



# TEA LEAVES

DARJEELING DIOCESE NEWSLETTER

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2022

Bishop's House, Darjeeling - 734101 INDIA

May

## Bishop's message



Month of May was dedicated to Mary the mother of God and have always experienced the infinite Grace of God through Mary. Likewise the month June is dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. How blessed we are, always being filled with the grace of God.

What does the devotion to Sacred heart of Jesus teach us? We live in a love-hungry world. As we experience, no human love can quench the insatiable human's hunger for love. No wonder Jesus revealed to Margaret Mary a French nun on December 27, 1673. And later she confessed what Jesus told her. "My Divine Heart is so passionately in love with humanity that it can no longer contain within itself the flames of its ardent love. It must pour them out though you and manifest itself to them with its precious treasures, which contain all the graces which they need to be saved".

Ever since, she became the agent of this message to the humanity in the world. Devotion to the sacred heart is indeed the devotion of the passionate love of Jesus to the humanity. We Catholics are so blessed to have all these treasures. We are blessed with infinite love and infinite mercy of God.

Let us like St. Margate Mary try to be the instruments of his fountain of love to the people around us.

Pope Francis invites us to celebrate the closing ceremony of *Amoris Laetitia* Joy of Love in the Family from 22<sup>nd</sup> -26<sup>th</sup> June 2022, in Rome and around the world.

When our families begin to burn with the Passion of love of Jesus flowing from the fountain of the heart of Jesus, life begins in the family.

*+Stephen Lepcha*

## FIRST DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF LATE REV. FR. RENE SINGH



Late Rev. Fr. Rene Singh, the great educationist and pastor had died on 9<sup>th</sup> may 2021. It was a pandemic hit year so according to the Government SOP only 20 (twenty) persons could be present for any funeral services. Even for the funeral of Fr. Rene Singh only twenty persons were present. Fr. Rene, who had spent 39 years as the Parish Priest and the Headmaster in Sacred Heart Church, Pedong and St. George's H. S. School, Pedong respectively. While in Pedong he had cordial relationship with all walks of life. People of Pedong wanted to pay respect to Late Fr. Rene Singh. Therefore, people of Pedong under the leadership of Dr. Jigmee Bhutia (ARD), Pedong, Late Rev. Fr. Rene Singh Memorial Foundation was started. The foundation organized the 1st Death Anniversary of Late Rev. Fr. Rene Singh on 9th May 2022. They had organized Holy Mass for the repose of the soul of Rev. Fr. Rene Singh. Open invitation was given for the mass. Many ex-students of Rev. Fr. Rene participated in the Mass from different parts of India and Nepal. The Main Celebrant of the Mass was Rt. Rev. Bishop Stephen Lepcha. After the Holy Mass the bust of Late Rev. Fr. Rene Singh, constructed by the foundation was inaugurated by Rt. Rev. Bishop Stephen Lepcha. On that occasion Bishop appreciated the initiative taken by the people of Pedong for showing respect and gratitude to Late Rev. Fr. Rene Singh.

*Fr. Joseph Chettri*

## ERECTION OF TWO NEW QUASI PARISHES IN PEDONG DEANERY;



Two new Quasi Parishes have been erected by the Decree given by Rt. Rev. Bishop Stephen Lepcha, bifurcating Vijaya Rani Girja, Maria Busty. The two New Quasi Parishes are: Sacred Heart Church, Duka, Gangep and St. Joseph, the Worker's Church, Changsing Lingsekha. The new Parish Priests of the respective parishes are Rev. Fr. Camrus Rai and Rev. Fr. Marcellino Sukden Lepcha. Fr. Samuel Lepcha, V.G. and Rev. Fr. Joseph Chettri, the Dean of Pedong Deanery declared the erection of two Quasi Parishes by reading the Decree given by the Bishop and the Chancellor then followed the installation of the First Parish Priest in the respective Places.

*-Fr. Joseph Chettri*



# Bishop's pastoral Visits in the month of May 2022

## Bishops Pastoral Visits:

Canon Law 396.1 states that a bishop is obliged to visit the diocese annually either in whole or in part, so that he visits the entire diocese at least every five years..... The presence of bishop is a blessing to the parish when he visits.

Bishop of Darjeeling- Sikkim leaves no stone unturned to render his pastoral care to the near and far flung parishes of our Diocese.



**Gitdabbling :** After a gap of three years Bishop Stephen Lepcha visited St. Joseph's Church, Gitdubling. He reached on 30th April and joined in the felicitation of Mr.

Robert Lepcha a retired senior teacher of St. Joseph school Gitdubling. He had served the school for more than thirty years and will always be remembered as the most dedicated, committed and a noble teacher. Fathers, Sisters, Staff and students had organised a grand felicitation program in his honor.

After the program Bishop joined in the Parish Pastoral Council meeting at the parish hall. Fr. Thomas Urgen Lepcha the parish priest, Fr. Sebastian Lepcha the assistant parish Priest, Fr. Norbert Lepcha in charge of Longsheol Mission, Sr. Victoria S.J.C the Superior of St. Joseph convent and all the lay members of parish Pastoral Council were present. Members belonging to different commissions, SCC, PPC, Catholic Associations, Women, Youth and Holy childhood, read their annual reports. The parish priest gave the report of the construction of the new Church. The construction of the new Church is about to be completed. The entire expense of the construction of this church is born by the generous contribution from the local Catholic families. Each Catholic family is committed to contribute Rs.10000/- Rupees Ten thousand each. Bishop encouraged them saying that you have proved an act of faith in God. A christen hymn says. "Miracles can take place when you believe" and this has come true in this matter. After the meeting Bishop visited few elderly members of the parish and returned to priest resident at around 7.30 pm

On 1<sup>st</sup> May, Sunday, Parish celebrated the feast of St. Joseph the worker, the Patron saint of their parish. Solemn Mass was celebrated. 24 candidates received the sacrament of confirmation. After the mass the faithful felicitated the Bishop by Lepcha traditional way by offering fruits, vegetables, eggs, hens etc. Bishops Vehicle was filled with their gifts. Bishop was overwhelmed by the love of the faithful.

**Takdah 08.05.2022:** As per the invitation of the Diocese of Darjeeling, Rev. Marcel Fernandes OCD, Provincial Leader of OCD Congregation arrived on Sunday morning from Dhupguri near Binaguri their head quarter in the Diocese of Jalpaiguri along with the following priests, Fr. Raphael Tudu OCD, the new in charge Parish, Fr. Leo Murmu OCD, the incoming in charge of Primary school, Fr. Joseph Shibu Fernandes OCD. Bishop called them for a short meeting before Mass with them, in presence of Fr. Prakash Rai, the outgoing Parish Priest and Fr. Amar Rai the outgoing Assistant PP. He read out the short memorandum between OCD and the Diocese of Darjeeling to be followed during the term of two years of experimental basis. After the meeting, handing over and taking over of required parish parochial documents and inventory of the Church, Presbytery and the School was conducted.

Bishop introduced the OCD fathers to the faithful gathered in the Church and briefed them about their purpose of coming to Takdah parish, mainly to explore the possibility of up gradation of the School on public demand within 2-3 years time. Meanwhile they will look after the parish as well. The faithful traditionally welcome the OCD fathers at the beginning of the Holy Mass; Fr. Raphael Tudu OCD was solemnly installed as the new parish priest in the presence of entire faithful. Diocese has decided to bifurcate Teesta valley Mission from Takdah parish and Fr. Prakash Rai is appointed as the in charge of this new Mission.

## St. Peter's Church, Gaucharan.

Bishop arrived St. Peter's Church, Gaucharan East Sikkim in the afternoon of 14.05.2022. Parish youth ICYM unit of this parish welcomed Bishop solemnly. He was requested to bless and inaugurate the majestic and beautiful Bishop's Room inside the Priest's resident built by Fr. Stephen Gyan with the generous contribution by the Parishioners. It was unique and first time that happened in the life of 25 years of Bishops Episcopate ministry that the parish made a special room for Bishop in the Diocese of Darjeeling-Sikkim. Lunch, Dinner, and next day's breakfast, lunch was prepared by youth for priest, and sisters. Bishop expresses his sincere thanks to Vivek Rai the President and all the Parish youth for their exclusive genuine love and concern. Sincere thanks also to the Parishioners for their love and respect for their shepherd. Umpteen thanks to Fr. Stephen Gyan the parish priest for his animating leadership. After lunch Bishop participated in the Parish Pastoral Council meeting in which whole parish report was read out. As per the Parish report, normal parish pastoral activities are going on. SCC meeting is picking up slowly after the lock-down due to Covid-19. Faith formation, regular Sunday Catechism for children (Saturday) is also regularizing in systemic way. Parish managing committee is being officially approved by the Government. So they were able to register the parish land in this committee's name on behalf of the parish which was pending for a long time. In the parish plan of actions, one is to make a unique "Calvary Dara" pilgrim centre for all Christians for East Sikkim with the financial help from the present Government.

**15.05.2022:** Early Sunday morning bishop visited the original old parish in Gaucharan where gave Holy Communion to Edward Lepcha a retired teacher and his wife, Mrs. Peter Santujit Rai the first catholic members. Late Peter Santujit was a first convert and very close to Missionary priests. They were like one family. He remained ever faithful and always supportive to all the priests. His legacy is carried over by his son Mr. Patrick a Government Officer in Sikkim. Bishop was invited by Dominic Rai and his family who offered high breakfast. Bishop visited also Mr. Paul Karna Rai a builder who was not well on that day. Finally he arrived Church exactly on time before Mass. Culmination of Bishop's visit was the solemn Eucharistic celebration with the faithful, sharing the good news on Sunday. Parish church was almost full to the capacity. Liturgy, Choir was well organized with the help of Cluny sisters and the youths of the parish. Miss. Leonie Malmith Lepcha received both Holy Communion and Confirmation from Bishop. St. Peter's Church (parish) established 1977, was founded by late Missionary priest Jean-Marie Brahier CR. He tirelessly worked for the development of local people, by way of establishing the cooperative society. He adapted the local culture and the language. He was indeed a walking Jesus for the people. May he Rest in Peace seeing the spiritual progress of the mission he started.

**Sangsay:** Bishop arrived Sangsay on 21 .05.2022:. He offered Mass for the SCN sisters' community at Nazareth Lee Convent. Sr. Arpita SCN Superior, Sr. Jyoti SCN and Sr. Stanilau SCN are members of this community. After closing down St. Dominic School, sisters are keeping themselves busy with



other social and pastoral work in the parish. Sr. Jyoti who is a nurse is collaborating with Hayden hall Darjeeling conducting health awareness program and reaching out to the sick and needy people in entire village of Sangsay. There are five trained paramedics under the supervision of Hayden hall. Sisters are involved in social developmental work. The Financial sustenance of Sangsay is fully dependant on agriculture. Though the cultivating land is rocky, dry and stony, people somehow cultivate Brooms, Ginger, Chilly, and rear animals, low cost poultry farm, cow diary etc. Sisters try to organise the farmers and find the market to get normal valuable prices for their product. Besides these they go out with the catechist and the parish priest go wherever there are Village Mass. Their presence is certainly making an impact in the parish. Listening their pastoral ministry, bishop noticed that despite all these good things happening but biggest challenge for their sustenance remains worrisome. They want to do good but how?

**22.05.2022:** Outgoing parish priest of St. Dominic Church, Sangsay Fr. Augustine Subba had invited Bishop for the pastoral visit. His reports are as follows; there total 100 families. There are two substations, Our lady of Lourdes Chapel at Pathong and one at Tarkhola on the National Highway to Gangtok. This substation is now being looked after by senior Fr. Jerome Singh from Gianora Home. It is divided into 9 SCC units. The Catholic Associations are affiliated DDCA, Mata Samaj, Youth, Holy Childhood, remain quite active. PPC is dissolved before lock-down due to Covid-19. The Parish Finance Committee is existing. Parish priest feels that faithful need training on PPC, PFC and other Associations as since they remain always uncertain about these Church bodies, the faithful are responsible in general. Fr. Augustine Organisms two retreats annually in Advent and one in Lenten Seasons. Group recollections are held once in three months regularly. Novena is conducted SCC wise and way of the Cross conducted SCC family wise. During Advent and Lenten season Holy Mass is being offered SCC wise. Mass is offered in the substation once a month mass for the community. It's a huge parish distance wise. Our lady of Lourdes Pathong substation is closer to Kalimpong town than Sangsay parish. Because the distance it may be wiser to be annexed with Mary Mother of God Church or St. Anthony Church Kilar Homes or make it Quasi parish. Bishop wants to visit this substation soon along with Dean of Kalimpong and other priests as well as send a team of lay people from Kalimpong for this genuine need of the community.

Tea leaves congratulate Fr. Augustine Subba for his hard labour in mobilizing and constructing the new Church for Sangsay.

**Sonada - 28.05.2022:** On kind invitation of Sr. Sherin H.C. the headmistress of Holy Crosse Girls Higher Secondary School Sonada. It was an opportunity for the Bishop to join with the Holy Cross sisters, past and present Staff members, Guardians, Parents and the students to thank all the visionaries like pioneering Holy Cross sisters and late Fr. Luiji Jellici sdb and late Bishop Eric Benjamin who thought of starting a good school, empowering the local Girls. The best way to celebrate its golden jubilee was to have solemn Eucharistic celebration thanking God firstly for his abundant graces blessed upon for the last fifty years. It was indeed a grace-filled moment. The School beautiful hall was packed with the students, their parents and all invited local dignitaries. The Headmistress in her inaugural address left no stone unturned to remember all personnel involved in the progress of this Institution, including all those Government officials who granted recognition of this school and also D.I, local Government official for their continuous support and financial support especially for the salary of the staff members. She also highlighted the vision and mission of the education of the congregation of the Holy cross Society after the heart of

the heart of Founder and Foundress Fr. Theodosius Florentini and Mother Maria Theresa Scherer of Switzerland. Tea leaves congratulates Sr. Blasia H.C Superior, Sr. Sherin H.C, the headmistress, other sisters of the Community, staff and students for reaching the golden year of their service.

**Pringtam, Blessing of Bell Tower:**

On behalf of kind invitation of Fr. Joseph Menezes, the parish priest and the entire Parishioners of St. Patrick Church, Pringtam, Bishop had gone there mainly for the Blessing of Church Bell tower. He had combined his pastoral visit also. The program was well organized by the local parish



Committee. Liturgy, singing choir was very good. Fr. Joseph Menezes the parish priest, Fr. Patrick Golay and Fr. Gerard Lepcha concelebrated with Bishop. One Holy Cross sister also attended the Mass. After the Mass Bishop performed the blessing ceremony of the Church Bell which was the centre of the whole program of the day. Master of the ceremony Mr. took over the rest of the felicitation program of day. They were two guests of honor were invited by the parishioners one was area MLA Mr. Ruden lepcha who was the main person to bring motor able road to this area and great supporter of the people. There was also Mr. Patrick Sada and his wife present for the function who in fact was the key person to bring major development of the area by initiating carpeting of the road in the beginning, bringing electricity connection and bringing drinking Water to this dry areas while he was the Financial administrator of Hill Council, Darjeeling. People had invited the president of the Hamro party Mr. Ajay Edward too. He and his party members also joined the mass as they were on their way for their party meeting in this area only. He too had contributed financial support towards the bell tower. It was a great gesture of love shown towards his own church. Major contributor and moral supporter absent on this great occasion was not other than *Bhumi Putra* Fr. Dr. Samuel Lepcha who could not be present due to his erstwhile commitments.. Children of Parish School and parish youth as well as local children studying at St. Philomena's School presented beautiful cultural dance and other items to make the day joyful one. Beauty of the program was lunch prepared by all neighbors belonging to Hindu and Buddhist community which is the uniqueness of the local Hill people. Unity in diversity culture prevails here.

A Tea Leaves congratulates the parish priest and all the parishioners for the great blessed day.

PIC OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to the new DYD





**"YOUR WORD IS A LAMP FOR MY FEET, AND A LIGHT FOR MY PATH"  
(PS 119, 105)**

**FIRST TIME IN DARJEELING DIOCESE**

**BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE IN NEPALI**

- Are you interested in knowing about Jesus Christ?
- Are you eager to be introduced to Bible?
- Do you have doubts in any particular passage of the Bible?
- Do you want guidance in your life and light for your steps?



**REGISTRATION FROM JUNE 2022**

(REGISTRATION FEE RS. 500/-)



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**CONTACT**

**FR. FRANK SUBBA**  
8372031881



A program by Bible Commission Darjeeling Diocese  
(Affiliated to CCBI)  
Divya Vani, Loreto Convent Road,  
Darjeeling, 734 101

**Bible Commission Darjeeling Diocese (CCBI), Bible Class SCC, DRT/DST**



Bible Commission Darjeeling Diocese organized Bible class for SCC-DRT/DST from 23-25 of May 2022, at Divya Vani Darjeeling. On the 23rd first day of the class Fr. Samuel Lepcha, director of SCC Darjeeling diocese welcomed Bishop Stephen Lepcha and all the participants and briefed about the Bible class. Bishop Stephen Lepcha addressed the participants and told them about the importance of the Bible study and fruitfulness of the Word of God in the lives of the faithful. The number of participants was 20 from Sikkim, Kalimpong, Pedong, and Fagu. Among the participants, Four Cluny sisters and one Loreto sister who participated in the Bible class. Fr. Frank Subba, SJ was the resource person for all the three days. Bible Class consisted of the basic introduction to the Bible, how to read and interpret the Word of God. The Bible class was conducted first time for SCC DRT/DST, all the participants profited a lot from it. I thank Fr. Samuel Lepcha and Sr. Veronica Ranger SJ, who played a very vital role in organizing the Bible class for SCC DRT/DST.

*-Fr. Frank Subba, SJ Secretary, Bible Commission*



**"Do not let the past disturb you.**

**Leave everything in the sacred heart of the Jesus and begin again with Joy."**

**-St. Teresa of Calcutta**



**Family Prayer to the Sacred Heart**

*Sacred Heart of Jesus, we entrust our family to You. Look down upon us and reveal to us the treasures of love, goodness, and grace in Your Heart. Forgive our sins and fortify our weakness, that we may serve You faithfully as You deserve. These favors we ask for ourselves and for every family in our neighborhood and homeland. Heart of Jesus, pierced by a soldier's lance on Calvary, be our refuge in life and our gateway to Paradise. Amen.*

**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,  
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