



TEA LEAVES

DARJEELING DIOCESE NEWSLETTER

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Bishop's House, Darjeeling - 734101 INDIA

SEPTEMBER



Bishop's message

Every month leaves behind a special mark. India celebrated 75th Independence Day on August 15, 2022. Likewise the month of September too is marked with very special day in our Country "Guru Bhakti" teacher's day. In India, September 5 is observed as Teachers day since 1962, in recognition of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan's outstanding attitude to education and students. He was great philosopher and educationist, who was not only a teacher and Professor in the university but also served as the Vice President and later as President of India. "God lives, feels and suffers in every one of us, and in course of time, He attributes, knowledge, beauty and love will be revealed in each of us" is one of the best inspirational Quotes' by Dr. S Radhakrishnan. Radhakrishnan is acclaimed for dedicating his life towards education and improving the standards in the field of education. When his students and followers asked how he would like to celebrate his birthday? he had said "Instead of celebrating my birthday, it would be my privilege if September 5 is observed as Teachers Day. What a profound thought! This reflects his whole being as the teacher and educationist. No doubt, his whole life and writings is a source of Inspiration to millions of Teachers and students to become a genuine seeker of the truth.

These two months August and September are significantly blessed month for the universal Church. On 15th August, the Church commemorated the Assumption of our Mary into heaven, glorifying God and 8th September is commemoration the birthday of Mary the mother of Jesus, who totally in her deep faith in God, gave her consent saying yes, I am the hand made of God, thy will be done. Thus God's plan of salvation to the humanity came to a reality. She became a co-redeemer, this exulted her to the highest rank among the women to be the Mother of God and to be the guiding star to women's human dignity. May Mother Mary intercede for us always.

DARJEELING -KURSEONG DEANERY- FAMILY COMMISSION

DIVYAVANI, PASTORAL CENTRE, DARJEELING.

INTERACTION PROGRAMME on "AMORIS LAETITA" (JOY OF LOVE)

Held on the 7th of September-2022 : • Venue: Divyavani Pastoral Centre Darjeeling.

"Amoris Laetitia" (The Joy of Love) is a Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis. The Holy Father addresses the challenges Christian families meet in the current secular world, be they issues of welcoming and educating children, mutual acceptance of weakness, issues of marriage and divorce, aging, as well as sexual identity (same sex relationship).

An interaction programme based upon the above topic "Amoris Laetitia" (The Joy of Love) was held at Divya Vani Pastoral Centre on the 7th of September. The programme was attended by participants from 15 parishes under Darjeeling and Kurseong Deanery. Programme started with prayer and welcome key note address by Rev. Fr. Alex Gurung, (Dean Darjeeling Kurseong Deanery) followed by a brief introduction and guideline about the deliberation by Shri Peter Kerr, (Co-ordinator Darjeeling -Kurseong Family Commission). Rev Fr. Paul Rai (Priests Co-ordinator- Darjeeling- Kurseong Deanery) took up the responsibility of the Moderator.

Three major and important topic from the book " Amoris Laetitia ("Joy of Love") was taken for discussion by three well

known Family Life Educators from Darjeeling Diocese Family Commission namely, Shri Rajen Banerjee, Shr. Prakash Thomas and Shri Denis Lepcha .

1. Shri Rajen Banerjee explained in brief the first seven chapters from "Amoris Laetitia ("Joy of Love")
2. Shri. Prakash Thomas Thapa dealt with the topic "Towards the better education of Children".
3. Shri Denis Lepcha brought to light the meaning of "Vocation of Family through the eyes of Jesus" (b) "Restoration of marriage." (c) The Sacrament of Marriage (d) Love Made Fruitful. (e) Pastoral Perspectives.

Despite limited time given to the resource persons they were able to put the message of "Amoris Laetitia" ("Joy of Love") across to the participants. Each session was followed by interaction, sharing questioning and clarification sought by the participants. The participants consisting of Priests, Nuns, Lay-leaders and Youth participated in the deliberation enthusiastically. Questions and

Contd. Page - 3

BISHOP'S PASTORAL VISITS

4th August 2022: On the invitation of Fr. Sushit Beck Bishop Stephen visited St. John Mary Vianney



Quasi mission Station, Khamdong East Sikkim, a substation of St. Joseph Parish Martam. The pioneer priests of this mission started in 1977 were Rev. Jean-Marie Brahier C.R and late Fr. Victor Khawas. With their missionary zeal and love, people had accepted the faith and now there are 35 families whose livelihood depends mainly on Agriculture.

Fr. Sushit Beck is a junior priest who is very energetic and enthusiastic. He has been diligently looking after the faithful's spiritual needs celebrating Mass on Sundays. He has built a small yet beautiful Church. He has also built a small residence for priests. St. Xaviers Primary School, Khamdong is almost 6 kms away from the parish. He walks daily to look after the School administration. This School was started by Rev. Fr. Felix Baretto, the then Episcopal Vicar General for Sikkim. It runs from Nursery to Class V, having 115 children. The Registration of School and parish, cemetery land is under process. The church Managing Committee was registered in 2017. The task is a very challenging one yet Fr. Sushit says, "I do it for Jesus and his Mission"

14th August 2022: On the invitation of Fr. Stanley S.J, the Rector of St. Joseph's School, North point Darjeeling and Quasi parish priest of St. Ignatius Quasi parish Lepcha Busty, the Bishop visited the parish. Fr. Papadil S.J. founder of the Lepcha Busty mission also joined the Bishop from North point College community. Fr. Stanley reported that Lepcha busty was Established in the year 1978 but created quasi parish only in 2017. There are total 47 families. This parish has PPC, PFC, 4 SCC unit, CIC, Jesus youth movement, Women's group, Catholic Association. This quasi parish is also looking after the mission at Goke which is 6-7 kms away. The Major challenges faced here are health issues, marital problems and poverty as it is a Tea garden. During the parish meeting the Bishop suggested that the possibilities of other alternative income sources like floriculture could be explored like in Our lady of Lourdes parish, Lizahill. The parishioners were prepared by having nine days of Novena to St. Ignatius of Loyola and solemn Mass was celebrated on the concluding day of the parish day. 8 children received the sacrament of confirmation and one received first communion. During the Mass Bishop also blessed the newly made backdrop on the stage behind the Altar. There was short cultural program and whole program ended with festive meal prepared by the parishioners. Cluny sisters from St. Michael Convent Singamari, led by superior Sr. Prisca Molomoo, were actively involved in preparation of the parish feast by teaching catechism to the children and preparing liturgy.

15th August 2022: Bishop offered Holy Eucharist at Immaculate Conception Cathedral on the solemn occasion of Assumption of Our Lady and Independence Day. After Mass the National Flag was hoisted by the Bishop. The Catholic faithful of the Diocese of Darjeeling-Sikkim observed Independence Day by hoisting the National Tricolour in the individual houses, offices and the churches all over. Diocese also reminded the people of the Preamble to the Constitution of India by displaying it in the Churches and Educational Institutions. Fr. David Yozan Rai prepared a short video message on the Preamble to the Constitution of India and circulated it throughout Diocese of Darjeeling-Sikkim.

20th August 2022: Bishop arrived at Loreto Convent, Sadam, Sikkim at 10.30 am. He offered Holy Eucharist in the chapel for the Community. Sr. Agnes Bhutia IBVM newly appointed superior and Sr. Rina Ekka, B.Ed student sister were there. After lunch pastoral meeting with the Bishop was held. Sr. Agnes reported that Loreto School at Sadam Sikkim was established on 24th June 1997, it was upgrading but due to lack of students and trained teachers as well as finance the Loreto Congregation were reluctant to continue further. The Loreto School has been given Provisional Registration up to 2024. At the moment the school is running up to Class V with 66 students, 6 Teachers, 4 support Staff and two Sisters. Sr. Agnes is very positive in imparting quality and good value based education to the children of the locality. Sisters also shared their keen interest in involving themselves in the pastoral work of the parish. Bishop mentioned that in the Statutes of the Parish pastoral Council, the provision is already made for the religious to be the Ex-Officio members by virtue of the appointment from their Superior. They are automatically responsible in shepherding the faithful. It was felt that besides these statutes a separate agreement between the Diocese and the congregation could be drawn for the smooth functioning in collaboration in the pastoral work in the parish.

21st August 2022: The Bishop attended the Parish Day celebration in Shanti Ki Rani Girja (Church) Turuk Sadam, established in 1968. The Pioneers of this mission were late Fr. Charles Mukhia and Late



Fr. Anthony Namchu. Over the years the faithful have grown. Fr. Frederick Dewan the present parish priest reports: The faithful have become more responsible, reliable, and very supportive to the parish priests. Managing Committee is registered by the Sikkim govt. Registration of the parish Land is under process. Parish executive members are planning to build a new priest residence for which parishioners have collected some amount. There are 58 families, 250 total Catholics. There are 10 SCC units in the parish. The parish administration is done through PPC and PFC. Women group is strong and are actively involved in social religious work. ICYM and Holy childhood groups are also quite active in all parish activities, especially choir. On the parish day, the choir was excellent, even small children were playing the musical instruments and singing the hymns with devotion. Catholic Association of Turuk Sadam parish a unit of Sikkim Catholic Association is very active in helping the parish in its overall developmental work, mobilizing funds while linking with Government of Sikkim. After the Eucharistic celebration, the parish had organized a felicitation of the Covid-19 volunteers. Parish had Health Volunteer groups who tirelessly served the people of Turuk Sadam mainly for the prevention of Covid by way of creating awareness program, distributing preventive medicines door to door. This was done in collaboration with the Govt. health workers, among them Mrs. Sonam Palden Lepcha, Nurse working in Health department was the main person behind this work. On that day she gave a detailed report of the state of Sikkim on Covid-19. After hearing the whole report and witnessing the well organised



felicitation program. Bishop declared that this was the number one Health Volunteer group of the Diocese of Sikkim Darjeeling. On invitation of the parish, Local Health workers, Panchayat members, headed by Zilla President of Gram Zilla G.P were present and attended the entire program.

27th August 2022: After offering Mass on the occasion of the celebration of the Feast of St. Augustine at St. Augustine's School, Kalimpong, the Bishop arrived at St. Joseph's school Paren Jaldhaka in the evening. He offered mass for the Cluny community there and had meeting sharing their pastoral day to day work. Sr. Christine Pradhan SJC superior of the community along with others reported to the Bishop

that after struggling for many years St. Joseph school is registered officially with the council of ICSE on May 20, 2022. This has 382 students and 20 teachers including four sisters, Sr. Sharon Subba SJC as the Principal. Besides academics, value education classes are conducted and also catechism class is given to the catholic students. Due to busy schedule in the School and the hostel they get very little time for any other pastoral work like houses visit and so on. But they were eager if the parish priest invites them to be involved in the parish pastoral work. The Cluny sisters are involved in the Parish work in other parishes' wherever they are.

28th August 2022: On invitation of Fr. David Lepcha the parish priest of Holy family church Paren Jaldhaka, Bishop made an official parish visit. Though it is a newly created parish however the parish priest is trying his level best to run it as per the norms laid down by the diocese. Hence this parish has PPC, PFC, other associations and SCC units. Father gives importance to house visit. He reaches the sick and elderly regularly, giving communion and helping the needy. Fr. David took the Bishop to a family to give communion and confirmation to a 14 years old child with special needs. Father David shared that he was looking after an elderly sick lady and cleaning her house too. He enjoys doing this, something he has learned from Kalighat Kolkata working with the Missionaries of Charity sisters during his seminary formation days. He runs a hostel with 39 boys in his residence. Although



Fr. David's desire is to build a small Church. He has submitted the blue prints with estimate prepared by the engineer to Bishop's House already three times but in vain as no Agency has accepted the project so far. The present Church built long ago by late Fr. Molomoo is leaking and also too small to accommodate the faithful now. Let us pray for the success of building the new church there. The Small community has started collecting Rs.200/- per month per family towards

DARJEELING –KURSEONG DEANERY.....

clarifications on important and crucial issues likesame sex marriage, sex education etc. (raising questions about such issues in public domain still believed to be a taboo in general) were raised by the participants. All the queries and clarification sought were very efficiently handled by, Shri Rajen Banerjee, Shri. Prakash Thomas Thapa, and Shri. Denis Lepcha.

His Lordship Bishop Stephen Lepcha, in his message and deliberation said, "Teaching given by Pope Francis through "Amoris Laetitia" ("Joy of Love") is very much appropriate and timely for families. Each and every family in the world today needs the teaching of "Joy of love".

Through the teaching of "Amoris Letitia" ("Joy of Love") each one of us can save our families and each family members from being influenced by the ideology of materialistic world and its destructive systems. Timely counselling from trained counsellors in matters that relates with our day to day life is very much essential among families, men and women youth and students and is very much needed in our society today. Seeing the need, the importance and in order to make available trained counsellors our Priests, Nuns and Lay- leaders are being trained to become qualified counsellors. Their counselling will be available to our families, the community and individuals facing family or personal crisis. When we learn and begin to find out the negative and destructive issues that hamper the very core of joy of love in the family, among men, women, youth and students, with timely counselling from trained experienced counsellors, many of our families brothers and sisters, youth and students who are trapped in the sinking zone of unhappiness, depression and self-destruction will be saved and joy of love will once again prevail among our families and among each one of us. Joy of love to prevail in the family means God's presence in the family and when God is present in the family there is joy", His Lordship Bishop Stephen said.

The opportunity was also taken to facilitate and congratulate Shri. Denis Lepcha Assistant Teacher from St. Robert's H.S .School Darjeeling for being awarded the prestigious Siksha Ratna award from the education department, Government of West Bengal. On behalf of entire Darjeeling Diocese Denis Sir was facilitated by His Lordship Bishop Stephan Lepcha and on behalf of the DDCA and Family Commission he was congratulated by Shri Prakash Thomas Thapa.

Darjeeling- Kurseong Denary Family Commission thanked, His Lordship Bishop Stephan for gracing this crucial programme and specially for being the main source of inspiration and force in making the programme 'happen'. Rev. Fr. (Dr.) Laban Lepcha for his personal initiative and encouragement to prepare the ground for organising this much needed interaction programme. All the Participants who sacrificed their time and resources to make this programme fruitful and successful. Heartfelt gratitude was offered to Rev. Fr. Edward Barrato, for his warm hospitality and making the conference hall available for the programme. Closing prayer and vote of thanks was offered by Shri Prakash Thomas Thapa.

-Peter Kerr, Co-ordinator Dar-Kur Deanery.

PIC OF THE MONTH



A person throws a flower towards the coffin of Britain's Queen Elizabeth II as it is transported in London. (Carlos Barria/Reuters)

ICYM DESK

National Youth Day-Gyalshing



St. Marys Roman Catholic Church, Gyalshing, West Sikkim celebrated its National Youth Sunday on 21/08/2022 under the guidance of Rev. Fr Moni Clement Lepcha, Parish Priest. Almost 35 ICYM youths were present. The day began with Adoration and Sacrament of Reconciliation for the youths of the Parish. Rev. Fr. Micheal Singh farmer RYD cum DYD celebrated the Holy Eucharist for all the Youths of the Parish. After the Mass was over Mr. Sushil Tamang, a well known entrepreneur of the Parish gave a motivational talk on Career Guidance to all the youths as well to all the Parishoners and Rev Fr Micheal Singh gave the Youths and all the Parishers about the Catholic Church. The day ended with blessing of all youths by all the Parishoners and after that a delicious lunch was prepared by Ama Samaj of the Parish.

National Youth Day Celebration at Bidyang

The Youths (ICYM) of St. Joseph's Church, Bidyang Busty, a sub-station of Don Bosco Parish 14th mile, Kalimpong Celebrated the National Youth Sunday on 14th of August 2022. The day began with Eucharist Celebration where the main Celebriant was Rev. Fr. Martin Lakra. The choir was conducted beautifully by Babu Samaj and Ama Samaj including liturgy.

A short programme was organized by the Babu Samaj for Youths after the Mass where the Youths were felicitated with traditional Khadas. Parish Priest along with ICYM representative took the honor of cake cutting ceremony followed by a few words of gratitude by Secretary.

After the Celebration, the Youths involved in plantation drive.

The day ended with the Church decoration for 15th of August especially for the Feast of the Assumption and Independence day.

-Alwin Lepcha, ICYM Secretary

Reports on National Youth Sunday and Blood Donation Camp



Diocesan Youth Commission, ICYM Darj-Sikkim celebrated the National Youth Sunday on 14th of August 2022. The theme for NYS was "Mary rose up and went with haste". This year also the ICYM observed the National Youth Sunday in Parish level only. Diocesan Youth Commission, DEXCO on the occasion of National Youth Sunday had organized the Blood Donation Camp, a life saving gifts with the collaboration, St. Teresa's Church, 8th mile KPG, and Mary Mother of God Church, Relli Road Kalimpong. The day began with the Holy Mass where the Main Celebriant was Rev. Fr. Chrispin Tamang DYD. The Blood Donation Camp started at 9:15 am. Kalimpong District Voluntary Blood Donor Forum came for the collection of blood with technical support. More than thirty members volunteered for donating blood. A certificate of appreciation, donor card was given to each donor as a token of gratitude including refreshments. The camp ended with serving the lunch to KDVBFB team, a photo session and a prayer by Rev. Fr. Chrispin Tamang DYD.

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 : tealeavesdarjeeling@gmail.com / alecgurung@gmail.com, Mobile : 9641872925

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