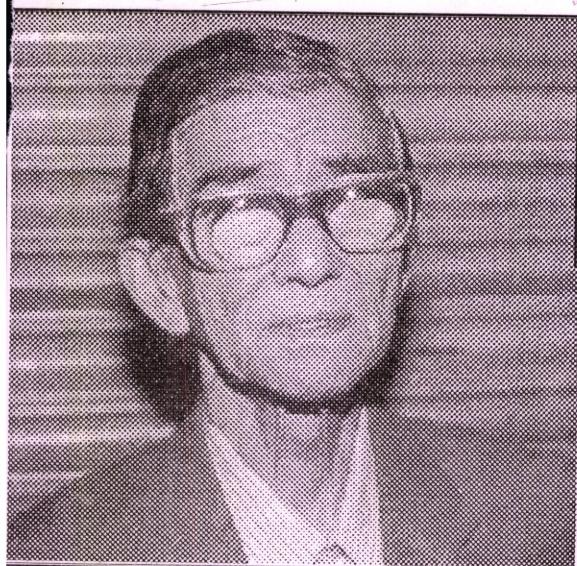




NEWSLINE

Vol. 40 No.3 PROVINCE OF GUWAHATI MAY-JUNE 1998



Rev. Bro. 39 B 291.
George Sungmur, S.D.B.

Born : 31.01.1916

Professed : 22.12.1939

Died : 07.05.1998



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Intervention at the Special Assembly for Asia of the Synod of Bishops

by

Archbishop Thomas Menampampil sdb

Inculturation

It is important to realize that cultures are live realities. They are constantly evolving. Societies are ever in transition. Inculturation is not, therefore, a dialogue with antiquity, but with communities on the move. While they have their roots in the past, their gaze is set towards the future. It is impossible for a team of specialists to offer a ready made inculturated Gospel to a society, as sometimes we seem to pretend. Even as we try to offer such a gift, the community has already moved forward.

An evangeliser needs to take the pace and the rhythm of the community that he/she is serving. He/she ought to delve into the inner world of the community and dialogue with its deeper self and unuttered aspirations and ambitions, address the collective unconscious, and whisper the Gospel to its soul. That is the area where poets, artists and prophetic personalities operate. That is the area where giant missionaries have worked their wonders.

A Dialogue of Civilization

There were references to Asian values in earlier interventions. Hard work, discipline, spare living, family cohesion, filial piety, respect for authority, loyalty within the community... These are often

considered typical Asian values. Add to them: an emphasis on the spiritual and an oneness to the transcendent. Asia can make a contribution to humanity preserving these values and strengthening them in the bosom of the Church for the benefit of world community.

None of them are, however, exclusively Asian. Asianness is not best asserted in contrast to any other society. God's gifts are complementary. Eastern and Western civilizations are, in fact, two mighty streams of human experience whose waters have often overflowed one into the other. The decimal system (elements of science) discovered in India, was taken to the West as Arabic numerals, developed further and returned to the East in our times as modern science and technology. Greek Philosophy born in the West, was preserved by Arabic writers in the East and returned to the West where it stirred into life a cultural revival known as renaissance. For centuries, the West borrowed from the East theological, liturgical, monastic and spiritual traditions. We in the East need not consider it something negative if we borrow some good things from the West today. It is not going to make us any less Asian.

So many of our Church activities (including this Synod) involved dialogue between civilizations, where we appreciate each other, learn from each other and complete each other: the spirit of dialogue (of which we have spoken) that is needed at the humblest and individual level, is also required at national and global levels. Great men like Mahatma Gandhi and Tagore thought in terms of the whole humanity, not only of their own country or their own civilization. Such an on-going dialogue will prevent a clash of civilizations: between East and West, North and South, and leaving no room for either Euro-centrism or Asia-centrism but universal brotherhood.

(Source: Internet)

❖ R.I.P.

The mother of Fr. Joseph Putenpurackal (P.J.) of Don Bosco, Maligaon, passed away on 9 May. We express our condolences to Fr. Joseph and pray the Lord to grant eternal rest to his mother.

The Father of Bro. Roland Halge, student of theology at Sacred Heart Th. College, passed away on 14 May. We extend our condolences to Bro. Roland and his dear ones and pray for the repose of the soul of his father.

Fr. Johny Eapen's elder brother died on 9 May. We offer our condolences to Fr. Johny and his dear ones as we pray for the repose of the soul of his brother.

❖ Selsella Parish Celebrates Silver Jubilee

The St. Joseph's Parish, Selsella, Garo Hills, celebrated the silver jubilee of the founding of the mission. The parish was founded by Fr. Anthony Valluran sdb. Fr. A. Victor sdb conducted an animation programme for 25 couples who celebrated the silver jubilee of their marriage during the parish jubilee. The parishioners prepared for the jubilee by means of animation, retreats, prayer services etc. during the last one year. These programmes and the silver jubilee celebrations were organised under the leadership of Fr. George Kallunkal, Parish Priest.

❖ Words of Eternal Life

Words of Eternal Life, an 8 volume commentary, by Fr. Thomas Pazhayampallil sdb, provides useful homiletic material for pastors. The books are available with I.J. A. Publications, 10/1 Corporation Complex, Lazar Road, Fraser Town, Bangalore - 560 005.

❖ Fr. Peter Celestine Appointed Bishop

Fr. Peter Celestine OFM (Cap.) currently parish priest of Catholic Church, Dispur, has been appointed Bishop of Jammu-Srinagar, May 7. He succeeds Bishop Hippolytus Kunnunkal OFM (Cap.). As we congratulate him, we pray that he may have a fruitful episcopal ministry.

❖ Fr. Sngi Releases Bible Commentary on Job

Fr. Sylvanus Sngi Lyngdoh, author of a multi-volume Bible commentary series in Khasi has brought out his latest volume on the Book of Job. The book titled *Ka Shemlanot U Job*, is dedicated to the parents of Fr. John Vaikath sdb.

❖ Pre-Novices attend preparatory course

A preparatory course of 40 days for the 23 pre-novices was held at Don Bosco Tech. School, Shillong, April-May. The programme was animated by Fr. Thomas Edamattath, Provincial Secretary. They have begun their novitiate at Sunnyside, May 18. □

New Phone Numbers

Don Bosco, Agartala -----	0381/202006
Khliehriat -----	03655/20084
Don Bosco, Saiha -----	03835/23006
Don Bosco, Seling -----	0389/70334
Sunnyside -----	0364/260080
Sojong -----	03674/69414

Sacred Heart College, Shillong

ITLR (Fr. J. Puthenpurakal) -----	0364/250313
Rector -----	0364/250314
President -----	0364/250315

Dotma Church Blessing and Convention

The Church of the Risen Lord at Dotma, Kokrajhar District, Assam, was blessed by Archbishop Thomas Menampampil in the presence of Archbishop Tarcisius Resto Phanrang of Shillong and Bishop Robert Kerketta of Tezpur, the Lutheran Bishop Nityananda Borgowary. 25 priests, about 50 sisters and a large gathering of people attended the programme.

The Catholic community of Dotma prepared for the event through a three day convention. Delegates from the neighbouring parishes of Bashbari, Gossaigaon, Soraibil, Bengtol, Gurubasha, Ballamguri, Bongaigaon, Barama and Barpeta attended the programme. On 13 talks on the theme Christ the Light, was given in Bodo, Santhali and Hindi. Fr. Joseph Palamthattel, Fr. Sebastian Ishoray, Fr. John Vaikath were the main speakers. In the evening Archbishop Resto presided over a concelebrated Eucharist during which 43 children received First Communion. The Mass was followed by a candle-lit procession through the Dotma Bazaar.

The church blessing on the following day was the high point of the celebration. The Resurrection Church and the Don Bosco Hall



building constructed by Fr. Edward D'Souza sdb, Parish Priest, will remain a symbol of the faith of the people of the area. Fr. Edward thanked all the people who had come to participate in the programme. On behalf of the parishioners of Dotma, he thanked the numerous benefactors who had contributed to the construction of the Church and the hall. Fr. Eddy described the celebration a true manifestation of the unity, love and fellowship among the people belonging to different ethnic communities professing faith in Christ. □

Salesian Co-operators Meeting Held

The Salesian Co-operators of Upper Shillong Unit met at Sunnyside, Shillong together with Shri Linus Dkhar, Provincial Coordinator and Fr. Edmund Gomes, Provincial Delegate. Some of those who are aspiring to join the Co-operators were also present. The following were elected to the local council: Smt. Margrita Marbaniang, Local Coordinator, Smt. Matilda Marbaniang, Smt Annabel Kharpuri and Shri. Breakson Kharkongor as councillors. The Upper Shillong Unit, the 11th unit of Salesian Co-operators in the Province of Guwahati, is attached to the Sunnyside community and

Fr. Patrick Nongrang has been appointed local delegate.

The meeting began with a prayer led by Fr. Joseph Almeida, Novice master. Shri Linus Dkhar spoke on the nature and function of the association of Salesian Co-operators and the vocation of the Salesian Co-operators as a way to holiness. The Provincial Coordinator expressed his thanks to Fr. Joseph Almedia for his keen interest and support to start the Upper Shillong Unit of the Co-operators.

Linus Dkhar

A Birthday to Remember

It was 14th October, some year, in the early Salesian history of Our Lady's House, Shillong. For the confreres, especially for the adventurous and mischievous theologians, this day was a much awaited day in the whole year- the Birthday of Fr. Gutierrez, the Rector. The Birthday of the Rector was the most solemn feast of any community in those days.

And so for the Our Lady's House, it was a joyful occasion to celebrate the Birthday of saintly, Fr. Gutierrez. In spite of the poverty Fr. Augustine Gorneri, the Prefect, and a few theologians decided to make it a memorable one. They toiled hard to make a beautiful, big and delicious looking cake. Only the material used was saw dust !

During the usual simple dinner, that evening, the well decorated cake was kept on a big table for all to see. Fr. Gutierrez was happy and surprised. " Oh, God, Fr. Gorneri must have worked a miracle to get such a beautiful cake",

exclaimed Fr. Alvin Comba, his companion at table.

After the dinner, Fr. Gutierrez was invited to cut the birthday cake. Amidst the giggling and clapping of the theologians, not knowing the trick, Fr. Gutierrez proudly cut the cake and gave a slice to Fr. Comba. Fr. Comba, in all his humility and austerity broke a small portion of the slice and began to eat. "Take more, you won't get another slice for a year", warned Fr. Gutierrez. " But for you, I shall cut a bigger one", said Fr. Comba as he cut a big slice and presented it to Fr. Gutierrez.

To the utter surprise of the theologians and all those who knew the prank they had played, Fr. Gutierrez and Fr. Comba ate the whole slice they had received. The theologians could not believe their eyes as they watched in awe and fear. Fr. Gutierrez must have thought this as an occasion to teach a lesson to the mischievous theologians.

*(As told by Fr. C. Attard) **Joshy Thomas***

First Professions

24 Novices, 23 for the Province of Guwahati and one for Calcutta, professed at Sunnyside, Shillong, 24 May. Four of them are Salesian Brothers. Fr. Provincial presided over the Eucharist and accepted the newly professed into the Salesian Congregation. Many confreres and relatives of the newly professed were present on the occasion. The newly

professed have left for their post-novitiate formation to different Salesian centres at Dimapur, Kalyani, Nasik, Hyderabad and Yercaud. Fr. Provincial while congratulating the young Salesians for their bold step in accepting God's call to follow the Salesian vocation, thanked the novitiate community and all those who have helped to form them.

Bridging Memories: Ex-Bosconians and Former Teachers Meet to Mark Golden Jubilee

Don Bosco School, Guwahati, organised a meeting of the past pupils, former headmasters and teachers at the School auditorium, April 16 as part of the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the school. Rich tributes were paid to the past students, teachers and headmasters who from the inception of the school in 1948, had set an example of academic excellence and leadership.



Archbishop Tarcisius Resto Phanrang of Shillong, a former teacher of Don Bosco, was the chief guest at the meet. Shri Gunin Hazarika, Minister for Industries, Assam, a student and border of Don Bosco, Shri Silvius Condapan, Opposition Leader in Assam Legislative Assembly and former student and teacher, Dr. Nirmal Kumar Chodhury, former Vice-Chancellor of the Gauhati University, and a rank holder from among the first batch that appeared for matriculation from the Don Bosco School, were among the distinguished list of participants at the gathering.

Welcoming the participants of the meet, Fr. C. Kuriala, Headmaster, said the school had been looking forward to this day as an important event of the Golden Jubilee celebrations. "We feel proud and happy to honour all its past

pupils and teachers who have been a credit to the institution and a beacon of light to society."

Archbishop Resto recalled his early days in the school as a teacher. He congratulated the school management for the great strides of progress achieved during the past 50 years. Don Bosco is a much loved and respected name, he said.

One of the memorable moments of the day was the felicitations offered to the first batch of Bosconians of 1948 by the Bosconians of 1998. Accepting the felicitations, Dr. Nirmal Kumar Choudhury thanked the school on behalf of all his classmates. He expressed appreciation for the outstanding contribution made by the school and wished that it rises to greater heights of excellence in the years to come. He thanked his teachers who were present at the function and attributed his achievement to their dedication and sacrifice.

Shri Barda Charan Sarma IPS (Retd.), one of the teachers in 1948, gratefully accepted the felicitations offered by his students of 1948. He recalled the years spent in the school as some of the best time of his life. He wished every success to the school in its continued journey. Cash awards and felicitations were offered to the five teachers who retired in 1997.

Speaking on behalf of the past headmasters of the school, Fr. V.T. Thomas said that it was indeed a privileged moment to meet the many past pupils and teachers of Don Bosco during the Golden Jubilee year. The other former headmasters and Asst. Headmasters who attended the programme included Fr. V.M. Thomas and Fr. K.O. Augustine. Bro. Ignatius Sungmur, who has served the institution during the last 40 years, and is one of the most



enduring symbols of the school, was also present at the felicitation ceremony.

The Bosconians enlivened the programme with songs and mime. The programme concluded with a tea party and ex-Bosconians danced to some remix numbers at the school grounds. Earlier during the day there was a friendly cricket match between the Past XI versus the Present XI. □

Education has important role in Evangelization of Asia

Fr. Juan Edmundo Vecchi, sdb, Rector Major, at the Synod

Fr. Vecchi, our Rector Major, made the following intervention at the Fourth General Congregation of the Special Assembly for Asia of the Synod of Bishops, April 21.

Education has had, and still has, an important role to play in the evangelization of Asia because of its humanistic and didactic quality, for the advancement of the poor, for the possibility of putting forward the faith, and for the witness of men and women educators, the majority of them consecrated persons.

Today it can become a privileged setting for inculturation and the interreligious dialogue of "life and action" (*Vita consecrata*, n.102), in which religious are asked for a particular commitment. But for this the following are necessary:

1. A reflection on, and the correct setting up of the relationship between education and evangelization which combines the two without confusing them.
2. That the subject responsible for educative initiatives be conceived as a community of persons in which there are relationships of participation and collaboration, and within which a group of animators are at work who can keep clear and updated the purpose, style and pedagogical inheritance.

3. That in this community an educative plan be drawn up which conforms to the context and needs of those to whom the work is directed, in line with the perspective of evangelical service to each individual.
4. That in this plan be considered the different ways of presenting and bearing witness to the Christian proclamation, with an attentive zeal and with respect for the diversity and degree of development of each one.
5. That it be inserted in the human context with a sense of solidarity and with an effort at advancement.
6. That the education include both young people and adults, traditional institutions and multiple initiative, as well as places and means of social communication, and that it be considered a necessary dimension of every evangelizing activity.

(Source: *L'osservatore Romano*, n.18
6 May 1998, p.3)

Women Empowerment Programme at Tangla

These days we hear of all sorts of bandhs, but never probably heard of a "Chula Bandh". 600 Catholic women had a "Chula Bandh" when they left home to attend the first Mahila Sabha conducted at Don Bosco School, Tangla, April 16-19. Inaugurating the Sabha, Fr.K.O. Chacko, Parish Priest, urged the women to come away from their daily humdrum life to take time to rest and re-charge their batteries.

Sr. Elisha Minj FMA, Superior, Auxilium Convent, Tangla, the camp chief, ably conducted the sessions with the help of other resource persons: Srs. Sarita Toppo msmhc, Clementina Toppo, Imelda Minj, Seraphina Kujur and Rita Basumatary. Frs. Rayappa Anthonyswamy, Deben Daniel Kachari and Masidas Mundu from the neighbouring parishes of Ambagaon, Udaguri and Mangaldai came to offer Masses and animate the women delegates.

Mr. Aroon Barooa, the Dist. General Secretary of the Indian Women and Child Welfare Council, conducted a session on the role of women in society. He spoke of the schemes offered by the Govt. for the welfare of women. Mrs. Singh, wife of Nonaipara T.E. hoisted the flag and spent a day with the participants. Mr. Alex Minj, Secretary, Adivasi Welfare Society, exhorted the

women to be self-reliant. Dr. Deepok Tanti, gave tips on rudimentary health care.

On the last day of the Sabha, the women delegates attired in traditional costumes danced to the tune of the "Nagras" and "Mandals" to welcome Fr. Francis Cheeramban, the Vice-Provincial. Fr. Francis in his talk thanked the women for their cooperation in the parish ministry.

The women delegates elected Mrs. Angela Kujur, a high school teacher, as President of the Mahila Samity. She exhorted women to join hands to build a better family and society. Fr. Vice-Provincial, during a solemn Mass, accepted the promise made by women to keep the family prayer the centre of their lives and to work for eradicating the evil of alcoholism.

On the concluding day women delegates marched to the beat of drums and music. The convention was marked by a spirit of integration and unity. The women have decided to observe third Sunday of the month as Mahila Divas (Women's Day) in the parish.

The two active movements for the empowerment of youth and women in the parish are paying rich dividends in the life of the Tangla Parish, said Fr. Chacko, the Parish Priest. □

✚ BRO. GEORGE SUNGMUR ✚ THE MAN WHO NEVER CEASED LIVING

Bro. George Sungmur died on 7 May, at Nazareth Hospital Shillong. 82 year old Bro. George has been suffering from cancer and knew of his impending death. A concelebrated requiem Mass was celebrated at the chapel of the Don Bosco Tech. School, Shillong, hours after his death.

Fr. Provincial who presided over the Mass described Bro. George as "a Salesian who showed how to be cheerful and welcoming." The outstanding qualities of this great Salesian, whom everyone loved and admired, were his simplicity, joviality and dedication to duty.

Bro. George's mortal remains were laid to rest at the Salesian Cemetery at Laitumkhrah, Shillong, May 8. Presiding over the Eucharist at the Cemetery, Fr. Provincial said God chose Bro. George to live in the service of God. Bro. George wanted to die peacefully. He wanted to die a holy death. His death was peaceful and serene. "We thank God for calling him to follow the Lord and Don Bosco."

Archbishop T. Resto in his tribute to Bro. George recalled his four decades of association with this great Salesian. Bro. George never lost his peace in the face of difficulties, he said. The Archbishop recalled the difficult days of war and deprivation

during which Bro. George continued to remain unperturbed. Bro. George, he recalled, had a passionate love for football and hockey. He would be delighted whenever he won the game, but also knew how to take a defeat.

One of the students from the Motor Mechanics Dept. paid him tribute saying "Brother, you were not afraid to preach Christ and his message. Nobody took offence at the way you gave them advise. You did not feel ashamed to say what you strongly believed to be true."

Mr. Loniank Marbaniang, the Provincial Delegate for the Past Pupils, said though old, Bro. George was young in spirit. Though in pain he never showed it. "We were fortunate to have had him as our teacher. May Divine Providence help you, Bro. George, to help and inspire us to be good."

Bro. V. S. Mathew, the Provincial Economer, and a long time associate of

Bro. George, in his farewell message described Bro. George as a holy and simple man. He narrated an incident in which a man who had given his car to Bro. George to repair constantly pestered him asking whether the car was ready. One day Bro. George told



him: "You are so much worried about your car. But what about your soul? "The message went home, the man took his advise seriously and went to confession and the sacraments.

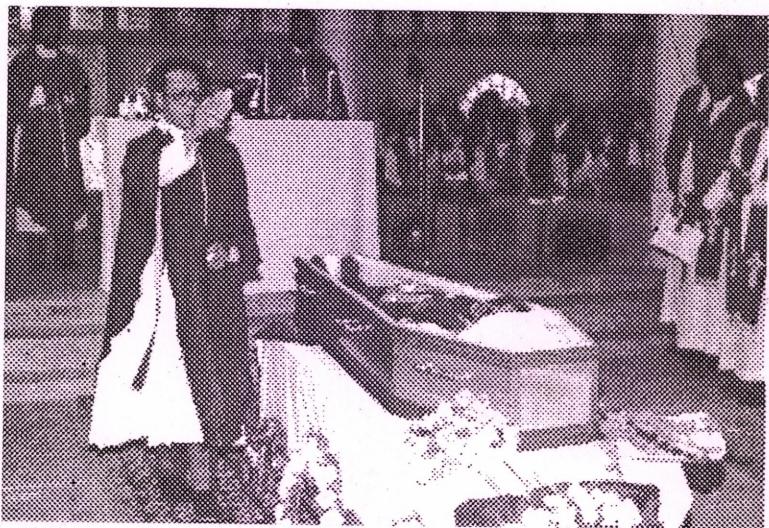
Hundreds of Salesians and Salesian Family members, past pupils, students and friends of Bro. George were at the Cemetery to bid him tearful farewell. Archbishop Resto presided over the funeral rites. Many were moved to tears as Bro. George's favourite hymn to Mary, Schubert's *Ave Maria* was played a few moments before the coffin was lowered to the ground. Many of his confreres remembered the times Bro. George would play the tune on his violin.

The body was taken to the final resting place by a group of Salesian Brothers and Fr. Provincial. The hushed sobbs and tears of those present were proof of the profound way this simple religious who worked most of his life with machines and grease had touched the lives of so many people.

A Brief Life sketch of Bro. George

Bro. George Sungmur was born in Singamari village near Darjeeling in 1916. In those days recording birthdays was not usual. Eventually when a date of birth was needed his superiors assigned to him the date of Don Bosco's name feast, January 31. He was barely two years old when his mother died. Shortly after, his father too passed away. An aunt, the sister of his father, herself a devote Catholic, looked after George and his sister.

When his eldest sister got married and settled down in Kurseong, she took the young boy, George and his two elder brothers to her house. George attended the Jesuit-run St. Alphonsus School at Kurseong. His



parish priest Fr. Wery and the Christian Brothers of Goethals, particularly, Bro. Menchen, were impressed by George, especially his skill as a footballer. Another fascination of George was motor mechanics. Together with a friend called Peter Paul, George reached Don Bosco Tech. School, Shillong, in 1935. His teacher was Bro. Casagrande whom Bro. George would recall with fond memories. Bro. George decided to become a Salesian Brother.

He made his novitiate at Sonada, near Darjeeling in 1938-39 under the direction of Mgr. Orestes Marengo, and made his first profession as a Salesian Brother on December 22, 1939 during the years of World War II. In 1940 he was appointed to Don Bosco, Liluah, to be in charge of the Motor Vehicle section. A year later, he was transferred to Guwahati to be in charge of the

Carpentry workshop. After a short stint there, he reached Don Bosco Tech. School, Shillong, where he worked till 1974 as the head of the Motor Vehicle Department. This gave him the opportunity to follow the footsteps of his great Salesian teachers and dedicate his life to the education and training of youth.

He also spent some years working at the various mission centres and institutions like Umsholait, Raliang, Sacred Heart Th. College, Sunnyside, the Cathedral of Shillong. In 1986, he returned to Don Bosco, Shillong and to the motor mechanics section. In 1994 he handed over charge to younger Salesians and spent his time assisting the community in various ways.

One of the memorable events of Bro. George's life was his visit to the Holy Land and Europe in 1975, during the Holy Year. The experience of faith in Lourdes would be a frequent topic of conversation for him in later years.

Speaking at the funeral of Bro. George, Fr. Provincial recalled some of the qualities that characterised his life:

What strikes many of us who have known Bro. George as an active elderly confrère, is the enviable grace with which he took every moment of life. He was not a *degreed* person.

But his positive attitude to life gave him a radiance which attracted young and old to be his friends. We all loved him and appreciated him as one with whom it was easy to get along. He had a warm heart which endeared him to all of us.

Football was a passion for Bro. George, right from his boyhood days. During his last days he expressed regret that he would not be alive to see the World Cup Football of 1998. In his younger days, he seldom missed an important match. To the end of his life he exhibited that same fascination of his boyhood days.

Discussing football games brought to his side young people and other fans to whom he would also address words that challenged their lives.

He loved his violin with which he sought to bring delight to every gathering. "Short and sweet like a donkey's kick" would be his quip as he introduced his violin performances. He felt free to entertain children and grown ups with his usual repertoire of songs in various languages. We loved him all the more for it.

Bro. George had clear cut and convinced Christian principles for life. He felt obliged to share them with all. He was fond of rolling up his sleeves to show the tattooed picture of Krishna on his left forearm to speak of his conversion to Christ. He never felt



embarrassed to share his faith with others and to invite them to share what he treasured most.

Perseverance was an important topic which figured frequently in his conversations and

enthusiasm. Even those who had lived with him for years and known his faith and convictions were moved by the quality and depth of his faith, the calm resignation, the fearlessness with which he could speak of



talks. He always had a word for young confreres, urging them to take their vocation seriously. His love for religious vocation drove him to speak to every young person, suggesting, encouraging and even insisting on following God's call.

His Salesian vocation led him to spend the greater part of his life with boys in the Motor Vehicle workshop. Statistics may show the number of young people who have learned skills with Bro. George from 1940 onwards. But we will not be able to gauge the impact that his person had on all those young people who were so close to him all these years. He lived as a true Salesian apostle, in the workshop or outside it.

Bro. George lived life gracefully. He leaves behind memories of a life lived to the full. The realisation that he had terminal cancer and that death was imminent, did not diminish his

death. In his last days we joked with him about death and he would join the conversation with as much serenity and enthusiasm as he would talk about his favourite game of football.

A few days before his death, Bro. George gave a recorded message for one of his friends who had requested it. In halting sentences interspersed with his oft used "what you call", he said: "I am ready to go to my creator and I am waiting for the day when he will call me. I am just like a boy going from school to home, sweet home... We all have to go... Our life is like the roses which today blooms and tomorrow fade away... I am very happy to have become a religious because God called me to follow Christ. I am very happy I have been consecrated to God... When I go to heaven, I shall try to help you with my prayers." □

Juniorate Gets Heaven's Heavy Blessings

Like all the people in Shillong on that memorable afternoon on March 22, the Savios too witnessed a heavy hail storm. They were in the farm when suddenly the sky grew dark, and a storm broke out, accompanied by loud thunder and lightning. Huge hail stones poured down with high velocity, destroying the newly sprouted potatoes, beans and maze. Fr. Santosh, the administrator, was busy those days, painting the house in preparation for the feast of Dominic Savio, but the untimely hailstones broke as many as 110 window panes and soiled the newly painted walls.

People who have lived in Shillong for years say that it was the heaviest hail storm that they have ever witnessed. Elsewhere in Shillong, many school children were injured, window panes of homes broken and windscreens of many

vehicles damaged under the sudden and terrible volley of hail that fell from above. Some of the stones weighed 100 grams.

The storm was preceded by a strange, loud sound and a long gush of white smoke. The Savios who had watched *The Independence Day*, recently, ran for shelter thinking the noise was of a space vehicle.

After the "heavy blessings" as Bro. Joseph Pakma put it, the green fields around Juniorate were like the beard of Santa Claus, dotted with white all over - hail stones of all sizes and shapes, which remained in that state for several minutes. Like the old saying, Every cloud has a silver lining, it was all over within ten minutes.

Joshy Thomas

Bangalore to Host Salesian Brothers' National Congress

The National meeting of the Salesian Brothers of India in which all perpetually professed Salesian Brothers are expected to participate, will be held at Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore, from December 30 to January 3 next. Bro. Thomas Puthur of Mumbai Province has been appointed Convenor of the meeting. Bro. Nello Valeri from the Province is in the Organising Committee for the event.

Fr. Provincial in a circular dated March 19, highlighted the objective of the Conference as an effort "to revitalise our own vocation, to get a greater number of Brother Vocations, to discover the Salesian Brother's role in the Lay Project." Highlighting the role of the Brother in the Salesian charism and mission in Northeast India, he wrote :

We recall to mind the fact that Mgr. Louis Mathias, in forming the team of 11 pioneers to the Assam Missions, insisted that brothers form a good percentage. In fact the group had 5 brothers.

We have met our brothers mostly in the technical schools - which limited somewhat our understanding of the Salesian Brother. We have had, however, outstanding men who worked in various mission stations, parishes and schools and who are remembered with special affection by thousands of people, young and old. The significance of the Brother Vocation comes under more special scrutiny because of the congregation's emphasis now on lay collaboration.

Jubilee Reflections

We are going from jubilee to jubilee. Last year we celebrated the platinum jubilee of Salesian presence in Northeast India. In a couple of years from now we shall celebrate the great jubilee. So a few jubilee reflections are in order. I suggest that we move:

From massive structures to maximum service

It may be difficult to construct a building. But what one does with it after it has been painfully built up is the real test. Putting massive structures to minimal use is a disgrace.

From personal initiative to team involvement

In the modern world of trade, commerce, industry, services of all types and even of sports, people are discovering the value of collaboration. They speak of synergy, networking, tie-ups, and collaboration of different kinds. It would indeed be a pity, if christians who loudly proclaimed these values for centuries were to undervalue them today!

From doing much to achieving more

Achievement in our sense of the word is the result of well planned, well coordinated *doing* along with a prophetic witness offered by individuals and communities. Otherwise jubilees may be milestones not in a process of growth but simply in a process of ageing.

From novelty-seeking to discernment

Changed circumstances call for change in methods too. At the same time, if emphasis is on novelty itself, we run the risk of throwing away the baby with the bath water. Tradition and traditionalism are not to be confused. There is much in tradition that is as valid today as it ever was.

From creating opportunities to exploiting opportunities

In our ministry, we really do not need to go looking for people, especially youth. They are looking for us. In fact, they are all around us. But they cannot find us, because we are hidden either in an office or behind a desk full of papers.

Or perhaps, simply busy doing much and achieving little.

Paul Vadakumpadan

FROM THE PAGES OF HISTORY

Pius XI, Don Bosco and the Telephone in the Vatican

The Holy Father never seems to miss an opportunity of referring to the time when he visited Don Bosco and stayed with him for three days in 1883.

As is already generally known, the telephone system has been recently installed in the Vatican so that the Pope can speak to whom he pleases in the world outside the Vatican City. Before blessing the new instrument the Holy Father said:

“The magnificent gift that has been made us by the generosity of an American Firm recalls to our mind what Blessed John Bosco once said to him who was to be later the successor of St. Peter. He said to us. “It is my great desire to be always at the head of progress.” We know very well that he did as he had said. And we have the same thought. In the Vatican City, so small and at the same time so great we shall realise in a simple but efficient way this programme of action.”

Source: Salesian Bulletin Vol. XXIII, March- April, 1931, p.63.

FINANCE AND LAWS

- Jose Kadaprayil sdb

ATTENTION!!

RECTORS, PARISH PRIESTS, HEADMASTERS/PRINCIPALS, HEADS OF INSTITUTIONS and all such categories of functionaries....

Take note of the following.

The CBDT (Central Board of Direct Taxes), the apex tax administrative body of India, has issued a circular recently, No. SO 123 (E) dated 11th February 1998, enjoining on certain categories of people to apply for Permanent Account Numbers (PAN) under the new alpha-numeric series u/s 139A (4) of Income Tax Act 1961. The circular is quoted below for ready reference:

1. In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (4) of section 139A of the Income-tax Act, 1961 (43 of 1961), Central Board of Direct Taxes hereby specifies that every person who is assessed or liable to be assessed by an assessing officer under the control of any income-tax authorities in India and, -

(a) who has not been allotted a permanent account number and -

(i) if his total income or the total income of any other person in respect of which he is assessable under the Income-tax act 1961, during any previous year exceeded the maximum amount which is not chargeable to income-tax; or

(ii) carrying on any business or profession whose total sales, turnover or gross receipts are or is likely to exceed fifty thousand rupees in any previous year; or

(iii) who is required to furnish a return of income under sub-section (4A) of section 139 of the Income-tax act 1961; or

(b) who has been allotted a permanent account number other than under the new series, -

shall apply before the 30th day of April, 1998 in respect of assessment year 1997-98 to the Assessing Officer, having jurisdiction in respect of such person, for the allotment of a permanent account number under the new series.

2. Every person to whom clause (a) or clause (b) of paragraph 1 of this notification becomes applicable on or after the 1st day of any previous year relevant to the assessment year 1998-99 or any subsequent assessment year, shall apply for the allotment of a permanent account number under the new series to the Assessing Officer, having jurisdiction in respect of such person, on or before the 30th day of June of the relevant assessment year:

Provided that the persons, -

(i) who had applied or are required to apply for the allotment of a

permanent account number under the new series in accordance with the notification of the Government of India in the Ministry of Finance, Department of Revenue (Central Board of Direct Taxes) Number SO 379 (E) dated 30th May, 1996, or

(ii) to whom permanent account number under the new series have already been allotted,

shall not apply for allotment of a permanent account number under the new series under this notification.

Translating the above notification into ordinary language, the following would be the gist of the circular:

1. All those who have to submit a Return of Income have to apply for a Permanent Account Number.
2. All charitable trusts and societies are required to submit a return of Income in form 3A and hence they are obliged to apply for the permanent account number.
3. The responsibility for doing the needful rests on the functionary who has to sign the annual return of income in form 3A; and in our circles this is to be done by the head of the concerned institution.
4. The application for the permanent account number is to be made in form No. 49A.
5. Our status as an applicant is "Association of Persons (Trusts)" for whom sections 11, 12, and 12A of Income-tax Act 1961 are applicable, and whose income consists of "Income from Other Sources."

6. The last date for submitting the filled in form 49A was 30th April 1998, without attracting the penal provisions of fines and penalties.

However, the Deputy commissioner of Income-tax in Guwahati has assured the professional accounting fraternity in an informal meeting that he would not consider imposition of penal fines for the applications submitted late; submission of the application can be done even during the whole of May 1998.

THE CBDT HAS SINCE THROUGH A NOTIFICATION NO. 10582 (F.NO.142/1/98-TPL), DATED 28-4-1998, EXTENDED THE LAST DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF FORM NO.49A TO THE 30TH DAY OF JUNE 1998.

7. Non-compliance with the stipulations of the above notification and other provisions of the Income-tax Act 1961, in relation to filing of annual return of income and use of permanent account number in financial transaction records, can invite the penal provisions of the Income-tax Act 1961, among which are fines ranging from Rs. 500 to Rs. 10,000 and/or imprisonment for varying periods of time.

In the light of the above, those charged with the responsibility for signing the annual return of income in form 3A are requested to take the matter seriously and do the needful without further delay. Or else run the risk of inviting the penal provisions of the Income-tax Act 1961 for non-compliance. I guess no one would look forward to such a prospect, even though the brazenness with which some functionaries flout the legal provisions would seem to be a challenge to Divine Providence itself!

INFORMATION.. REMINDERS...

Foreign Contributions Regulations Act

Attention of those concerned, is also invited to the annual returns and accounts to be submitted to the Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi, in relation to the foreign contributions received by an institution during the financial year 1997-98, which are to reach MHA by 30th July. All who are in receipt of foreign contributions, both in kind and/or in cash, as well as directly and/or indirectly, would come under the purview of the FCRA Act 1976. Special attention of those who received new FCRA registration numbers during 1997-98, is invited in relation to submitting a nil report, even if they received no foreign contributions. For further details and information kindly contact your auditor well on time.

Minimum Wages Act - (Assam)

Enquiries have been coming in, regarding the progress of the legislation in relation to the minimum wages fixation for teachers of our schools in Assam; we have the following information...

The Assam Government has constituted a Minimum Wages Advisory Board, with terms of reference to study the matter and advise the Government, and having a term of three months. The Board consists of four independent members from the Government, four employers' representatives and four employees' representatives. The Catholic Church is a member of the Board as an employer. Fr. C. Kuriala, the Headmaster of Don Bosco School, Guwahati, is the representative of the Catholic Church on the Minimum Wages Advisory Board.

During the first meeting of the Board, held on 5th May, the written representation of the Church was put forward before the Board. While the Board was sympathetic in general towards the points raised in the representation, the Government is quite adamant about putting in place the new rate of wages; concessions are considered only as regards the point of arrears, which would be dropped and the new scales coming into effect prospectively, from the date to be specified in the relevant notification; it would seem the Government would also not insist on the question of paying the Variable Dearness Allowance (VDA). The Board has constituted a sub-committee to study the proposed scale of pay.

In a meeting held at the Archbishop's House in Guwahati on 7th May, two new scales have been drawn up as proposals from the side of the Catholic Church, one for the town areas and the other for the rural areas of the state. While we can hope for some positive reaction from the side of the Government to the new proposals, it would be advisable for all authorities concerned to think in realistic terms about implementing the new rates of pay that would come into force for teachers of our schools in Assam and study the financial implications of the same. This could also be an occasion for a serious evaluative study of the entire gamut of our educational apostolate vis-a-vis the resource inputs needed to maintain our schools on a higher level of employee-remuneration and the resources that each centre is able to generate to meet the expenditure requirements. The business world at large has taken on in a big way to schemes of amalgamation and mergers as a survival strategy... can we dare to be exceptions in the way we function? □

Savio's Ignored Whispers

The staff and students of Savio Juniorate staged *Ignored Whispers*, a two- hour operata written by Savio Silvera sdb and Olympio D'Mello sdb, on 3,4,6 May, to mark the feast of St. Dominic Savio, the Patron of Savio Juniorate. The operata was directed by Fr. Santosh Minj and choreographed by Bro. Cletus. The hall was packed to capacity on all the three days, and the programme was enjoyed by all.

The musical is a modern interpretation of the parable of the Talents. On the one hand it depicts the oppressive human conditions which make man a slave of his circumstances, and on the other, it pictures man as a creator of his own destiny. But the message is clear and effective. The viewer is challenged by the call to take a decision to change himself/ herself before trying to change others or one's circumstances. Every person has his/her duty. By failing to fulfill it, he or she is destroying humanity.

Ignored Whispers speaks a universal language of music and dance, action and silence, to teach you about Dominic Savio and his values; to tell you about a boy with a will, who used his talents to make others lives better, said Fr. John, the Rector, as he welcomed the guests to the show. Dominic Savio is the masterpiece of Don Bosco's educational system, the glory of the Salesian Family, he said. Quoting Don Bosco's words to Dominic, he reminded the Savios: "Holiness consists in being happy and grateful."

Among the guests who attended the performance were Archbishop T. Resto. The Archbishop described Dominic Savio as a " guiding star and an ideal youth". He shared about the joy he felt, when he as a young boy, in 1941, acted as Dominic Savio in an operata.

Joshy Thomas

Destination Bosco Mount

After the completion of the SSLC examinations, twenty Savios left for Bosco Mount, Rongkhon, March 31, to begin their PUC studies and pre-novitiate programme. The Savios wished their elder

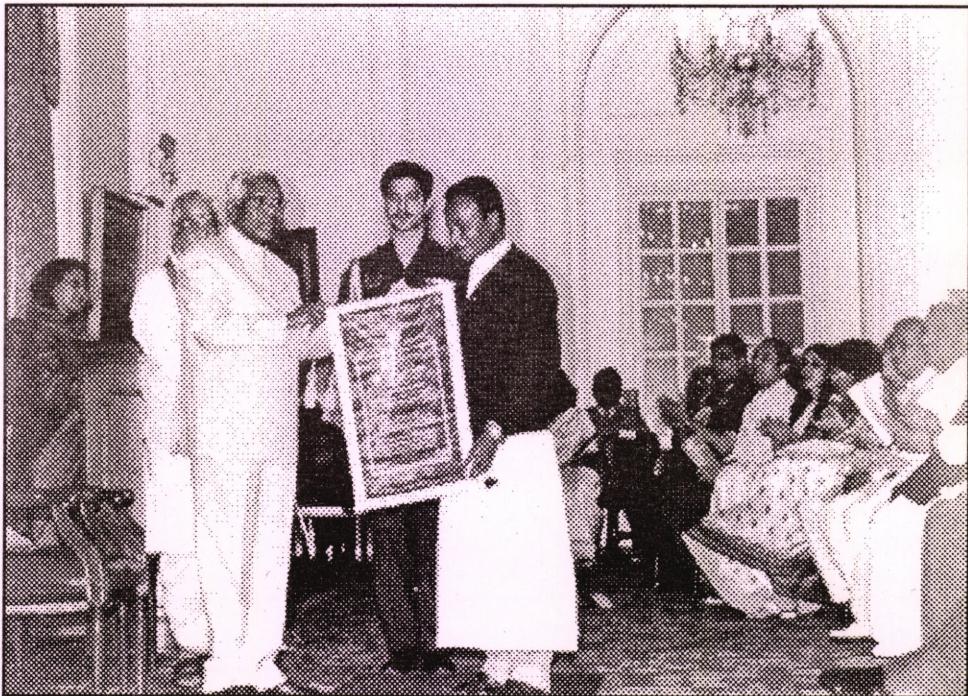
brothers as they take another step forward in their resolve to follow God's call. In a farewell for the pre-novices, the students presented a two act play called *Richard of Stanley Hall*.

National Award for Holy Family Mission, Rongjeng

Fr. Denis Toju Sangma sdb, receives the National Award for Child Welfare from President Shri K.R. Narayanan at a function in New Delhi, 25 March. The Award consists of Rs. 200,000 and a citation.

The citation reads:

Since its inception in 1971, the Holy Family Mission Home, Rongjeng, has been rendering commendable services to rehabilitate orphans and other under privileged children of the remote rural and tribal areas of East Garo and West Khasi Hills of the North Eastern Region of the country. The institution provides



varied services which include care, protection, educational, cultural, medical, recreational facilities and job oriented training activities through its educational and boarding centres. 215 children are presently benefitting through the Home established by the Institution. The Institution also assist children who are pursuing higher studies.

The dedicated and commendable services rendered by the Holy Family Mission Home, Rongjeng for the welfare of orphan children for the last 17 years earns for it National Award for Child Welfare for the year 1997.