



TEA LEAVES

DARJEELING DIOCESE NEWSLETTER

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2022

Bishop's House, Darjeeling - 734101 INDIA

DECEMBER



Bishop's message



What thought comes to our mind, as we await Christmas? Is it Happiness? Gladness? These are thoughts that certainly come in each one's heart as any festivity arrives. This awakens people's eagerness and energizes them in their tasks. Many parishes may have

already made their Christmas preparation plans, festive meal and caroling and may have even fixed the budget for the celebration of Christmas. This is our simple way to celebrate the Christmas.

But, are there any other ways to celebrate Christmas? Have we missed out on spiritual preparations? How does Christmas without Jesus feel in our homes and parishes? For where Christ is, there is Christmas.

As we read in the Bible the first Christmas celebration started through Joseph and Mary. How deep and strong was their faith! Both Joseph and Mary find themselves in impossible situations. By the power of the Holy Spirit Mary becomes pregnant. With Mary's Yes to the angel Gabriel begins the salvation History. (Lk 2: 36-38)

In our life too we face such situations which seems impossible to our human understanding. In our lives, there are some impossibilities. These hinder us from receiving Jesus in our lives.

Let us be together with Mary and say, "I am the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to your will." (Lk 1: 38) Joseph too believed in the angel's message and came back to Mary to take up the responsibility of being the foster father of Jesus. He came back forever to Jesus. Here in returning or coming back, there is the grace of God, there is the mystery of Christ.

At present situations for Christians and many other minorities, there is a feeling of insecurity. But let's be firm on Christ's words, let us not be afraid but trust on him. Celebrate your Christmas with Christ. To all the people of the hills, I wish you a Happy Christmas.

+Bishop Stephen Lepcha

THE FIRST LORETO NUN



St. Teresa's Girls' H. S. school presented their annual concert - "The First Loreto Nun" to celebrate the life of Mother Teresa Ball, the foundress of the first

Loreto School at Rathfarnham, Ireland. This year marks the bicentenary of the establishment of Loreto, the Irish branch of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which was founded in York by Mary Ward. Mother Teresa Ball and her sisters set up the first school in Ireland and named it Loreto - characterizing the same spirit of charity and love that pervaded the House of Nazareth. From Ireland the sisters led by Delphine Hart came to Kolkata and then to Darjeeling. The play was a beautiful rendition of the life of a remarkable women of indomitable courage and her vision.



The play was staged from 15th to 18th November 2022 for parents as well as for neighboring schools. The chief guest on



the final day was Rt. Rev. Stephen Lepcha, Bishop of Darjeeling. The various communities of priests and religious of Darjeeling were also present as guests. The Bishop was also felicitated on that day for his Episcopal silver jubilee.



BISHOP 'S PASTORAL VISIT TO ST. JOHN BERCHMAN'S PARISH, KURSEONG.



It was a joyous event for the entire parish of St. John Berchman's Church/ St. Mary's Hill Kurseong, to receive our dear Bishop Rt. Rev. Stephan Lepcha for his Pastoral visit from the 26th to 27th of November 2022. Eleven SCC groups belonging to various wards had gathered at various spots from St. Mary's Hill vehicle road entrance right up to the Parish gate, to welcome the Bishop. Rev Fr. Andrew Lama , Parish Priest, Fr. Edward Sagnes Assistant Parish Priest, Mr. Thomas Subba (gurubabu) Bro. Jason Lepcha, Ms. Bobby Chettri, (Secretary Parish Pastoral Council), Members of PPC & PFC . Rev. Sr. Nirmala (Superior- Auxillium Convent) Sr. Rashmi (Holy Cross Convent) Superior (Flame of Hope), Core Team, members, representatives from various lay Associations of the Parish, animators and Parish Youth , Ms. Reshmi Subba and Mrs Eva Chettri animators of Holy Childhood , Holy Childhood children , flower girls, Principal and the teachers of Sweet Angel's School, and large number of parishioners accorded a cordial welcome to the Bishop and accompanied him to the serene ambience of well decorated St. John Berchman's Parish Ground.

Later in the Day Bishop Stephen held a meeting with the representative of PPC, PFC, Catholic Association, Nari Sangthan, Youth and Holy Childhood .His lordship shared his views regarding the changing trends in the Catholic Church. He encouraged the faithful to remain firm in their belief and in the teachings of the Gospel .He cautioned the parishioners that different forms of attack confronted the Church at all level ,in recent years such attacks have grown at an alarming proportion. "Each parishioners must think, work and serve the parish community in whatever possible way they can .We must stay united in Christ and deep rooted in His teachings with strong conviction and faith". The day was concluded with community dinner in honour of Bishop Stephen.

On the 27th 'out-door' Holy Eucharist began at 8:00 a.m. The concelebrated mass was presided by His Lordship Bishop Stephan, along with Rev. Andrew Lama (PP) Rev. Fr. Edward Sagnes (APP). The day was also celebrated as the Parish Day. During the Holy Eucharistic celebration six boys and girls received their first holy communion and fifteen boys and girls received their confirmation. In his homily the Bishop shared his deep faith in Christ and said "The most wonderful words that our Lord Jesus Christ spoke can be found in John 15-7- If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. These living words spoken by our Lord Jesus gives me life, encouragement and the reason to face many challenges day and night as the God Shepherd I face to keep my flocks together. Prayer, stay and live together and remember the Church because each one of you are the living Church and God's word lives in you .Be concerned about the Church and do not wait for Priests and Nuns, keep serving the Church community in your capacity individually and collectively .Priest are there as your "Dharm-Guru' each one of us need them like wise they also need each parishioner and the parish Community. Together we live and bear witness to Christ in our daily life through our work and deeds

appropriate to the teaching we have received from the Holy Bible."On behalf of the Parish Community, executive members of St. John Berchman's Catholic Welfare Association facilitated the Bishop on his silver jubilee year as the "Good Shepherd of Darjeeling Diocese". On the occasion of the Parish Day of St. John Berchman's Parish His Lordship recalled the hard work and contribution made by Late Bishop Eric Benjamin (son of the soil) in leading and establishing Darjeeling Dioceses on firm grounds. Bishop Stephen praised the past founders, members of DDCA, Sodality, Parish Catholic Association and other lay organisation for their sincere contribution towards the Catholic Church and Darjeeling Dioceses. Later on Bishop Stephan visited the elderly and the sick in the parish. In his brief vote of thanks Rev. Fr. Andrew Lama expressed his heartfelt gratitude to His Lordship Bishop Stephen for being available two full days with the Parish Community. He thanked the members of the Parish Choir for their heart touching Hymns which added more meaning to the event.

Congratulations to the members of SJBCWA, NARI SANGTHAN, HOLY CHILDHOOD, Parish YOUTH members of PPC & PFC for the herculean task completed with great joy and meaningfully. The remarkable occasion was concluded with 'Agape-Lunch' for all.

*-Peter Kerr,
St. John Berchman's Parish/Kurseong*



PIC OF THE MONTH



**Mobile
in the
Cradle**



Jubilee celebrations in Darjeeling



the occasion of the jubilee an audio Gospel and a documentary film Sakshi was premiered, depicting the journey of the diocese and also the Episcopal Journey of Bishop Stephen Lepcha. This was

followed by the Jubilee Mass in the Same Venue presided by His Excellency Archbishop Geraldo Girelli. He congratulated the Bishop, Priests, Religious and faithful on the 60th year of the faith journey and wished the very best to the Diocese. He also read a citation letter on behalf of the Holy Father addressed to Bishop Stephen on the occasion of his Episcopal Silver Jubilee. The hall and the vicinity was filled to capacity with faithful delegates from

The Diocese of Darjeeling celebrated its Diamond Jubilee and the Episcopal Silver Jubilee of its second Bishop, Bishop Stephen Lepcha on 8th December 2022. Archbishop Leopoldo Girelli, the Apostolic Nuncio to India and Nepal was the Chief Guest and the Main celebrant of the Jubilee Mass along with Archbishop Thomas D'Souza, the Regional Bishops, Bishop Ignatius of Shimla the National BEC Chairman, Bishop Paul Simick of Nepal and the Religious and Diocesan Clergy. The day began with a visit to the Cathedral by the Nuncio and the Bishops where they paid homage at the grave of Late Bishop Eric Benjamin, the first Bishop of the Diocese of Darjeeling. The Jubilee Mass was preceded by the felicitation of the Nuncio

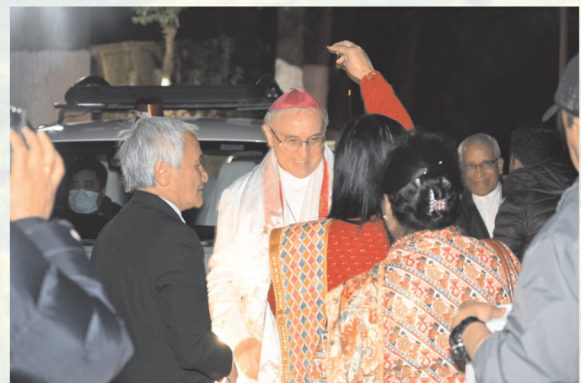


far and wide parishes of the diocese. The excellent choir and the well planned liturgical ambience added to the solemnity.



The parishioners of the Cathedral put in their level best to look after

and the Bishops at the Monica Affonso Hall at Loreto Convent. After a welcome speech by Fr. Samuel Lepcha, the Vicar General, Bishop Stephen was felicitated on the occasion of his Episcopal Jubilee, Archbishop Thomas D'Souza also was felicitated and he in his speech recalled his days as a seminarian, priest, Vicar General and Administrator of Darjeeling till he left for the newly created Diocese of Bagdogra as its first Bishop. On



the logistics of the day along with the Priests and religious of the vicinity. The day ended with a Jubilee Lunch prepared with love and diligence.

KUDOS from SRS



Sir DENIS LEPCHA, Pol. Sc. teacher of St. Robert's School, Darjeeling, has been conferred with the SIKSHA RATNA award for the year, 2022 by the Government of West Bengal.

We, at St. Robert's, are immensely proud of Denis Sir. We are honoured to have a teacher of his calibre, dedication and passion for teaching in our family.

Apart from his career as a teacher, he is also actively involved in various services in our Diocese, hence building up of the Diocese. He renders his selfless services in the Family commission, preaching retreats, translation work, writing hymn lyrics, Sahitya Academy etc., in the Diocese...

We congratulate him for the award.

May the Almighty God keep showering such blessings upon him.

Regards,
St. Robert's School, Darjeeling.



Christmas Musing

*A Child is always precious, whether rich or poor,
Brought up in luxury or begging at someone's door.
Some are lucky to be born with a silver spoon in their mouth,
While some struggle for Justice, North, East, West and South.*

*Christmas is always joyous, whether warm or cold,
Jesus' Birth in a stable will always be told,
The wrath of Herod and all his fuss,
Could not stop the era, of God amongst us.,*

*Jesus... Rich, or Poor? Is always a paradoxical reality
His teachings on Love and justice, reverbs in every city,
Understood and Misunderstood from Conception to Resurrection
Went back to His Father, in the day of Ascension.*

*'ET!!! HE Spiritually is with us always, till the "LAST" Day
Reminding us to keep our adulterated Ego at Bay
God So Loved the World by giving His only begotten SON
So with Faith, Joy and Hope we Say: Unto us a Child is born.*

*Wishing all, a very meaningful CHRISTMAS,
and A BLESSED 2023*

-Fr. Alexander Gurung



Kindly Communicate!!!

Tea Leaves is the medium through which the individual parishes, communities and institutions can share with others, about the activities and events of your areas of work. So please send in the reports of your initiatives and programmes to:

Fr. Alex Gurung, Darjeeling Diocese Communication Commission,
Bishop's House, Darjeeling

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