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DARJEELING DIOCESE NEWSLETTER

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2026

Bishop's House, Darjeeling - 734101 INDIA

FEBRUARY

Bishop's Message



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As we step into the New Year 2026, I extend to each of you my heartfelt greetings and blessings. A new year is always a moment of grace, an opportunity to look back with gratitude, to live the present with faith, and to walk into the future with renewed hope.

The past year has brought us many challenges, yet it has also revealed countless moments of kindness, solidarity, and courageous service within our families, parishes, schools, and communities. For all these blessings, we give thanks to God. May the seeds we have planted together continue to bear fruit in the coming months.

The Holy Father invites us to journey as Pilgrims of Hope during the Jubilee Year. Hope is not mere optimism; it is the deep assurance that God walks with us—guiding, strengthening, and renewing us even when the road seems uncertain. I encourage every reader of TeaLeaves to embrace this spirit of hope in daily life. Let our homes become places of prayer, our parishes centres of communion, and our hearts instruments of peace.

As we begin this new year, let us recommit ourselves to the values that shape our faith: compassion, integrity, service, and forgiveness. May our communities be marked by greater understanding and cooperation. And may we reach out especially to those who are lonely, poor, or struggling—carrying to them the warmth of Christ's love.

I entrust each one of you to the intercession of Our Blessed Mother. May the Lord bless your families with good health, joy, and harmony throughout 2026.

Wishing you all a grace-filled New Year.

+ Bishop Stephen
Diocese of Darjeeling



Tea Leaves congratulates
Bishop Edward Baretto
on his Episcopal Ordination
as the Co Adjutor Bishop of
Darjeeling Diocese.



Episcopal Ordination of the Co-adjutor Bishop of Darjeeling

Kalimpong witnessed a moment of profound grace and historic significance on 21st January 2026, as the Episcopal Ordination of the Co-adjutor Bishop of Darjeeling, Most Rev. Bishop Edward Barreto, was solemnly celebrated at the St. Augustine's School Ground, Kalimpong.

The sacred liturgy was held in the august presence of His Excellency Most Rev. Leopoldo Girelli, the Apostolic Nuncio to India and Nepal, whose participation underscored the close communion of the local Church with the Universal Church and the Holy See.

The principal ordaining Bishop for the occasion was Most.Rev. Elias Frank, Archbishop of the Calcutta Archdiocese. He was joined by the co-consecrators, Most.Rev. Archbishop Vincent Aind, Archbishop of the Ranchi Archdiocese, and Most. Rev. Bishop Stephen Lepcha, Bishop of the Diocese of Darjeeling. Together, they invoked the guidance of the Holy Spirit as Bishop Edward Barreto was ordained to the fullness of the priesthood and entrusted with his new pastoral mission as Co-adjutor Bishop of Darjeeling.

The Eucharistic celebration was marked by deep reverence, rich liturgical symbolism,

and a spirit of unity and joy. The laying on of hands and the prayer of consecration, central to the rite of episcopal ordination, were moments of intense prayer and reflection for the faithful gathered.

The occasion drew a large and distinguished assembly, including numerous Archbishops, Bishops, priests, religious men and women, and a vast number of lay faithful from different parts of the region and beyond. Their presence bore testimony to the love and support of the People of God for the Diocese of Darjeeling and for Bishop Edward Barreto as he begins his episcopal ministry.

The ordination ceremony was not only a significant moment for Bishop Edward Barreto personally, but also a moment of thanksgiving and hope for the Diocese of Darjeeling, as it looks forward to renewed pastoral leadership and service in the years to come.

The solemn celebration concluded with expressions of gratitude and felicitations, as the faithful rejoiced in this grace-filled event and entrusted the new Co-adjutor Bishop to the loving care of God and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Tea Leaves congratulates all the committees for fulfilling their duties responsibly and meticulously.



St. John Berchmans happenings.

St. John Berchmans' Parish, St. Mary's Hill marked yet another Republic Day by celebrating it's elderly. Every year for the last 17 years, on the 26th of January, our Parish has celebrated Senior Citizen Day alongside the national Republic Day.



While last year the elderly of the Parish were taken for an outing to Siliguri, this year an eventful day was organised for them in the Parish itself. "Sewadal", the organising body was at the forefront as always for this particular event.

The day began with the celebration of mass, followed by the unfurling of the national flag by our Parish Priest, Rev Fr Pradeep Rai.

Breakfast was served for everyone and it was a wholesome sight to see all our baje- boju gather together under one roof.

Various dance and song acts were presented by the members of the Holy Childhood, Nari Samaj and Youth. The senior citizen themselves too got a chance to take the stage and perform their acts. Some sang, some danced, some recited their poems and stories.

After a fulfilling lunch, there were games to keep the elderly entertained.

The day ended with tea and one could feel the love shared within the parish community. Through programmes like these, we hope to send a message to our elderly people that they are loved and treasured.

Shruti Chettri.

Deo gratias propter pastorem bonum...

25th January 2026, Our Lady of Lourdes Church Lizahill is exhilarated and blessed with the presence of Rt. Rev Bishop Stephen Lepcha for the purpose of making his pastoral visit on this very first month of the year.

On 24th Jan (Saturday) PP Rev Fr. Sanjok Rai & all the executives of the Association, PPC, PFC, BEC Animators, Nari Sangh, Purush Sangh, ICYM & Holy Childhood gathered together for the warm welcoming of our Bishop who arrived at our Parish around 3 pm.....After a while our Bishop went on to take a visit to the sick and elderly which was a great moment of blessings adding up in great joy among the elderly people of our parish..

Sunday, 25th Jan (Bible Sunday) in the presence and through our Bishop, our 5 children viz Aaden Jerome Rai, Aswini Maira Subba, Aadhyan Emmanuel Rai, Asbin Abel Subba and Canisius Subba, received their first holy communion....The children also took the incharge of the liturgy committing themselves in various liturgical activities. After the Holy Eucharistic Celebration, a felicitation letter was accorded to the Bishop from our parish with all the prayerful wishes.

After the Mass, Bishop had a small meeting with all the executives of all the associations and committees.

Bishop Stephen's presence has always been great among us, His powerful words of wisdom have always helped in shaping us into the better version in our journey of faith.

We thank God for the gift of our beloved Rev. Bishop Stephen who give his tireless service towards the Church, the diocese and the Laity. he is a great example whose every words of wisdom and faith enriching experiences, teachings, encouragements and his smile have carried on us how great God can be and how mighty things he can do. We are beyond blessed to have such a humble saintly figure bishop in the service of the Diocese...Our love and prayers will forever go with you in your journey of life.

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Winter Youth Convention 2026

The ZEXCO Team of South West Deanery, Sikkim, held a 4-day Winter Youth Convention from January 28 to 31, 2026, gathering youth from all parishes, including DEXCO members and some other youth members from other deaneries.



The inauguration on January 28 featured Rev. Fr. Dr. Victor Fernandes, the Vicar General of the Diocese of Darjeeling, as Chief Guest, and entrepreneur Mr. Sushil Tamang as Guest of Honour. The ceremony included a lamp lighting, bhajan dance, and a Holy Eucharistic

Celebration led by Rev. Fr. Dr. Victor Fernandes, who emphasized the vital role of youth in the Church's future.

On January 29, Rev. Fr. Lawrence Lepcha celebrated Mass, followed by sessions on the "Beauty of the Catholic Marriage", by Mr. Denis Lepcha and "ICYM and Leadership", by Mr. Evan Lepcha. Ms. Symran Marlyin Tamang encouraged youth to embrace gospel values in life.

January 30 began with Mass by Rev. Fr. Kalikotey Robin and a session on "Spiritual Bankruptcy" by Miss Prasansha Caroline Rai, reminding youth of God's love even amid challenges. Separate sessions for boys and girls were held, followed by Inter-Parish Group Song and Dance Competitions judged by esteemed guests, with Mr. Albert Kabo as Chief Guest. Winners from various parishes were honoured alongside dedicated youth and musical bands. The day ended with a candlelight rosary prayer.

The convention concluded on January 31 with a thanksgiving Mass led by the Deanery Coordinator, evaluation, feedback, and a closing lunch before participants returned to their parishes.

Fr. Anselum Lepcha.



Darjeeling Diocese 2026
A New Beginning



by Fr. Kinley Tshering, SJ

Thank you, Lord, for your protection.
Thank you, Lord, for sustaining grace.
Thank you, Lord, for everything.

When we were young,
a Benjamin in your eyes,
you sent us a wise shepherd.
With patient care
he nurtured
the tender tea leaves
of hills and plains.

In our teenage years,
a Stephen, chosen among the faithful,
you gave us a shepherd
for whom you alone mattered.
Charismatic yet humble,
under his care
the tea leaves of vocation bloomed.

Now, in our adult years,
an Edward of faith and justice.
You send us a shepherd
of quiet depth and listening heart.
It is a time of reckoning,
a time to drink deeply
the tea of maturity

Ode to Bishop Edward

I sighed a prayer for you today,
The way I always do,
I asked the Father. His hands to lay
Upon you and your flock too.
I sighed a prayer for you today,
Just the way I always do,
I asked the Lord to show you the way,
And light your path when skies turn grey.
May the one who will shepherd us
Be led by the Good Shepherd's voice,
May His staff guide every step you take,
And His heart shape your every choice.
May the one who will nourish us
Be fed by the Living Bread,
May the word you break for hungry souls
To the farthest corners be spread.
When burdens weigh upon your days
And the road feels steep and long,
May grace renew your weary strength
And turn your sighs to song.
May your hands that bless and heal
Be held by Christ each day,
And may the prayers you whisper for us
Be answered as you pray.

By Ms. Prashansa Caroline Rai

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:

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