



2026

Bishop's House, Darjeeling - 734101 INDIA

APRIL

## Bishop's Message



Dear Fathers, Religious,  
and Faithful

Grace and peace to you in this  
blessed season of Easter!

As we journey through April,  
our hearts are still radiant with the  
joy of the Resurrection of our Lord  
Jesus Christ. Easter is not merely  
a past event we commemorate,  
but a living reality that renews our  
faith, strengthens our hope, and  
calls us to be witnesses of new life  
in our daily lives.

In a world often marked by uncertainty, division, and  
hardship, the message of Easter reminds us that light  
overcomes darkness, love conquers sin, and life triumphs  
over death. As a diocesan family, we are invited to carry this  
hope into our homes, communities, and places of work.

I am particularly encouraged by the growing spirit of  
communion and participation within our Basic Ecclesial  
Communities (BECs). These small communities continue to  
be vibrant spaces of prayer, sharing, and mutual support.  
They are truly the living cells of our Church, where faith  
becomes tangible and mission takes root. I urge all our  
faithful to actively participate in BEC life and make it a source  
of spiritual nourishment and outreach.

The recent inauguration of the new church at Holy  
Family Church, Paren, stands as a beautiful sign of unity,  
sacrifice, and faith in action. Such milestones remind us that  
the Church is not merely a structure, but a people journeying  
together in Christ.

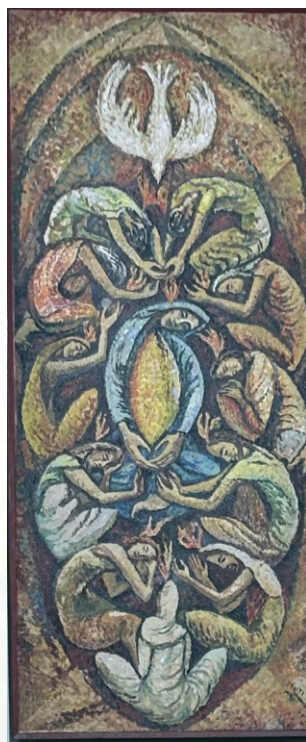
Dear brothers and sisters, let us continue to walk the  
path of Synodality—listening to one another, discerning  
together, and moving forward in mission. Each one of us has  
a role in building up the Body of Christ. Let us not grow weary  
in doing good.

May Mary, our Blessed Mother, accompany us and  
intercede for our Diocese. May the Risen Lord fill your hearts  
with peace, joy, and renewed zeal.

Wishing you all a grace-filled Easter season.

+Stephen Lepcha  
Bishop of Darjeeling.

**Pentecost is one of the most powerful and  
transformative moments in Christian faith—  
a feast not just of remembrance, but of renewal  
and mission.**



Fifty days after Easter, the disciples of Jesus  
Christ were gathered in fear and uncertainty.  
The Resurrection had filled them with hope, but  
they still lacked direction and courage. Then  
came the turning point. As described in the Acts  
of the Apostles, a mighty wind filled the house,  
and tongues of fire rested upon each of them.  
They were filled with the Holy Spirit and began  
to speak in different languages, understood by  
people from many nations.

This moment marks the birth of the  
Church.

Pentecost is not merely about a dramatic  
event; it is about transformation. Weakness  
became strength. Fear became courage. Silence  
became proclamation. The disciples, once  
hidden behind closed doors, stepped out boldly  
to preach the Gospel. Saint Peter, who had once  
denied Christ, now stood before crowds and  
declared the Good News without hesitation.

At its heart, Pentecost is the feast of unity in  
diversity. People of different languages and  
cultures understood one message. It is a  
reminder that the Spirit does not erase differences but harmonizes them. In today's  
world, marked by division and misunderstanding, Pentecost calls us to become  
instruments of unity, dialogue, and peace.

Pentecost is also deeply personal. The same Spirit that descended upon the  
apostles is given to every believer. It strengthens, guides, and inspires. It calls each  
person to live with purpose—to speak truth, to act with love, and to serve with humility.

For the Church today, Pentecost is not a past event but a living reality. It  
challenges us to move beyond comfort, to go out to the peripheries, and to witness to  
Christ in our daily lives. A Church without the Spirit becomes an institution; with the  
Spirit, it becomes a living, breathing community of faith.

In a quiet yet profound way, Pentecost asks each of us: Are we still hiding behind  
closed doors, or are we ready to step out in faith?

Because wherever the Spirit is welcomed, new life begins.





## BEC Facilitates a Synodal Church: Journeying together in Communion, Participation and Mission.

### Introduction

The vision of a Synodal Church, strongly emphasized by Pope Francis, calls the Catholic Church to “journey together” in communion, participation, and mission. As Pope Francis reminds us:

“The path of synodality is the path that God expects of the Church in the third millennium.”

In the Asian and Indian context, this vision finds a concrete and vibrant expression in Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs).

### 1. **BEC as a School of Communion**

BECs foster deep communion by bringing together small groups of faithful for prayer, Gospel reflection, and sharing of life. This reflects the vision of the Second Vatican Council:

“The Church is... a sign and instrument of communion with God and of unity among all people.” (Lumen Gentium, 1)

In Asia, the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) strongly promotes this model:

“The Church in Asia must be a communion of communities.”

In the context of the Darjeeling Diocese, BECs help unite diverse ethnic, linguistic, and cultural groups into one family of faith.

### 2. **BEC as a Platform of Participation**

Participation lies at the heart of synodality. BECs provide a space where all—laity, religious, and clergy—can share, listen, and discern together. As the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) emphasizes:

“Basic Ecclesial Communities are the most effective means of fostering participatory Church structures.”

Similarly, the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI) notes:

“BECs enable the faithful to live their faith in a participatory and community-oriented manner.”

With over 700 BEC units in the Darjeeling Diocese, participation becomes a lived experience, where every voice matters and co-responsibility is strengthened.

### 3. **BEC as a Source of Mission**

BECs are inherently missionary. Rooted in prayer and communion, they reach out to the poor and marginalized. This reflects the teaching of Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*:

“The Church which ‘goes forth’ is a community of missionary disciples.” (EG, 24)

The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences further emphasizes:

“BECs are instruments for evangelization and integral human development.”

Thus, BECs become centers of outreach, service, and witness in society.

### 4. **Relevance in the Indian and Local Context**

In India, with its vast diversity and social challenges, BECs provide a practical way of living the Church as a community. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India affirms:

“BECs are the new way of being Church in India.”

In geographically challenging regions like the Darjeeling hills, BECs ensure that the Church reaches every village and household. With the involvement of priests, religious sisters, and lay leaders (DRT and DST members), they sustain faith and promote unity even in remote areas.

### **Conclusion:**

BECs are truly the living cells of a Synodal Church. They embody communion, foster participation, and promote mission. As Pope Francis reminds us:

“Synodality is a style, it is a walk together.” Hence, strengthening BECs in India, especially in dioceses like Darjeeling, means strengthening a Church that listens, includes, and reaches out—a Church that truly journeys together in Christ.



## CHRISM MASS CELEBRATED AT KALIMPONG

### Kalimpong:

The Chrism Mass was solemnly celebrated at St Teresa's Church, drawing priests and faithful from across the Diocese of Darjeeling–Sikkim. The celebration was marked by deep spiritual fervour and a strong sense of communion within the local Church.

It was heartening to witness priests from all corners of the



diocese gathering around their Bishop, renewing their priestly promises and expressing their unity and fidelity to their pastoral mission. The presence of clergy, religious, and laity made the occasion a powerful sign of the oneness of the diocesan family.

During the Eucharistic celebration, the Bishop blessed the Holy Oils—the Oil of the Sick, the Oil of Catechumens, and consecrated the Sacred Chrism—which will be used throughout the year in the administration of the sacraments across the diocese.

The Chrism Mass stood as a meaningful testimony to priestly brotherhood, collaboration, and shared commitment to serve the People of God. The gathering concluded on a note of gratitude and renewed dedication, strengthening the bonds of unity within the Diocese.

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## Inauguration of Holy Family Church, Paren Marks Joyful Milestone for the Faithful

Paren, April 9, 2026:

The faithful of the Diocese of Darjeeling witnessed a moment of great joy and thanksgiving as the new church building of Holy Family Church, Paren, was solemnly inaugurated on April 9, 2026.

The auspicious occasion was presided over by Most Rev. Bishop Stephen Lepcha, Bishop of Darjeeling, in the presence of Bishop



Edward Baretto, Coadjutor Bishop of Darjeeling, and Bishop Paul Simick of Bagdogra. The celebration brought together a large gathering of priests, religious sisters, and lay faithful from various parishes across the diocese, along with invited guests from different regions.

The inauguration ceremony was marked by prayerful solemnity and festive spirit, reflecting the deep faith and unity of the local Christian community. The newly constructed church stands as a symbol of the people's devotion, sacrifice, and collective effort.

On this significant occasion, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Darjeeling extended heartfelt congratulations to Rev. Fr. David Lepcha, the Parish Priest, along with the religious sisters and parishioners, for their dedication and hard work in bringing the project to completion. The successful inauguration celebration was a testament to their commitment and collaboration.

The new church building is expected to serve as a vibrant center of worship and community life, nurturing the spiritual growth of the faithful for years to come.





## SOUTH-WEST SIKKIM DEANERY FELICITATES COADJUTOR BISHOP OF DARJEELING-SIKKIM

**Namchi, April 14, 2026:**

In a spirit of joy and ecclesial unity, the South-West Sikkim Deanery warmly felicitated Most Rev. Bishop Edward Baretto, the Coadjutor Bishop of the Diocese of Darjeeling-Sikkim, at St. Peter's Church on April 14, 2026.



The celebration began with the solemn Holy Eucharist presided over by Bishop Baretto, who was joined by priests of the deanery. In his homily, the Bishop expressed gratitude for the warm welcome extended to him and encouraged the faithful to continue walking together in faith, unity, and service, strengthening the mission of the Church in the hills.

Following the Eucharistic celebration, a well-organized felicitation programme was held in honour of the Bishop. Fr. Robin Kalikotey, Dean of the South-West Sikkim Deanery, along with fellow priests, religious sisters, and lay faithful, extended heartfelt

congratulations and conveyed their prayerful best wishes. The programme featured words of appreciation, cultural expressions, and gestures of welcome, reflecting the deep affection and respect of the people for their new shepherd.

The gathering concluded with an agape meal, fostering fellowship and community spirit among all present. The occasion marked not only a formal welcome but also a reaffirmation of the deanery's commitment to collaborate with Bishop Baretto in his pastoral mission for the Diocese of Darjeeling-Sikkim.

The faithful of the deanery expressed their hope that under his guidance, the Church will continue to grow in faith, unity, and service, bearing witness to the Gospel in the region.



### SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH OF CLUNY Province of North East India & Nepal

*Rest in Peace*



**Sr. Miriam Thapa**

09.12.1964 - 15.04.2026

*The Diocese of Darjeeling  
Join in Prayers with the  
Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny.  
May she  
"Requiescat in pace."*



## One Moment

(Luke 24)

*At Christmas  
God becomes man.*

*At Easter  
man is raised into God.*

*Two moments in time  
or so it seems.*

*But beyond time,  
beyond space,  
there is only  
One Moment:  
Alpha  
and Omega.*

*On the road to Emmaus  
they spoke of data,  
confused,  
missing the pattern  
life,  
death,  
resurrection.*

*At the breaking of bread  
death is broken.*

*Now they see  
the Resurrection.*

*And I  
I will live forever.*

*The finality of death  
once disconcerting,*

*now  
filled with hope  
and meaning.*



by Fr. Kinley Tshering, SJ

19 April 2026

## Nicodemus

By Fr Kinley Tshering, SJ

*Under the cover of darkness  
Like Nicodemus I came to unburden  
The grey areas of my life  
Yet certain of my life lived*

*I wanted answers*

*But You gave me wind instead.*

*"Unless one is born from above..."  
and I feel the ground shift  
beneath everything I once called certainty.*

*Called not to be a better version  
Not a new vision with new glasses  
A total new vista of life*

*Not improvement stitched onto the old self  
But a rebirth in hidden light*

*For I came by night  
thinking night was safe*

*But You met me there  
and turned night into beginning*

*And I, like Nicodemus, remain in wonder  
caught between darkness and dawn  
and no longer sure  
where one ends  
and the other begins*

## 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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