



TEA LEAVES

DARJEELING DIOCESE NEWSLETTER

visit us at : www.darjeelingdiocese.com

Bishop's House, Darjeeling - 734101 INDIA

SEPTEMBER

Bishop's Message



On this blessed month, we gather our hearts in reverence to celebrate the birth of our beloved Mother Mary, the gentle and compassionate mother of our Savior. With her immaculate heart, she has touched the lives of countless faithful, guiding them with her tender love and unwavering faith.

Mother Mary, is the beacon of hope, the vessel of purity, and the source of infinite grace. Her life on Earth was a testament to humility and devotion, inspiring us to walk in her footsteps with courage and love. Through her "Yes" to God, she became the Mother of all, embracing us with her maternal care and leading us closer to her Son, Jesus Christ.

On her birthday, we honor her, our dear Mother, and offer our prayers of gratitude for her intercession in our lives. May her example continue to inspire us to live in faith, to love unconditionally, and to serve others with a pure heart. We ask for her blessings always, that we may grow in holiness and remain ever close to our Heavenly Mother.

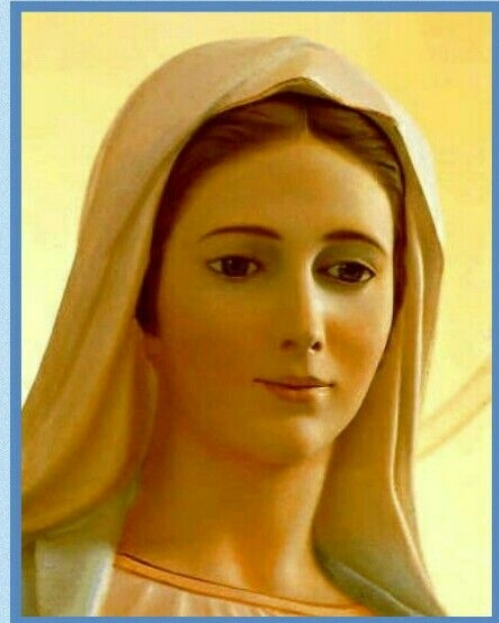
Happy Birthday, Blessed Mother. May your name be praised forever in our hearts.

+Bishop Stephen Lepcha

Happy Birthday Mama Mary!

"May Mary show us, in her son, the way of peace and enlighten our vision, so that we can recognize Christ's face in the face of every human person, the heart of peace."

Pope Benedict XVI
Message for World Day of Prayer for Peace, 2007



September 8
Solemnity of the Birth of the
Blessed Virgin Mary

For a latest videos visit us at :
youtube : darjeeling divyavani prastuti
For all publications, videos & Media
visit us at :

<https://www.darjeelingdiocese.com/media/>

Editorial

From the editor's desk

The "Jubilee Year Pilgrim of Hope" refers to the upcoming Jubilee Year 2025 declared by the Catholic Church, under the theme "Pilgrims of Hope." Jubilee Years are special years of grace and celebration that occur every 25 years. They offer the faithful a time for deep spiritual renewal, forgiveness, and pilgrimage, often accompanied by indulgences.

The "Pilgrim of Hope" theme emphasizes the journey of faith as one of hope, reflecting the Church's mission to inspire optimism, trust in God's mercy, and a renewal of spiritual life. It invites believers to become "pilgrims," both literally through pilgrimage to holy sites and symbolically in their spiritual journey.

The theme is particularly relevant in today's world, which faces many challenges. It calls on the faithful to persevere with hope, find meaning in their trials, and move forward with faith in God's plan. The Jubilee Year feature various events, prayers, and pilgrimages.



This is an excellent opportunity to deepen our faith, engage with the global Catholic community, and explore the profound concept of hope within the Christian tradition.

SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATION OF THE PRIESTLY ORDINATION OF OUR TWO PRIESTS

The diocesan community came together with joy and gratitude on 3rd August 2024 at St. Teresa's Church, Kalimpong to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the sacerdotal ordination of two of our beloved priests: Rev. FR. Francis Xavier Banerjee and Rev. FR. Alexander Gurung. The event marked 25 years of their unwavering dedication to God's service and the pastoral care of the faithful.



The celebrations began with a solemn Mass presided over by the Bishop. The church was beautifully adorned, reflecting the significance of the occasion. In his homily, Rev. FR. Francis Banerjee expressed deep gratitude to God for His faithfulness over the years and thanked the congregation for their constant prayers and support. Rev. FR. Alex Gurung echoed these sentiments and shared reflections on the challenges and joys of their priestly journey.



The Mass was followed by a grand reception held in the church premises. Parishioners, religious communities, family members, and friends attended in large numbers, offering their heartfelt congratulations. The event featured inspiring speeches from parish representatives, acknowledging the tireless efforts and spiritua



A highlight of the celebration was a video presentation, recounting the priests' journey from their ordination day to the present. The presentation featured messages from former parishioners, mentors, and fellow priests who played significant roles in their ministry.



The Silver Jubilee celebration was not only a moment to honor the priests but also to renew the faith and unity within the Diocese. Rev. FR. Francis and Rev. FR. Alex have touched countless lives through their ministry, and this milestone serves as a reminder of their enduring service to the Church and the community.

As they move forward in their vocation, the diocese continues to pray for God's blessings upon them, so they may keep inspiring and guiding the faithful for many more years to come.

SILVER JUBILEE GREETINGS

**"To fall in love with God is the greatest of romances,
to seek Him the greatest adventure, to find Him the greatest human achievement."**

-St. Augustine

Dear Fr. Alexander Gurung,

As we celebrate 25 years of your priesthood we join you with our hearts lifted in gratitude to the Almighty, praising Him for calling you to this vocation and leading you through these years.

It seems just like yesterday that here in your own home parish, twenty five years ago you took your vows and committed your life to Christ and His Church. In your own words, "tempus fugit"- time flies and here we are once more in the same place to congratulate you for the dedicated zeal with which you have and you continue to carry out your ministry.



Since your ordination on 8th December 1999 you have served the Diocese in various capacities as Asst. Parish Priest, St. Joseph's Church, Gitdubling (1999-2000), Parish Priest, Sacred Heart Church, Lolay (2000-2002), after having completed a Masters Degree in Mass communication and Post Graduate Diploma in Pastoral Communications from NISCONT, Delhi you returned to the Diocese and took charge as the Director of Communication and Public Relations Officer from 2003 till date. In the mean time simultaneously you also took care of Maria Paharki Rani Church, Glenburn (2003-2009) and our Lady of Lourdes Church, Lizahill (2009 -2018), Professor of Mass Communication and journalism at St. Joseph's College, North Point (2007-2018), Director of Divya Vani Pastoral Centre (2014 -2018), Dean of Darjeeling Kurseong Deanery (2018 -2023) and Pro Vicar of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception (2018 -2024).

There is no denying the fact that your skills in public relations has been a blessing to the Diocese as you have helped in building a holistic relationship not just within the Church but also in the society at large. Your role in the Media Ministry is highly commendable too. Divya Vani Prashtuti and the Diocesan website are fruits of your expertise and sincere efforts. But above all your love for the Church, the Bride of Christ is evident in the pastoral care you render.

Today on your silver jubilee, the Diocese is grateful to you for your selfless service and wishes to reiterate the very words written on the backdrop of the stage on your Ordination day, "You are precious.... You are mine." (Isaiah 43). Indeed Father, you are precious in the sight of God and the Diocese feels blessed to have you.

May the Lord keep you from all harm; May He watch over your life. May the Lord watch over your coming and going, now and forever more. (Psalm 121).

With warm regards,
Bishop Stephen Lepcha and Clergy
Diocese of Darjeeling

SILVER JUBILEE GREETINGS

“To

“The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honourable, to be compassionate, and to have it make some difference.”

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Dear Fr. Francis Banerjee,

It is with thanksgiving that we join you today to celebrate a remarkable milestone in your life – your sacerdotal silver jubilee – 25 years of priesthood, a quarter of a century lived in making a difference!

It was on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, here in this very Church that you were ordained, called in the order of Melchizedek, to be a priest forever. Here we are 25 years later, gathered in the same place to glorify the Lord for the gift of your priesthood.

Since your ordination on 8th December 1999, you have selflessly carried forth the ministries assigned to you. You have served as the Associate Pastor, (1999-2001) and Parish Priest (2001-2003), St. Maurice Church, Suruk. After completing your B.Ed. you served as Vice Principal and hostel Superintendent, St. Joseph's School, Rhenock (2004 -2013). During this time you also looked after St. Joseph's Church, Rhenock as its Parish Priest, Dean of Sikkim North East Deanery (2018-2023) and Principal of St. Xavier's School, Pakyong from 2013 till date.



You have touched many lives both as a Priest and as a Teacher. The commitment with which you have carried out your pastoral and administrative responsibilities is a testimony of the love you have for Christ and His people. Instilling Gospel values in today's young generation is almost a herculean task, yet as Principal you have been guiding students on this path, ensuring their holistic development and nurturing them to live as per the school motto, “Pro Deo Et Patria” – For God and Country. You have left no stone unturned to uphold the legacy of St. Xavier's School Pakyong and under your guidance one can see the St. Xavier's flag soaring high.

“Priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus” and this love is what you personify in your day to day ministry. Your dedication and commitment towards your vocation has changed the lives of many and your prayers, specially the Holy Mass has nourished and invigorated the people under your pastoral care.

The Diocese is grateful to God for your Priesthood and prays for God's favour to be upon you and yours today and forever.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15: 13.

With warm regards,

*With warm regards,
Bishop Stephen Lepcha and Clergy
Diocese of Darjeeling*

ICYM DESK

Theme: *“Those who hope in the lord will run and not be weary”*

-Isaiah 40:31

Venue: **St. Augustine’s School Kalimpong**

For each individual to know that lord sees in us a beauty that no one else can see, The word of God in Isaiah 43:4 tells “For you are precious in my sight and honored, and I love you”. Therefore to rejoice the grace of youthfulness with pure joy, to renew ourselves in his eternal love and mercy. The Diocesan Executive Commission of Darjeeling Sikkim Diocese organized the NATIONAL YOUTH DAY at St Augustine’s School Kalimpong, where about Six Hundred Seventy Six (676) numbers of youth delegates from the five Deaneries arrived along with their Coordinators, animators, and parish priest.

The arrival of each hopeful youth filled the ambiance with great excitement, to begin the day’s event. The program started exactly at 10:30 am, the auditorium filled with murmuring crowds became silent when the MC’s for the day Mr. Allen Lepcha (DEXCO Vice President) and Ms. Simran Marlyn Tamang (DEXCO Advisor) gave instruction and some details about the program, to excite and express to the youth that the Day was theirs, the DEXCO executive members performed the animation mentoring gladly to all the delegates, The excitement of singing and dancing for the lord brought enthusiastic vibes for the day’s program.

Meanwhile the special guest Mr. Albert Kabo the winner of sa re ga ma pa and his wife Mrs. Pooja Lepcha along with their baby arrived, accompanied by our Rev Bishop Stephen Lepcha (Chairman of ICYM of Darjeeling Sikkim Diocese) and DYD Rev Fr Chrispin Tamang. Followed by a welcome dance by the youth of Our Lady of Lourdes Tandrabung. After the flawless bhajan dance, Mr. Evan Lepcha (DEXCO President) gave a warm welcome addressing to the special guests, Rev Bishop Stephen Lepcha, Priests, Nuns and youth from all deaneries’. Rev Bishop Stephen and Mr. Albert Kabo lighted the Diya to signify the Triumph of light over darkness and to represent enlightenment, knowledge and wisdom. While the Diya was being lighted the choir sung the Jubilee hymn “Jwala Jastai mero aatma jali rahecha....” Which was magical.

Soon after we prepared ourselves for the Holy Eucharistic celebration, conducted by Rev Bishop Stephen Lepcha and sixteen Priest’s from the Diocese.

The new Coordinators of North East Deanery Rev Fr. Don Bosco Lepcha (Jnr) and Rev Fr Fredrik Gurung for Pedong Deanery After the mass ended Rev Bishop Stephen was felicitated, the SAMBARDHANA PATRA was cited by Mr. Clarence Lepcha (ZEXCO of Pedong Deanery) and felicitated by DYD Rev Fr Chrispin Tamang.

After the group photo session we all dispersed for lunch at Albert Lee Arena where the lunch was prepared and served for all the attendees. After the lunch everyone gathered in the auditorium exactly at 1:30 pm, for the next sessions, the DEXCO had already climbed the stage and were leading and performing the animation, the crowd was huge dancing and singing vibrantly.

Next we had Mr. Albert Kabo seated on the stage to be felicitated, the SAMBARDHANA PATRA was cited by Ms. Nisha Tracy Rai (DEXCO Joint Secretary) and felicitated by his lordship Rev Bishop Stephen Lepcha. Mr. Albert gave a few words of encouraging words to the youth and his struggles in bringing home the winner title of Zee Sa Re Ga Ma Pa. It was really a proud moment for the Diocese of Darjeeling and Sikkim to have him as a winner and encouragement to the young people who give up on their dreams half way. The man who made the hills proud once again filled the halls with a beautiful hymn, his beautiful voice echoed through the halls paving its way for cheers and smiles among all the youth. The youth and elders enjoyed his very first Bollywood song. For next twenty minutes. After the fun and exciting program, we were lead straightly for the most important session, the Jubilee Year Talk which was conducted by Rev Fr Robin Kalikotey. He thoroughly explained to all the meaning of jubilee year, its main purpose, and about hope of pilgrimages. After the session ended DYD Fr Crispin announced the winners of Plantation drive, and presented them with a maple Plant.

And also gave a plant as a souvenir to the “THE TABERNACLE” band for the outstanding choir. Lastly Mr. Sameer Subba (DEXCO Spokesperson) gave a warm vote of thanks to everyone for making the program successful. After the program ended we all departed toward our home bidding farewell. We thank the almighty for making this event a successful one.

THE SONG OF MY STRUGGLE

-Kinley, sj.

I have searched all my life,
For the One, elusive yet near.
When I found You,
I longed to cling forever,
But in moments of turmoil,
I felt lost again.
Yet in the ocean's storm,
Your voice calls me to shore,
"Come, let us break bread together."

At times, I am lifted higher than Tabor,
Lost in wonder,
Childhood's multicolored dreams flash by—
A fragile bubble I wish to live within.
But I fear the descent,
The long, dark night that follows.
Sometimes, I find comfort in the darkness,
Where slumber shields me,
And there's nothing to seek.

In youthful days,
I believed I had found it all,
But now, a dark cloud surrounds me.
Can my hopes and dreams still be true?

I have searched all my life,
In the strength of my body,
The imagination of my mind,
Through corridors of power,
And castles in the air.

But it was never this, never that—
It is nothing.
It is YOU I desire,
In YOU, I find myself.

ANUGYALAYA DESK

On 06.08.2024, the Directorate of Science and Technology (DST) under the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, organized an event at Gorubathan to promote sustainable livelihoods in Neora Forest Village. This program, guided by the Anugyalaya Darjeeling Diocese Social Service Society (ADDSSS), aimed to distribute polyhouse materials to selected progressive farmers to enhance agricultural productivity. The event, coordinated by MC Mr. Raju, began with a welcome speech from Fr. Dr. Samuel Lepcha, the Director of ADDSSS. Esteemed guests included Surya Mani Rai, Chairman of Panchayat Samiti Gorubathan, who addressed the audience, followed by speeches from Saran Rai, Karmadakshya of Krishi Bivagh; Nima Tamang, GP1 Pradhan Gorubathan; Renu Tamang, GP2 Pradhan Gorubathan; Helanta Barla, Ahalay GP Pradhan; Bhotu Darnal, Karmadakshya of Fisheries; and Sisir Pradhan, Karmadakshya of the Health Department Gorubathan Samiti. Fr. Dr. Samuel Lepcha also spoke about the initial challenges faced by the project team. Following the speeches, the polyhouse materials were distributed to the selected farmers by the distinguished guests. The event concluded with a vote of thanks from Mr. Darpan Gurung, who expressed gratitude to all participants, stakeholders, and organizers. This initiative, a collaborative effort between DST, ADDSSS, and various local stakeholders including Panchayat Samiti, Panchayat, Agriculture Department, and Health Department, marks a significant step towards improving agricultural practices and ensuring sustainable livelihoods for the farmers in Neora Forest Village. The successful distribution of polyhouse materials is expected to bring positive changes in the agricultural landscape, benefiting both the farmers and the broader community.

Congratulations to the Directorate of Science and Technology (DST) for the successful event at Gorubathan, promoting sustainable livelihoods in Neora Forest Village. Your dedication in distributing polyhouse materials to progressive farmers has made a significant impact. This initiative showcases the power of collaboration between government bodies, local stakeholders, and the community. We deeply appreciate your hard work and perseverance.

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
E-mail : alecgurung@gmail.com, Mobile : 96418 72925

Published by Darjeeling Diocese Communication Centre on behalf of Diocese of Darjeeling. Editor : Fr. Alex Gurung
Designed at PEETSAR GRAPHICS, Darjeeling - 734101 [98320 33006]