Asia (by 1,695), Africa (765), Oceania (52) and the Americas (42), while their numbers have fallen by 905 in Europe.

Numbers of permanent deacons have increased by 3.7 percent, from 38,155 in 2009 to 39,564 in 2010. They are present above all in North America and Europe, which respectively represent 64.3 percent and 33.2 percent of the world total.

The negative tendency in the number of non-ordained male religious reversed, as their number passed from 54,229 in 2009 to 54,665 in 2010. Numbers fell by 3.5 percent in South America and 0.9 percent in North America, in Europe they remained stationary while Asia and Africa saw an increase of 4.1 percent and 3.1 percent respectively.

The number of female religious is undergoing a strong decline, moving from 729,371 in 2009 to 721,935 in 2010. Numbers fell by 2.9 percent in Europe, by 2.6 percent in Oceania and by 1.6 percent the Americas. Nonetheless they increased by around 2 percent in both Africa and Asia.

The number of students of philosophy and theology in diocesan and religious seminaries has increased constantly over the last five years, from 114,439 in 2005 to 121,990 in 2010, a growth of 4 percent.

Number of major seminarians have fallen by 10.4 percent in Europe, and by 1.1 percent in the Americas, but are increasing in Africa (14.2 percent), Asia (13 percent) and Oceania (12.3 percent). (Source: Zenith).

RNDM Sisters celebrated 150th Anniversary

The Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions (RNDM) celebrated the 150th anniversary of the foundation of their religious congregation on January 4, 2012 which was established in France in 1861. Euphrasie Barbier founded this congregation. She also came to Chittagong in 1883 with five pioneer Sisters and established their mission here. At present the Congregation has 114 local and foreign nuns working in 15 convents in the country. This auspicious occasion is being celebrated worldwide and for the same celebration RNDM sisters in Bangladesh prepared a very magnificent jubilee celebration at SFX Green Herald International School premises, Mohammadpur, Dhaka. The program began at 3 p.m. with the blessing and unveiling of a large artistic globe on a tripod stand. The theme of the program was; "Treasuring the Past; Shaping the Future." The Eucharistic celebration began with a solemn procession presided over by Archbishop Patrick D'Rozario CSC assisted by four bishops and Msgr Mark Kadima, Secretary of the Apostolic Nunciature. A large

number of Priests, RNDM Sisters and Sisters from different congregations, religious Brothers and faithful were present in the Eucharistic celebration. In his homily, Archbishop Patrick shared that the Congregation has acquired many treasures to enrich the church in days past. "RNDM nuns are keen to comply with church teachings and are devoted in missionary spirit. We congratulate them on this anniversary," the prelate said. After the Eucharistic celebration a colorful cultural program was presented by the Sisters and by the people the sisters are serving in different convents. There talks were given by Sr. Probha Mary Karmokar, Bishop Michael D'Rozario CSC, Bishop Moses Costa CSC, Bishop Bijoy D'Cruze OMI, Bishop Subrato L. Howlader CSC, Advocate Promod Mankin, State Minister for Cultural Affairs, Dr. Benedict Alo D'Rozario, Executive Director of Caritas Bangladesh. In the cultural function a Photo Magazine was inaugurated. Sister Probha Mary Karmokar RNDM, Provincial, said that her Congregation plans to set up an RNDM Associate soon to involve lay people in missionary services. She expressed her hope that the RNDM Congregation will continue their services in future as they are doing now. She asked for blessing from God and prayers from everyone in this Jubilee Year of the Congregation to carry out the activities in a more devoted way.

Family can transform the Church

Episcopal Commission for Laity organized a workshop for the members of the commission on January 19, 2012 at CBCB Centre. Altogether 35 attended in that workshop from all dioceses of Bangladesh. Archbishop Patrick D'Rozario CSC was the resource person and he said that families must take a greater role in contributing to Church teaching. The Archbishop said that families needed to work harder to reshape the Church and the work must begin in the home.

Every family is a domestic Church because the children get their first catechism in the family. In this age of globalization every catholic can't get education at Church schools, or they study in schools where teachers on Christianity are not available. 'To counter the situation, families need to take up the duty to offer catechism to their children.' The prelate also encouraged families to gather in groups of 10 to 12 to form small communities, headed by a spiritual chaplain, to transform themselves into a mature domestic Church. If the members of the domestic Church are mature and can dispense equal love, friendship and unity to each other, they can lead the family to happiness and peace, and they can become important character in society. Many participants endorsed the call and said that if the family members lead a life of Christian values, the image of the whole Christian community will greatly improve (Source: UCA News).

Visit of Fr. Small, USA National Director of PMS

Father Andrew Small OMI, the National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States visited Bangladesh on January 18 – 24, 2012. At the end of a weeklong tour of the country, he mentioned that the Catholic Church in Bangladesh need more prayers and more support from the Universal Church to carry out its missionary activities.

Fr. Small, a confrere from the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) Congregation also visited parishes and tea estate villages in the newly erected Sylhet diocese where OMI priests are serving in most of the parishes. Bishop Bejoy N. D'Cruze, OMI of Sylhet diocese said Fr. Andrew's visit has brought renewed hope for the local

church. Fr. Small said, "The Church has lot to do for the poor and needy but lacks resources. Poor Catholics have strong faith amid numerous challenges they face every day and they do need more support from us." Fr. Small was very much surprised to see the extreme poverty of Bangladesh which was not known to him before. However, he praised the local church for its making significant difference in the lives of the poor and the powerless inspite of the limited resources and influence at its disposal.

Fr. Small made a courtesy call on most of the local Bishops at the Apostolic Nunciature in Dhaka. He also went to see the remote mission centre in Shimulia in Gazipur district and Oblate Scholasticate, Oblate Juniorate, CBCB Centre and Holy Spirit Major Seminary.

Though it was a very short visit to this country but by observing the local people he said, "People have a lot of love and respect and joy with the little support they have from us. But they need to have more of our prayers and support." The world needs to learn more from the Church in Bangladesh about how it has found a very good way to coexist in Muslim majority country (Source: UCA News).

Becoming the Church of the Poor and the Marginalized in Asia

The Office of Human Development of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference (OHD-FABC) organized 8th Bishops' Institute for Social Action (BISA) where the Archbishops, Bishops, Priests, Religious, Women and Men and Lay Sisters and Brothers (thirty-seven Participants) from seventeen countries gathered at Camillian Pastoral Care Centre, Bangkok in Thailand and tried to immerse in the lives of the most vulnerable and marginalized people, reflected over experiences and deliberated upon a pastoral-theological program of action in the light of CST on January 18 – 24, 2012. The theme of the 8th BISA (Bishops' Institute for Social Action) was "Becoming the Church of the Poor and the Marginalized in Asia." Bishop Gervas Rozario and Fr. Albert T. Rozario of Episcopal Commission for Justice and Peace participated in that program.

BISA VIII adopted the following strategies:

1. Immersion into the lives of the vulnerable people (Poor and Marginalized, Migrants, Indigenous, HIV affected, trafficked women);
2. Reflection on the Immersion Program (the experience of living amidst the marginalized, migrants, indigenous people, victim of HIV/AIDS and Human trafficking);
3. Inputs, Deliberations and Reflections: Reflections on the various issues of the people of Asia and the responses of the Church in the light of the Catholic Social Teachings.

Through that pastoral-theological program of action, the participants wanted to share with the church in Asia, the concerns of the marginalized and propose some recommendations towards action, which are applicable to all sectors. Their reflections and formulation of pastoral theological program of actions kept in mind the various sectors like the Parish/BCCs, BECs, Diocese, Conferences, four Asian Zones (Central, Southeast, South and East) and Asia as a whole.

BISA VIII came up with some proposals for OHD – FABC for the future BISA series and Pastoral-Theological Program of Action for Asia. BISA VIII resolves

- (i) to disseminate CST in the form and manner our people can understand and put into practice in our own place,
- (ii) resolves that all the efforts of human development should become an integral part of our pastoral policies, program and priorities,
- (iii) resolves to educate the Church and society regarding the issues of these most marginalized and vulnerable communities and evolve programs of action to address their issues,
- (iv) resolves to network with the like minded faith and secular organizations and engage in advocacy work with local, provincial, national, Regional Organizations and Government,
- (v) resolves to become the Church of the poor that all our parishes, institutions, dioceses and conferences strive towards becoming the Church of the poor.
- (vi) resolves proactively to become the voice of the poor concretely,
- (vii) in all reflections, we need to get back to the pastoral cycle of immersion, reflection and action.
- (viii)** resolves to rededicate to work for the Reign of God and its values of Justice and Peace especially amidst the suffering millions in Asia. We are to become agents of social change by enabling the poor and the marginalized to claim their economic, social and cultural entitlements.

Bishops to address Sexual Abuse

The Jesuit-run Gregorian University in Rome organized the four day symposium titled “Towards Healing and Renewal” on February 6 – 9, 2012. According to Vatican spokesman Fr. Federico Lombardi that symposium enjoys the ‘full support’ of the Roman Curia and the Vatican Secretariat of State. Most Rev. Patrick D’Rozario CSC, Archbishop of Dhaka and President of CBCB was the official delegate from Bangladesh. More than two hundred Archbishop/Bishops from all over the world gathered to help draft guideline to deal with and prevent sexual abuse by clerics in the Catholic Church. The symposium focused on the area, where scandals had been made headlines like Europe and the US as well as the area, where it has not attracted public attention and where a few victims have come forward.

According to Msgr. Charles Scicluna, the Vatican’s chief prosecutor of sex abuse cases, awareness of the problem is growing in Asia. Last November, Msgr. Scicluna addressed a closed door meeting on sexual abuse organized by the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conference in Bangkok. “There is awareness that something needs to be done.” At the same time, he said Vatican law must take into account cultural differences that might hinder the detection of abusers.

“In some cultures, it’s hard for victims to come forward. We are debating how to change attitudes that favor silence over denunciation.” Also there is the issue of what is and what is not acceptable in certain cultures. “What would be unacceptable in the US, such as caressing, kissing or embracing, is normal in the Philippines.” The protection of children,

he stressed, must become “a permanent principle and concern” in every decision of the Church.

Archbishop Luis Antonio Tagle of Manila Archdiocese was another speaker who addressed on the topic “Clergy sexual Misconduct in Asia”. According to Jesuit Fr. Hans Zoller, a psychotherapist who is one of the symposium organizers, one of its main goals is to offer Bishops in Asia, and other areas where scandals have yet to emerge, the skills to deal with abuse cases. Symposium participants attended lectures and workshops on issues including the Bishops’ responsibility to protect children and the psychological effects of abuse. (Source: UCA News).

CBCB Meeting

The first meeting of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB) for 2012 was held on February 29 – March 1, 2012 at CBCB Centre. Archbishop Patrick D’Rozario, all other Bishops and the Administrator of Khulna Diocese were present at the meeting. The main discussion of the meeting were: Synod of Bishops: Response to the Lineamenta, Year of Faith (October 2012 – October 2013), Ecumenical Document: Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct, X Plenary Assembly in Vietnam, Asipa General Assembly and workshop in Dhaka, Formation course for the formators, Discussion on some Episcopal Commissions and finalizing a few appointments of Episcopal Commissions and Inter diocesan appointments etc.

Most Rev. Joseph Marino and Msgr. Mark Kadima met the Bishops during the CBCB meeting. The Bishops shared with the Nuncio about the concept of steward leadership in the context of Bangladesh. Later the Nuncio updated some important information of Rome with the Bishops. Fr. Shorot F. Gomes, Fr. Emmanuel K. Rozario and Fr. Jyoti F. Costa were present for the governing body meeting of the Holy Spirit Major Seminary. The priests appealed to the Bishops for some immediate needs of the seminary including teaching staff and extension of facilities of the Major Seminary. The Bishops gave them a patient hearing and assured to do the needful in the course of time. Fr. Shorot also presented the accounts of the seminary for the year 2011 and it was approved. As usual, the meeting began with the Holy Eucharistic celebration presided over by Most Rev. Patrick D’Rozario CSC of Dhaka. The Nuncio invited the Bishops for dinner on February 29 at the Nunciature. Archbishop Emeritus Paulinus Costa and Bishop Emeritus Michael D’Rozario also joined the other Bishops.

Annual Assembly of the Episcopal Bodies

Like other years in the past, the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Bangladesh had Annual Assembly with the Secretaries/Directors of the Episcopal Bodies on March 2, 2012 at the CBCB Centre. The assembly was presided over by the President of CBCB and moderated by the Secretary General. Archbishop, all the Bishops, assistant secretary general, secretary/director of Episcopal Bodies and one representative of the affiliated desk or one member of each Episcopal Body (altogether 37 members) were present in the assembly. There are 14 Episcopal Bodies of the Catholic Bishops' Conference working in various fields of the country. The names of the Chairman and Secretaries are given below. These

Bodies are divided as related to Apostolate, related to Persons and related to Evangelization.

United Forum of Churches, Bangladesh

The United Forum of Churches, Bangladesh arranged a day long seminar on the theme 'Church and Witness' at the CBCB Centre on April 13, 2012. The objectives of the seminar were to reflect on our common identity as Church and Mission, to reflect on our common Christian Witness in a multi-religious society and to experience fellowship among the Christian denominations. Altogether 61 participated representing the CBCB, NCCB and NCFB. The program began with the morning devotion led by Rev. David A. Das of NCCB followed by words of welcome by Archbishop Patrick D'Rozario CSC and Mr. Tapan Chowdhury of NCFB. Talks were given by Bishop Theotonijs Gomes CSC on Church and Mission: Biblical-Theological View Point and Rev. Saurabh Pholia on Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct. The sessions and open discussions were moderated by Mr. Joyanto Adhikary and Rev. Ashim Baroi. Bishop Theotonijs Gomes CSC gave an etymological meaning of Church and idea of Church in the Old and New Testaments. He narrated the theological concept of Church as Holy, Communion of the Faithful, Universal, Apostolic and One. Bishop Theotonijs Gomes CSC also presented some practical recommendations and invited all to put them into practice as we witness our Churches. Rev. Saurabh Pholia in his talk gave a narrative on the challenges a religion faces to witness and to establish justice in the midst of multi religious world. He explained the content of our witness and how it should be done in a multi-religious world especially practicing Christian values. Inter religious dialogue and inter Church dialogue are to be strengthened to accelerate our witness.

Later on Rev. Leor P. Sarkar presented the Agreement of the United Forum of Church, Bangladesh (UFCB) signed by the CBCB, NCCB and NCFB last year in August. Question-answer, clarification and suggestions were given to strengthen UFCB. The program ended with a short prayer followed by lunch. The Master of Ceremony of the entire program was Rev. Leor P. Sarkar, Secretary of the UFCB. Archbishop Patrick D'Rozario CSC is the Chairman of the UFCB.

New President of SSVP

Mr. Benjamin Gomes of Kakrail, Dhaka Archdiocese was elected new President of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul on March 2, 2012 held at Diocesan Pastoral Centre, Rajshahi.

The installation of the new president and oath taking ceremony was held at CBCB Centre on April 12, 2012. Mr. John H. Y. Lee, Vice President, International Structure and Board Member of Society of St. Vincent de Paul Council General was present on that auspicious occasion. Bishop Bejoy D'Cruze OMI, of Sylhet celebrated mass assisted by Fr. Parimol I. Rozario at the altar. In his homily, Bishop Bejoy highlighted the life of St. Vincent de Paul who dedicated his life for the poor and inspired the Vincentians to do the same as their patron did. Around 150 Vincentians from different conferences of St. Vincent de Paul

were also present to congratulate the new president and to wish him all the best as he assumes his new responsibility. Congratulations, Bro. Benjamin!

National Course for the Laity

Episcopal Commission for Laity organized a five day course for the representatives of laity of Bangladesh held at CBCB Centre on April 24 – 28, 2012. Altogether 30 participated in the course from seven dioceses of the country. The purpose of the course was to know the Church, theological knowledge of the Bishops, priests, religious and laity in the Church, dignity, mission, participation and apostolates of the laity in the Church, to be more aware of the lay organizations in the Church and to be effective leaders. Subject matters and resource persons of the course were: (a) Participation of the laity in the present reality (Archbishop Patrick D’Rozario CSC); (b) Church in the light of the Bible (Fr. Emmanuel K. Rozario); (c) Theological analysis of the Church (Fr. Shorot F. Gomes); (d) Models of the Church in the Times (Fr. Albin Gomes); (e) Vocation of the laity and dignity (Fr. Jyoti F. Costa); (f) Mission and Apostolic Work of the laity (Fr. Emmanuel K. Rozario); (g) Vocation and Mission of the laity (Leaders of various Organizations); (h) Church in Asia (Fr. Shyamol Gomes CSC); (i) Pastoral Directives of the Church in Bangladesh (Archbishop Patrick D’Rozario CSC); (j) Apostolic work and Church apostolates of the laity (Fr. Gabriel Corraya); (k) Christian movements and organizations: nature, role and principles (Archbishop Patrick D’Rozario CSC); (l) Christian leadership (Dr. Benedict Alo D’Rozario); (m) Small Christian Communities (Fr. Albin Gomes); (n) Formation of the laity in the Church (Fr. Stanley Costa). Archbishop Patrick D’Rozario presided over the closing Eucharistic celebration and distributed certificates among the participants.

New Bishop of Khulna Diocese and Consecration Ceremony

On 4th May 2012, His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI appointed Rev. Fr. Romen James Boiragi, Administrator of Khulna Diocese and Parish Priest of Muzgunni Catholic Church, as the new Bishop of Khulna Diocese. Most Rev. Romen James Boiragi was born on 4 May 1955 in Holdibunia under Shelabunia parish of Bagerhat district in the diocese of Khulna. He is the son of late Durgachoron Boiragi and Amia Boiragi.

Bishop Romen started his school in Shelabunia Mission School and passed SSC from St. Paul’s High School (1963 – 1974). After completing his studies in the school he joined St. Joseph’s Seminary, Ramna, Dhaka and finished HSC and BA from Notre Dame College (1974 – 1978).

From 1979 – 1984 he attended Holy Spirit Major Seminary in Dhaka for priestly formation and was ordained a priest on 13 January 1985.

After ordination, he held the following positions:

1985 to 1986: Assistant Parish Priest in St. Joseph’s Cathedral, Khulna;
1986 – 1992: Parish Priest in St. Joseph’s Cathedral, Khulna;
1992 – 1996: Pontifical Urbaniana University for a Doctorate in Canon Law;
1996 – 1998: Parish Priest in St. Joseph’s Cathedral, Khulna;

1998 – 2012: Parish Priest in Muzgunni Parish;
1996 – 2011: Vicar General of Khulna Diocese
2011 – 2012: Administrator of Khulna Diocese.

Consecration of Bishop Romen James Boiragi was held on June 15, 2012 at St. Joseph's School premise, Khulna. Archbishop Patrick D'Rozario CSC was the main celebrant assisted at the altar by Archbishop Joseph Marino, Papal Nuncio and Bishop Moses Costa CSC. All other Bishops of Bangladesh (except Bishop Bejoy D'Cruze OMI who was sick in the USA and Bishop Theotonius Gomes CSC who was in Brazil for a climate change summit), 110 priests and a significant number of religious and around 15,000 faithful attended the historic event of the local Church. Archbishop Joseph Marino read out the Papal Bull which nominates the Bishop of Khulna. In his homily, Archbishop explained the duties of a Bishop and asked for cooperation from everybody to make the diocese a family. Explaining the gospel passage where Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love me more than these? Lead my sheep" That also applies to Bishop Romen to love Jesus and to lead the sheep entrusted to him by the Church.

In the afternoon a reception was accorded to Bishop Romen attended by the Bishops, Talukder Abdul Khaleque, Mayor of Khulna, DC of Khulna, other civil and government officials who spoke highly of Bishop Romen and expressed their great willingness to cooperate with the new Bishop in all possible ways.

Earlier on June 14 a special thanksgiving ceremony and handing over the new Bishop to the diocese was held at Muzgunni parish where he served 14 years as pastor. Later he was brought to the Bishop's House for a reception by motor car procession. The Bishop was received by different groups according to their cultural traditions.

Archbishop to Rome for Pallium

Pope Benedict XVI imposed upon 43 Metropolitan Archbishops the pallium on Friday (June 29, 2012) in the Vatican Basilica. Archbishop Patrick D'Rozaio CSC of Dhaka was one of them. A delegation of 13, consists of priests and lay leaders accompanied the Archbishop for this ceremony and to make a pilgrimage in Rome.

In his brief address the Pope said, 'I am happy to greet all of you, who have come to Rome, to the tomb of the Apostles, with your metropolitan Archbishops, upon whom I had the joy to bestow the pallium yesterday in the Vatican Basilica during the course of a solemn celebration commemorating the holy Apostles Peter and Paul. In this meeting of ours we wish, as it were, to continue the climate of profound ecclesial communion, which we experienced yesterday. In fact, the presence of the Metropolitan Archbishops, who come from different parts of the world, manifests the visible universality of the Church, called to make Christ known and proclaim the Gospel to all continents in various languages.

I greet each of you with affection, venerable and esteemed Metropolitan Brothers, and with you I greet relatives, friends and the faithful entrusted to your pastoral care, who are your crown in these significant days. I also greet the dioceses from which you hail.'

BILA V on Women

Bishop Sebastian Tudu, Sr. Zita SSMI, Ms. Rita Roselyn Costa and Ms. Lipika Sarkar attended the Fifth Bishops' Institute of the Lay Apostolate on Women in Camillian Pastoral Care Centre, Bangkok on July 9 – 13, 2012. The theme of the program was 'Making a difference in the realities of Women in Asia'. Thirty six participants (3 Bishops, 1 priest, 8 women religious and 24 lay women) from twelve countries participated. The delegates reflected on the positive and negative aspects affecting the life of women in Asia and also how to respond through learning to work with various groups to build on strengths and on beliefs. It was a realization to join hands with civil society groups as the Catholic Church has much to contribute from its wisdom, moral and ethical storehouse and in particular the values enshrined in the social teachings of the Church.

The gathering of women hopes that the delegates can work together with many partners working with the same problems concerning women, both in the Church and in society. It is also hoped that strong faith in the dignity of the human person will encourage to serve women whose dignity is violated regularly and without any support.

Some of the recommendations of the gathering were:

1. That education of women and men be aimed at building equality.
2. Education of the young is particularly important for this purpose.
3. Form support groups wherever possible to empower women specially those who are victims of abuse, violence, or are in difficult situations.
4. Help parents understand the value of both girls and boys and give parenting education to raise awareness of the need for equality in raising children.
5. To educate seminarians so that in future priests will be more aware of discrimination against women, will be more open to the participation of women in society and in the Church.
6. To develop in every local Church, policy for better participation of women and a policy to deal with sexual abuse.
7. To network with greater effectiveness for the purpose of sharing information and best practices to support women
8. To cooperate with state and NGO agencies that share common interests and values in order to raise a stronger collective voice.
9. To collaborate more effectively with the Government, NGOs and international institutions in addressing the moral, social and economic needs of women.

Formation Course of the Clergy Formators

A Course for formators of the seminarians in Bangladesh was held at Christo Jyoti Pastoral Centre, Rajshahi on July 9 – 21, 2012. Altogether 56 Clergy Formators, most of them are directly and some are partially involved in the formation of the seminarians in Bangladesh. Don Giuseppe Magrin and Fr. Valentino Salvoldi from Propoganda Fide, Rome were the resource persons assisted by our local priests to deal the practical aspects especially challenges and present realities of priestly formation and life as priests in the context of Bangladesh.

The purposes of the course were: (a) To create a deeper sense of communion of the local church and missionary spirit; (b) Spiritual, intellectual, pastoral and human formation of the clergy and skill development; (c) To lay a sort of foundation for those who are at the initial stage in formation work and to explore the present realities of our seminaries and the local church and to take necessary steps for better and effective formation of seminarians in the future; (d) To inspire the pastors so that they can take care of the seminarians when they are sent for pastoral experiences in different parishes.

Effects of the Course:

Theological update; deepening understanding of priestly life and ministry; skill development to cope with present challenges and realities; personal growth for formation ministry; create a deeper spirit and sense of communion and mission of the universal and local church as well.

Future action-plan

To arrange courses and seminars at different levels (minor, intermediate, major seminary); monitoring and follow up of the formation in seminaries (spiritual, human, intellectual and pastoral aspects) with special attention and care; prioritizing need of formation for both priests and seminarians as per the signs of the time.

A local team of formators under the guidance of Bishop Subrato Lawrence Howlader CSC organized this special course for the formators.

National Workshop on SCC

ASiPA Desk of FABC (Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference) and CCP (Christian Communities Program) jointly organized a national workshop on Small Christian Communities at CBCB Centre on August 14 – 18, 2012. Sixty participated all from six dioceses of Bangladesh. Archbishop Patrick D'Rozario CSC was present both for the opening ceremony and closing Eucharistic Celebration. Resource persons of ASiPA desk (Ms. Wendy Louis, Fr. Arthur Cyril Pereira, Ms. Viviana, Fr. Rohan Dominic) conducted the sessions to make the SCC more vibrant in Bangladesh.

As part of the workshop, the participants and resource persons were divided into four groups for exposure program at Hashnabad, Golla and two groups at Dharendra parishes. They had Bible sharing with the local groups, visited the families and the local group members shared their experiences of SCC. At the end the participants had planning session. Archbishop Patrick D'Rozario CSC and Bishop Subrato Lawrence Howlader CSC attended some sessions of the workshop.

Inter diocesan Appointments

The Bishops in their last meetings finalized a few new appointments. Fr. Emmanuel K. Rozario as Rector of Holy Spirit Major Seminary; Fr. Joyanto J. Raskam as Vice Rector of Holy Spirit Major Seminary; Fr. Dilip S. Costa as National Director of Pontifical Mission Societies & Secretary of Episcopal Commission for Evangelization; Fr. Jyoti F. Costa as Secretary of Episcopal Commission for Family Life; Dr. Edward Pallab Rozario as

Secretary of Episcopal Commission for Health Care; Fr. Subroto B. Gomes as National Spiritual Advisor of Society of St. Vincent De Paul; Fr. Eugene Anjus CSC as Secretary of Episcopal Commission for Liturgy and Prayer.

Synod of Bishops

Pope Benedict XVI officially opened the Synod of Bishops on October 7, 2012 with prelates from all over the world in attendance under the theme of “The New Evangelization and the Transmission of the Christian Faith”. The Synod of Bishops represent a way for the Holy Father to bring Bishops together to address matters of the Church in light of the Tradition of the Church and what the Word of God has revealed. We look at a Synod as a very important moment in the life of the Church, because the Holy Spirit brings the Bishops the direction, insight and even resolution we need to advance the mission of the Church.

Bishop Gervas Rozario of Rajshahi diocese was the ordinary delegate from Bangladesh in the Synod and presented the following:

“The time and situation are fast changing in the modern age of science and technology (cf. *Instrumentum Laboris* nos.57,58). With the advancement of material development there is a growing tendency of worldliness among the people everywhere. Today there is an increasing number of challenges to faith in God including atheism, fundamentalism, relativism, etc. For this reason, there is an urgent need for evangelization and re-evangelization which will enable people to discover that God is the ultimate and Supreme Being who is the Creator and Master of the Universe. New Evangelization is not new in subject because “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Heb 13:8). For the new Churches, like in Bangladesh, one may think of “Evangelization in the new Millennium” or “Evangelization in the Modern Time”. This means putting out into the “deep”. In a world swayed by the materialism and consumerism, the Church and especially her leaders need to become Masters of Spiritual Life. There is a need to find out appropriate means and methods in order to carry on the mission of evangelization, in the form of Asian asceticism as expressed even in the traditional monastic models of the Church.

The new evangelization is very much meaningful in our context when we consider evangelization as concern for the poor as it was for Jesus. The negative sense of poverty as experienced by our Asian peoples is mainly the result of the insatiable greed of the few rich and powerful. But there is also a positive sense of poverty: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 5:3). This evangelical poverty is something that the Church is called to live and preach, especially in Asia. As true believers in Jesus Christ, we must learn not only to renounce worldly goods, but also appreciate the simplicity and humility of the poor, their happiness with whatever little they have and their concern for others. Church leaders must also open their hearts to be evangelized by the evangelical values of the poor. Such a culture of solidarity with the poor will surely show us a way to address environmental justice and world hunger.

Moreover, modern understandings towards development are alluring men and women to succumb to a culture of consumerism that in turn leads to the overuse of the resources of

the earth. The first summit in Rio twenty years ago pointed out that such approaches not only have polluted our planet and effected global warming, but they are also bound to affect negatively the future generations. While the rich are mainly responsible for the global warming, the poor are the victims of its adverse effects. What needs to be developed is a sense of reverence and respect for every other human being, the earth and all living creatures. This is what the Church must promote. What we need is a spiritual revolution, a global change of mind and heart that will ensure the basic human dignity and a clean planet that will be home for all.

Special Envoy of Pope Benedict XVI and 125th Jubilee of Dhaka Diocese

Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, former Archbishop of Westminster came to Bangladesh as Special Envoy of Pope Benedict XVI to attend the 125th jubilee celebration of Dhaka Diocese on November 4, 2012 for a five day visit. During this time, Cardinal had a hectic schedule. As part of his visit, Cardinal Murphy visited the Holy Spirit Major Seminary and celebrated mass there for the seminarians and professors, addressed the Bishops and had dinner together at CBCB Centre, visited Notre Dame College (accompanied by Most Rev. Joseph Marino and Most Rev. Gervas Rozario), and Islamic Foundation at Agargaon (accompanied by Most Rev. Joseph Marino, Most Rev. Bejoy D'Cruze OMI and Fr. James Cruze CSC), celebrated mass for the Major Superiors of BCR at the Nunciature followed by lunch, met the President and Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (accompanied by Most Rev. Patrick D'Rozario, Most Rev. Joseph Marino, Fr. Abel B. Rozario and Fr. Adam S. Pereira CSC) and finally attended the 125th jubilee celebration of Dhaka Diocese and opening of Year of Faith in the national level at Bottomley Home School Premise on November 9, 2012.

Jubilee of Dhaka Diocese & opening of Year of Faith

The 125th Jubilee of Dhaka Archdiocese was held on November 9, 2012 at Bottomley Home School premise, Tejgaon. A significant number of faithful, priests and religious, all the Bishops of Bangladesh, Papal Nuncio and Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, Special Envoy of Pope Benedict XVI were present. The celebration began with a prayer service and welcome talks. Fr. Jyoti A. Gomes presented a long history and heritage of the Dhaka Diocese. People of different ages gave their testimony of faith.

The jubilee mass was presided over by Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, assisted by all the Bishops of Bangladesh and Papal Nuncio. In his homily, Cardinal highly appreciated the prevailing of inter religious harmony in Bangladesh. He said, 'God is present in all human beings and Catholic Church gives importance to inter religious dialogue as a fundamental aspect.' He remembered the contribution of Bishops, priests, religious and catechists in the history of the formation of faith of Dhaka Diocese.

The jubilee celebration and Year of Faith included inter Church program, inter religious program and cultural program. Mohammed Mozzamel Hossain, Honorable Chief Justice was present as chief guest of inter religious program. In his speech the chief justice said, as per constitution of the country, every religion is entitled to practice their religion. At the same time he acknowledged the contribution of the Christian community in the fields of health, education and human development which is incomparable.

37th Asian Conference of Marriage Encounter

The 37th WW Marriage Encounter of Asian Conference was held at CBCB Centre on November 11 – 17, 2012 with participants from 10 Asian countries. The theme of the conference was “Grow in Holiness.” Bishop Gervas Rozario opened the conference with the Eucharistic Celebration at Tejgaon on November 11. In his homily Bishop Rozario shared with the couples on the concept of holiness, how to be holy in marital life and so on. During the session the Asian delegates shared among themselves about intimacy in marital life. Archbishop Patrick D’Rozario presided over the concluding mass on November 16 at Holy Rosary Church, Tejgaon followed by Gala Night at CBCB Centre. Delegates were from Korea, Japan, Philippines, Singapore, India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, UAE, Taiwan and Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Catholic Doctors Association

A workshop of Bangladesh Catholic Doctors Association was held at CBCB Centre, Mohammadpur on November 30, 2012 in which Catholic physicians said they are often forced to defy the Church’s social teachings on abortion and artificial birth control, which the government and NGOs have made available throughout the country in an effort to control Bangladesh’s population.

Birth control has been heavily encouraged in this country of more than 152 million people – the eighth most populous on the planet – since the 1990s. Abortion is illegal here unless the life of the mother is in danger, but doctors say it is a common practice. “I’ve refused to kill fetuses many times,” said Dr June Jacqueline Gomes. She said turning women away means the patients will never return to her practice. Because of those repercussions, few of the country’s 90 Catholic doctors dare to refuse to perform abortions.

The doctor said she has performed “hundreds” of ligations – tying women’s tubes to prevent pregnancies, which is also against Catholic teachings. Dr Gomes was attending the recent program, “Faith in the life of Medical Professionals,” organized by the Catholic Bishops’ Commission for Healthcare and Association of Catholic Doctors in Bangladesh.

Several doctors at the program said it was difficult to be faithful to religious teaching while performing their professional duties. “After I passed MBBS, I got training on Menstruation Regulation [MR], which is a kind of induced abortion,” said Dr. Anthony Albert, 55, who works in a private hospital in Dhaka. “But I have done hundreds of MRs in my life, otherwise I might have lost my job.”

Bishop Theotonious Gomes CSC Auxiliary Bishop of Dhaka, head of the commission and keynote speaker at the workshop said a Catholic doctor shouldn’t just look for money. “Catholic social teaching puts human life on top of everything and we never support destroying life. Even if our faith collides with reality, we need to stick to our faith,” said the prelate, a theologian. Bishop Gomes added that they are currently thinking of installing a ‘model Catholic hospital’ in the country, where people can receive treatment in accordance to Catholic social teachings. Sister Mary Olympia SMRA, a doctor nun from Associates of Mary Queen of Apostles congregation says she often tells patients that

abortion is murder and that it is illegal, although she noted that there are both legal and moral exceptions. (Source: UCA News)

FABC Plenary Assembly

The Federation of Asian Bishops Conference (FABC) held its X Plenary Assembly with the theme 'FABC at Forty Years: Responding to the Challenges of Asia' on December 10 – 16, 2012 in Xuan Loc and Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam. These gatherings are held every four years in different countries of Asia. Altogether 111 delegates (7 Cardinals, 69 Bishops, 35 priests, religious and laity) participated in the Assembly. Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, the Holy Father's Special Envoy; Archbishop Savio Han Tai Fai SDB, the Secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples; Archbishop Leopoldo Girelli, the non-resident Pontifical representative of Vietnam; fraternal delegates of the continental Federation of Episcopal Conferences of Oceania; Latin America and Europe; representatives of a few funding and donor partners; the Bishops and Secretaries of the FABC Offices; and invited guests. Archbishop Patrick D'Rozario CSC, Bishop Bejoy D'Cruze OMI and Bishop Sebastian Tudu attended the Plenary Assembly on behalf of CBCB.

The historic approval of the Statutes of the FABC came into being 40 years ago. Four important events converge with the ruby anniversary: the Year of Faith, the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, the 20th anniversary of the publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and the just concluded XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith.

The same Spirit animated Vatican II now summon us to become renewed evangelizers for a New Evangelization. It is the Spirit who can fashion this newness in our Church and in each one of us. It is the Spirit who enables to respond credibly and effectively to the social mega-trends and ecclesial realities that Assembly discerned.

To be renewed as evangelizers it is needed to respond to the Spirit active in the world, in the depths of our being, in the signs of the times and in all that is authentically human. We need to live a spirituality of New Evangelization.

For such spirituality, some fundamental dimensions were offered:

(1) Personal encounter with Jesus Christ; (2) Passion for mission; (3) Focus on the Kingdom of God; (4) Commitment to communion; (5) Dialogue, a mode of life and mission; (6) Humble presence; (7) Prophetic evangelizer; (8) Solidarity with victims; (9) Care of creation; (10) Boldness of faith and martyrdom.

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