



CBCB Newsletter

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Editorial

This year of 2020 was different in many ways than other years. Although the people of the world began this year with hope and faith to have progress and better times during the year, but due to covid-19, pandemic, everything all over the world changed. People all throughout the world passed a kind of fearful experience as many people have been infected by covid-19 and many lost their near and dear ones due to covid-19 pandemic. Many people lost their jobs, many people have had sufferings because of this long lasting corona virus pandemic.

In Bangladesh, the local Church also has lost Most Rev. Moses M. Costa, csc, Archbishop of Chattogram Archdiocese and the General Secretary of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh. It was a big loss for the Archdiocese of Chattogram and the entire local Church of Bangladesh. We also lost a few Religious Brothers and Sisters this year and we remember with grateful hearts, their dedicated services to the Church and the people of God. May God grant them all eternal rest into His kingdom.

As we celebrate Christmas, we want to begin our journey with new hope that God will protect us all as he showed his love by sending His only Son into the world. "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Actually, Christmas is about much more than just sharing warm emotions and memories. It's about what God supplies and shares. Christmas is about God's faithfulness made tangible through history. It's about how God has touched our lives with his love.

The God of history, our all-powerful and merciful God, intervened in the world scene for us all. He has made it possible for us to have peace. He gives us everything we need. Messengers have come to us. And they are beautiful! The Christmas angel came to the shepherds that first Christmas announcing, "Peace on earth!" And God has sent his Christmas greeting to you, "Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!" That's what Christmas is all about. And that's just what we need. God gives us what we need right here in his holy Word. He gives us a message of hope and love, and he gives us the ability to receive and believe it.

As we are going to say goodbye to the year 2020, let us remain grateful to God for all His blessings He showered upon us all. Let us prepare ourselves for Christmas with loving hearts of harmony and peace and allow Jesus to be born in our hearts during Christmas. Wishing you all our readers of the CBCB Newsletter, a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year 2021.

A Hearty Congratulations to the New Archbishop of Dhaka and Thanks to retired Archbishop Cardinal Patrick D' Rozario, CSC

Pope Francis on September 30, accepted the resignation of His Eminence Cardinal Patrick D' Rozario, CSC and announced Most Rev. Bejoy N. D'Cruze, OMI, Bishop of Sylhet, as the new Archbishop of Dhaka. Cardinal Patrick D' Rozario, CSC submitted his resignation in 2018 at the age of 75, but the Vatican extended for two more years and so his resignation was finally accepted at the age of 77.

Cardinal 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 Chattogram as Coadjutor Archbishop of

Dhaka on November 25, 2010 and thereafter Archbishop Patrick moved to Dhaka and took canonical possession on January 25, 2011. 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 new Archbishop 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 in 2000. The following year he was appointed Superior of the Oblate Delegation in Bangladesh, a post he held when called to the episcopacy. Bishop Bejoy had been bishop of the diocese of Khulna since May 2005 and in 2011 he was made the first Bishop of the new diocese Sylhet where he served for 9 years. 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 Christian Unity



and Inter-religious Dialogue of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB).

New Archbishop Bejoy N. D; Cruze, OMI Archbishop Bejoy Nichephorus D'Cruze, was installed as the new archbishop of Dhaka in Bangladesh through a Mass followed by a reception program at St. Mary's Cathedral Church, Ramna, on November 27, 2020.

His Eminence Cardinal Patrick D' Rozario, csc, Archbishop George Kocherry, the Apostolic Nuncio to Bangladesh, all the Bishops of Bangladesh, many priests and Religious man and women were present for the ceremony. Due to Covid-19 pandemic, there were only selected lay faithful from the Archdiocese and other dioceses of the country. About 500 people, mostly Catholics, attended the Covid-19-protocolled Mass and

reception program that also sought to thank retired Holy Cross Archbishop Cardinal Patrick D’Rozario, who served the archdiocese from 2011.



Among the dignitaries were apostolic Nuncio Archbishop George Kocherry, the bishops, Leaders of Other Churches, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s special assistant Biplob Barua and Catholic parliamentarians Jewel Areng and Jharna Gloria Sarker.

In his homily, Archbishop Bejoy Nichephorus D’Cruze, the new head of Dhaka Archdiocese in Bangladesh, has expressed his desire to promote more unity, solidarity and dialogue in the Catholic community, all churches and other faiths for communion and peace.

“I am unworthy and incompetent, yet God has chosen me to be a shepherd,” said Archbishop D’Cruze, who is taking charge of the country’s oldest and largest diocese after serving the dioceses of Khulna and Sylhet. He also cordially thanked Cardinal Patrick D’Rozario for his great service and contribution for the past 10 years.

In his first sermon as archbishop of Dhaka, the 64-year-old prelate said his priority is communion. “The Church should become a communion, fraternity of believers, and unity would prevail in all circumstances. As we worship and follow the Trinitarian God, this is a must that we try to live in communion — a communion between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,” Archbishop D’Cruze said.

He reminded the audience that Christianity is a universal religion for dialogue with other faiths and the welfare of humanity. “Christianity is a universal religion. It has an enormous heart and it has been sent to all ethnicities and nationalities for salvation. Thus, we accept all with an open heart, have dialogue of faith and forge harmony. It is because we believe all people have been created in the image of God,” Archbishop D’Cruze said.

During the reception and cultural program, all the speakers congratulated Archbishop Bejoy N. D’Cruze, OMI, new Archbishop of Dhaka and expressed heart-felt thanks and gratitude to retired Archbishop Cardinal Patrick D’Rozario CSC 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.

We all pray for the new Archbishop Bejoy N. D’Cruze, OMI that God will always be his guide and that he would always follow the example of the Good Shepherd Jesus to love and serve all people irrespective of caste and creed. We also pray for the retired Archbishop Cardinal Patrick D’Rozario, csc that God will grant him good health and that he will continue to love and serve the Church as Cardinal for many years.

BANGLADESH BISHOPS' (CBCB) PILGRIMAGE- 2020

FOR THE HUNDREDTH BIRTHDAY OF 'FATHER OF THE NATION' SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN

When the Bangladesh Government announced a year-long program to celebrate the 100th birthday of Bongobondhu 'Father of the Nation' Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (born 17 March 1920 at Tungipara),

the Catholic Church in Bangladesh devised a plan to participate and collaborate in the celebrations. The Catholic Bishops' Conference (CBCB) wanted to arrange celebratory events in all the Catholic Dioceses, institutions and organizations, including a big gathering of the Christian Liberation Fighters in Dhaka, which our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina hopefully would attend as Chief Guest.

In addition, the Catholic Church in Bangladesh also wanted in 2020 to celebrate and remember the 100th birthday of 'Servant of God' Theotonius Amal Ganguly, CSC, the first Bangladeshi Bishop or Archbishop (born 18 February 1920 in Hasnabad, Atharagram, Dt. Dhaka).

But due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government of Bangladesh and also the CBCB had to cancel many of the planned programs. One of the plans the CBCB had was to make a pilgrimage to historic places in Khulna Diocese to show our solidarity, unity and communion with all the people of Khulna Diocese, as well as to show our respect, homage and gratitude to 'Father of the Nation' Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and to the thousands of martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the country during the 1971 Liberation war. Fortunately this plan came to fruition from 06 to 10 November 2020.

The Bangladesh Bishops started their pilgrimage journey from Dhaka at 2 p.m. 06 November 2020. The first stop was at Queen of Peace Catholic Church, Roghunondpur, Faridpur-7800. Father Lawrence Barun Gomes, SMRA Sisters Mary Jyotsna and Mary Nioti, and some 50 parishioners, after welcoming the Bishops, went with them to the Church to pray for peace, harmony, justice, and for the human rights especially of poor and underprivileged people. His Eminence Cardinal Patrick D'Rozario, CSC, gave thanks to the people for their warm welcome and love. Father Barun Gomes and Barishal Bishop Lawrence Subrato Howlader, CSC, thanked the Bishops for

their concern and prayers. The SMRA Sisters served pitha, tea and coffee. The Bishops arrived at the Khulna Bishop's House at 8:45 p.m. 06 November, where a big crowd welcomed them. The beautiful welcoming ceremony included a big banner with all the Bishops' photos. The Bishops were garlanded with flowers, and Bishop of Khulna James Romen Boiragi and a representative of Khulna Diocese gave welcoming speeches. Cardinal Patrick expressed thanks to all.

Bishop Romen James Boiragi and Father Jacob Biwas then arranged a royal dinner with many dishes (items) including fish, prawns, chicken and scraf seafood). Sisters Bargman and Lucy SC welcomed the Bishops to their house Santa Maria called Bichitra, where they had prepared nice beds and other necessities for the Bishops' good rest. Archbishop-Elect Bejoy D'Cruze OMI at the Sisters' chapel led a short prayer and lit a candle for the well-being of the Sisters as well as for all the Doctors, Nurses and patients.

Second Day - 07 November 2020
Cardinal Patrick D'Rozario, CSC, presided at the Eucharistic celebration at the Khulna Bishop's House chapel at 6:30 a.m. with Archbishop Bejoy D'Cruze OMI, Bishop Gervas Rozario and the other Bishops concelebrating. Cardinal Patrick shared his hope that we could enter into the hearts of the Khulna people, for we are one in Jesus Christ. There are many historical places in Khulna Diocese and Khulna has a rich cultural history. We want to be united with the people, and we want to learn from the rich culture of Khulna Diocese. Your warm welcome has made us feel at home. We are brothers and sisters. Your token of gifts made us feel dignified. Let us continue to foster the communion of our community.

The Bishops then visited Tungipara, the birthplace of Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman, the Father of the Nation. The Bishops laid a

beautiful bouquet of flowers at the grave of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and they prayed for his departed soul. The Bishops also prayed for Bangladesh and all its people. The Father of the Nation had the dream to make Bangladesh Sonar Bangla. The authorities at Tungipara were very cordial to the Bishops. They explained to the Bishops about the Sheikh family's historical background and their meeting room. They helped the Bishops tour the cemetery, house and important places. The Bishops signed the Visitors' Guest Book.

The Bishops visited Advocate Gloria Jharna Sarker's [Member of Parliament, reserved 30 seats] Loudube village. Hundreds of people were waiting for the Bishops' visit to this small village. After the Bishops crossed the Poshu River by a small boat, they were given a warm welcome by the villagers and different groups of people, for example, by the Awami League, Jubo League, Mohila Songho, etc. Some Bishops went by three wheeler van to Adv. Gloria Jharna Sarker's house. Adv. Gloria Jharna Sarker has undertaken some development projects such as promoting women's development and preparing new types of food. The Bishops took part in tree plantation and fishery projects. Adv. Gloria Jharna Sarker arranged lunch for more than 1,500 people.

To appreciate God's creation in nature, and to implement Pope Francis' letter 'Laudato Si', the Bishops visited the Sundarban Forest.

Bishop James Romen Boiragi invited the Khulna priests, brothers and sisters, and Caritas people for dinner with all the Bishops at the Khulna Bishop's House.

Third Day - 08 November 2020

The Bishops celebrated a Eucharistic Mass at St. Joseph's Cathedral Church in Khulna. A huge number of people were present at the Mass. A really touching and thrilling royal welcome reception was given by the Saint Joseph's Boy Scouts with their drums

and music. When the Bishops made a courtesy visit to Saint Joseph's High School in Khulna, the teachers there were happy and appreciative. The Bishops also visited, prayed and lit candles at the grave of late Khulna Bishop Michael D'Rozario, CSC.

The Bishops went to Bagerhat to visit the Shat Gombus Mosque. The In-Charge of the Shat Gombus Mosque came to meet the Bishops. And he and the Bishops had a nice dialogue regarding our common humanity, justice and peace. Md. Golam Ferdus, Custodian of the Bagerhat Mazar, prayed for the Bishops' safe trip and for unity, harmony and peace throughout the world.

Cardinal Patrick D'Rozario, CSC, prayed for the country, human rights, and justice and peace. The Cardinal mentioned especially the economically poor, minority, marginalized and powerless people. All human beings are God's creation and we are brothers and sisters.

The Mayor of Khulna City Alhaz Talukder Abdul Khaleque came to meet all the Bishops at the Bishop's House in Khulna. The Mayor welcomed the Bishops to Khulna and he promised to give any necessary assistance for the Christian minority community.

The Bishops then paid a visit to Sagardari, Michael Modhu Sudan's palace. They visited his old house, his uncle's house and the library.

The Bishops stopped at Karpashdanga Parish, where a big crowd was waiting for the Bishops' arrival. The Bishops arrived quite late at about 8:45 p.m., but the people were very happy to greet them. The people gave a beautiful flower garland to each Bishop. There were a good number of children present also, Archbishop-Elect Bejoy D'Cruze, OMI thanked the people for their love and dignified and loving welcome. Cardinal Patrick D'Rozario, CSC, blessed all the people. The Bishops arrived at Bhabarpara Parish at 9:45 p.m. A big

group of Parish people welcomed the Bishops even though it was very late. They welcomed them from the main road to the parish campus by procession, with music and dancing and singing kirton songs.

Fourth Day - 09 November 2020

The Bishops celebrated the Eucharistic celebration at Bhabarpara Church. The church building is big and was filled by the people. Cardinal Patrick D'Rozario, CSC, was the main Celebrant. The Cardinal shared about peace, justice, human dignity, and the communion of the human community, and the special concern of the Holy Father Pope Francis for poor, minority, powerless and marginalized people, and for those in remote areas living in extreme poverty.

The Bishops paid a visit to the Mujibnagar (am bagan) Mango Garden where the Bangladeshi Government was first formed in 1971.

There is a big monument in remembrance of the liberation fighters who gave their lives to make the country free from Pakistan. You experience the history of Bangladesh very strongly in Mujibnagar! The Bishops presented a big bouquet of flowers to show their respect and gratitude for the sacrifices made by the Liberation Fighters to make possible the free nation of Bangladesh with its green and red flag.

The Bishops first of all remembered 'Father of the Nation' Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman who gave such strong and powerful leadership. The Bishops also remembered the four leaders who led the Temporary Government in 1971 in the absence of Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman. The Bishops showed their solidarity and oneness with the Bangladesh Government, which is celebrating this year the 100th birthday of 'Father of the Nation' Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The Bhabarpara Catholic Parish played an important role in the establishment of the Temporary Government in 1971. At that time Father Francis A. Gomes (later the first Bishop

of Mymensingh Diocese) as Parish Priest at Bhabarpara, provided tables and chairs and necessary furniture to the Temporary Government. Sister Catherine SC read a Bible passage at the inaugural ceremony of the Bangladesh Government. The elderly people at Bhabarpara still vividly remember that historical event.

The Bishops visited the whole area and showed their respect, honor and gratitude to the martyrs. Cardinal Patrick D'Rozario, CSC, led the prayer for the departed souls, for the Bangladesh nation's growth and prosperity, and for the human dignity, unity, justice and peace and equal rights for all, especially for the minority, weak and marginalized people.

The Bishops paid homage to Lalon Shah as a spiritual man who taught that all human beings are created by God, that all are equal, and that there should be no discrimination in human society. The Bishops went to visit Lalon Shah's Mosque (or Mazar). The Bishops talked to Khadem Md. Ripon, the Director of the Mazar. Cardinal Patrick led the prayer for human dignity, unity and the welfare of Bangladesh. The disciples or devotees of Lalon Shah sang three spiritual songs for the Bishops.

The Church of Bangladesh's Bishop's House is in the center of Kushtia City. Church of Bangladesh Bishop Hemen Halder and his people gave a warm welcome and presented beautiful flowers to the Bishops. They arranged songs, dances, a welcome speech and a big lunch for the Bishops as well as for the people. All the Bishops also prayed together. The Kushtia people claim that Kushtia is the capital of culture in Bangladesh.

Kutibari is Robindranath Tagore's Banglo (bungalow). Tagore spent much time at Kutibari. He wrote many poems, small or short stories, and even novels there. The Bishops enjoyed a good visit in the Kutibari Banglo, which is well taken care of by the

Bangladesh Government. The Bishops drank tender coconut water.

The Bishops continued their journey and arrived at 6:30 p.m. at Bonpara Parish. While some people had left, many remained to give a hearty welcome to the Bishops. They were happy to welcome all the Bishops together! They presented bouquets of flowers and washed the Bishops' hands as a symbol of love and respect. Cardinal Patrick D'Rozario, CSC, who had been the first Bishop of Rajshahi from 1990 to 1995, joyfully stated that he felt very much at home. The Cardinal also expressed the intentions and desires of the Bishops in making this Pilgrimage which was now concluding. Rajshahi Bishop Gervas Rozario

welcomed the Bishops to Rajshahi Diocese. The SMRA Sisters served High Tea and coffee.

Fifth Day - 10 November 2020

The Bishops concluded their pilgrimage at Bonpara Parish, with a closing Mass at 6:30 a.m., Tuesday, 10 November, at the Bonpara Church. Cardinal Patrick shared that the Pilgrimage had been a beautiful experience, where all the Bishops experienced both brotherhood and collegiality. Archbishop-elect Bejoy D'Cruze OMI thanked all for their love, prayer and support, and stated: 'We are strengthened by your spiritual support, as we journey together in the Spirit!'

Bishop Ponen Paul Kubi CSC

The CBCB Delegates and Apostolic Nuncio met the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

His Eminence Cardinal Patrick D'Rozario, csc. Archbishop Bejoy N. D'Cruze, OMI, Archbishop



George Kocherry, the Apostolic Nuncio and Bishop Shorot F. Gomes met the Prime Minister and gave her a cheque of Tk. 50 lac for the Government Corona Fund, on behalf of the Catholic Community in Bangladesh. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh formed a five member Committee for fund raising in order to help the poor and needy who were affected very much due to

coronavirus pandemic in our country, and also to express our solidarity with the nation and the government. They also shared with her about Catholic Education *Nitimala* and the contribution of the Catholic Community on education, health care and other matters.

Some information of CBCB Meeting

The fourth meeting of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB) of 2020 was held on November 4-5, 2020 at CBCB Centre. All the Bishops and Rev. Fr. Leonard C. Rebeiro, Administrator of Chattogram Archdiocese participated in the meeting. As His Eminence, Cardinal Patrick D'Rozario CSC, Archbishop of Dhaka & President of the CBCB retired on October 01, 2020, the Vice President of the CBCB, Most Rev. Gervas Rozario presided over the meeting which commenced at 8:30 A.M.

The main discussions of the meeting were as follows: Meeting with Most Rev. George Kocherry; Pope Francis' Social Encyclical *Fratelli tutti* (October 3, 2020), letter from the Vatican; Dicastery of Integral Human Development: to join a Video Conference concerning the situation, reflection, service during Covid – 19; Request of Archbishop Joseph Marino, President of the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy Voluntarily welcome of a priest-student in a diocese in Bangladesh); Letter regarding Latin Course (from the Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments); FABC Matters: Our response to

the FABC, on Safeguarding Policy; Letter of FABC President His Eminence, Cardinal Bo; CBCB Matters : CBCB Office bearers; Bank Signatories of CBCB Bank Accounts; dates of CBCB Meetings in 2021; CBCB & Episcopal Commissions: Seminary Commission: i) sharing on the reports of the Review done by Cardinal Patrick D' Rozario, csc and Bishop Bejoy N. D'Cruze, OMI ii) Vice Rector and Spiritual Director: Ramna Seminary iii) Holy Spirit Major Seminary matters; Review of Chairman and Secretaries of Episcopal Commissions; EC- Social Communication matters; Caritas Matters; EC- Youth Executive Secretary; EC- Liturgy and Prayer: Shorter *Ordo Missae*; Meeting with the Major Superiors of the BCR : Shifting the BCR Center to a new venue: the rationales and justifications for doing so; Assessment of the Child Protection Policy implementation: where we stand and what more to be done; The corona-virus effects and creating 'hopes' for the youths in innovative ways.

Election of the Office Bearers of the CBCB: The CBCB new Office Bearers are elected for three years (2020 - 2023): Archbishop elect Bejoy D'Cruze, omi as President, Bishop Gervas Rozario as Vice

President, Bishop Ponon Paul Kubi, csc as General Secretary and Bishop Subrato Lawrence L. Howlader, csc as Treasurer. All were reminded that from now on after every term, there will be an election of CBCB Office bearers following the constitution of the CBCB.

Inter-diocesan Appointments: Fr. Peter Chanel Gomes is appointed as Executive Secretary of EC- Liturgy and Prayer for a period of three years with the possibility of renewal.

Due to Corona Virus Pandemic, most of our episcopal commissions were not able to arrange programs with participants physically present during the month of September to December, but some episcopal commissions arranged online programs and meetings locally and some members of some episcopal commissions joined some online programs with FABC and other countries as well. We hope and pray for the end of this deadly coronavirus pandemic so that people all over the world can go back to normal life.

Wishing all our beloved readers and benefactors

A MERRY CHRISTMAS

&

A Happy New Year 2021



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