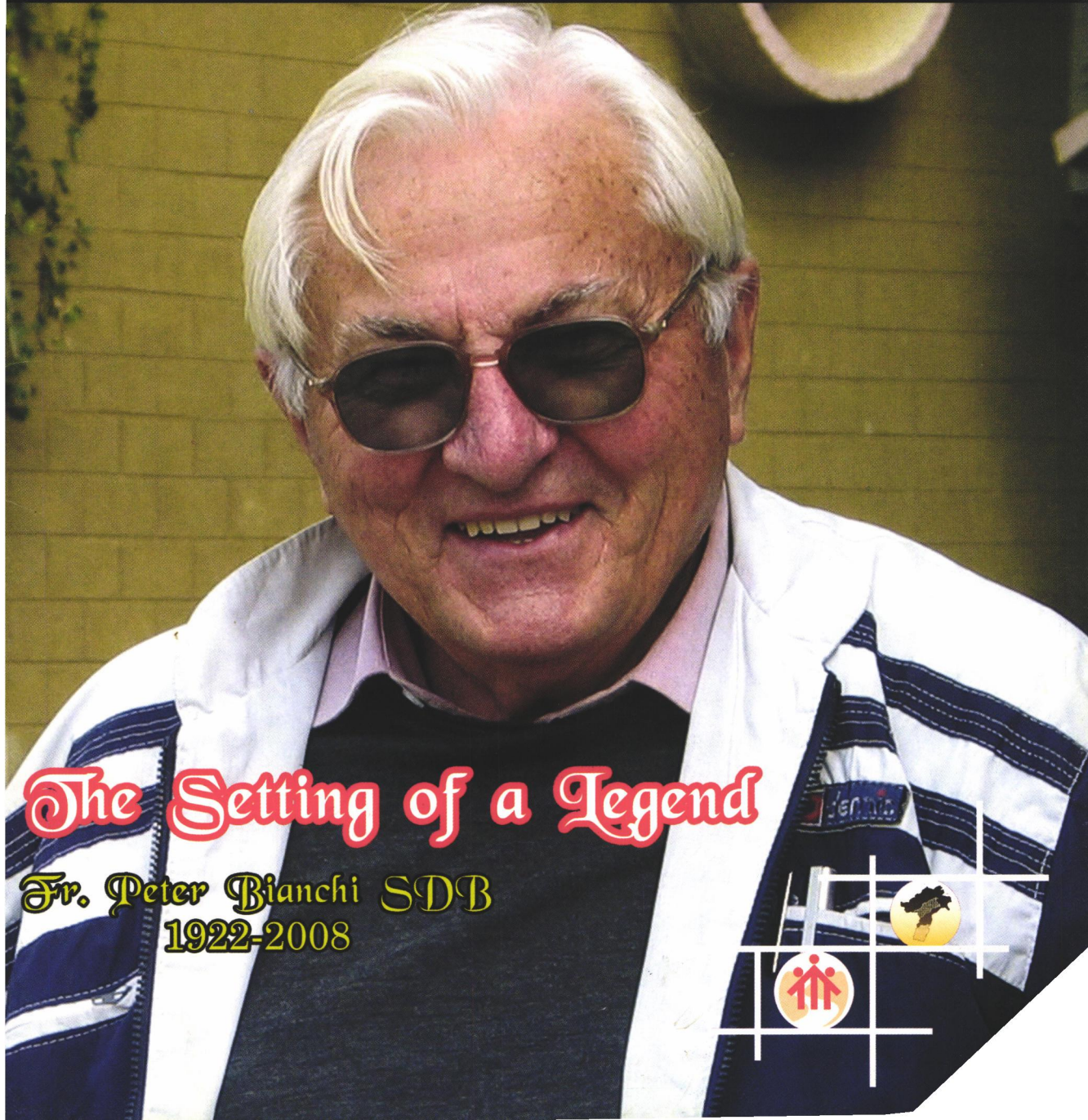


DIMAPUR *Links*

Volume 26

March - April 2008

Number 2



The Setting of a Legend

Fr. Peter Bianchi SDB
1922-2008





25 Years, DBS, Langjing



Summer Thrill, DBYC, Itanagar



Runways 2008, DBYC, Kohima New DBS Campus, Rangajan



Career Guidance, Doom Dooma



New Presbytery, Khobong

Editorial

EVERY USEFUL LIFE IS A MINISTRY

Every useful life is a ministry, says, John M. Templeton. Unfortunately, oftentimes, when people hear the word 'ministry,' they think of a church or a government office. Of course, they are not wrong either.

In truth, however, everything productive that you can accomplish in life is a ministry. By loving your work – whatever that work may be – and holding the attitude that it may be accomplished from the perspective of doing a good job for others, you are fulfilling a ministry of service. And the world needs many more ministers of service who are willing to dedicate their energies to the job at hand. The power of loving what you do can be tremendous.

The Province of Dimapur mourns the death of a valiant pioneering missionary and a lover of the poor in the person of Fr. Peter Bianchi. A person totally dedicated to the service of people, a life fully lived for others, especially the poor and the marginalized. Leaving his home and family, he made India, especially the Northeast his home and he was fully at home. He must have certainly known the words of George Herbert "Be useful where thou livest" and he showed it in his loving service which is the greatest of ministries.

Every effort contributed to helping another is a way of saying yes to life. And saying yes is a profound form of successful behaviour, which can bring an increase in happiness. When we live our lives in a useful manner and in harmony with others, we become ministers of service to others. But it takes courage to rise above the status quo, a bravery that each of us must learn in our own way.

Life is made up not necessarily of great sacrifices or high-level duties but of little things. The smiles, the kindness, the commitments and obligations and

responsibilities that are given habitually and lovingly are the blessings that win and preserve the heart and bring comfort to one's self as well as to others. This is the ministry of service performed by every useful life. Therefore service is neither giving what you don't have to give, nor is it giving when you don't need to give, but it's giving because you want to give. One of the greatest icons of the boxing-ring, Mohamed Ali once said, "the service you do for others is the rent you pay for the time you spend on earth." In what does a true ministry consist?

The Motive of ministry is Love

The Measure of ministry is Sacrifice

The Authority of ministry is Submission

The Purpose of ministry is the Glory of God

The Tools for ministry are the Word of God and Prayer

The Privilege of ministry is Growth

The Power of ministry is the Holy Spirit

The Model for ministry is Jesus Christ

Well, to the one who faces the light, the path is bright. It is the person who faces the other way, the way of selfishness, who may ultimately walk in his own shadow as it falls upon the path before him. Spring, the harbinger of changes on earth is here. It's a time of celebration, festivals and joy. It is also a time of renewal and new life. Let our lives be useful. Let it be a ministry.

Fr. Tarcisius Toppo



Upper Assam Regional Meeting

The Upper Assam Regional Meeting was held at Don Bosco School, Dibrugarh, on 5 April 2008. In all 22 Salesians representing different Salesian communities in Eastern Assam participated in the meeting. The main theme of the meeting centered around the animation of the Confreres on the four dimensions of the Youth Pastoral Ministry.



The meeting commenced with a hymn on unity 'Bind Us Together'. Then the Confreres watched a videographic presentation of this year's strenna 'Let Us Educate with the Heart of Don Bosco'. Next Fr. Nestor Guria, Vice Provincial and Provincial delegate of the Youth Pastoral Team, briefly touched upon the specifics of the said strenna. He then dealt with the nitty-gritty of the meaning, importance and structure of the Salesian Educational and Pastoral Project (SEPP).

Fr. Peter Salew, coordinator of the dimension on Vocation, presented his paper



on the same. He emphasized that (1) Participants in the vocation camps should come mostly from our own boardings and schools, (2) Vocation to Salesian Brotherhood should be specially taken care of, (3) All Confreres, not only those in charge of vocation dimension, are responsible for the promotion of religious/priestly vocations. Fr. Salew also reminded the Confreres of those who are responsible for vocation recruitment from various parts of India – Fr. Peter Salew (Provincial Vocation coordinator) - from Manipur and Nagaland; Fr. Tarcisius Toppo - from Assam; Fr. Padmanabhan Suresh - from Tamil Nadu; Fr. Manipadam Cyriac - from Kerala, and Fr. Joachim Minj - from Jharkhand and Orissa.

Fr. John Pudussery, coordinator of the dimension on Groups & Movements, briefly explained the formation of different youth groups – (1) Bosco Youth – for young men until their marriage, (2) Bosco Teens – for boys of classes 8 to 12, (3) Bosco Kids – for boys of classes 5 to 7. He said the Salesians have no schools in the city of Bangalore but they have units of Bosco Kids in almost all the Catholic schools of the city. He also informed that Camporee

2008 will be held at Dimapur in December. Mr. Gerald Minj of DBYES, Dimapur, has been selected to represent the Province in the International Youth Convention in Sydney (Australia) later this year.

As Fr. Nazarius Lakra (coordinator of the dimension on Evangelization & Catechesis) and Fr. Karinattu Benny Kurian (coordinator of the dimension on Education & Culture) could not be present physically their papers were presented to the Confreres for their personal perusal. The meeting had a happy conclusion with a photo session and fraternal meal.

Fr. Jonas Kerketta

Don Bosco Langjing Completes 25 Years

The silver jubilee celebration of Don Bosco High School, Langjing was held on 16 March at the school campus with Mr. L Jayentakumar Singh, minister of education, sericulture and transport, as the chief guest of the inaugural function and Rev. Fr. C. C. Jose, and Sapam Keba Singh, MLA, as the guest of honour and students from various schools.

A musical mantra was performed by Rk Priyadarsini and her group and the opening song was sung by the students of Don Bosco, Langjing who had decorated themselves in the national tricolour for the occasion.

Giving the welcome address, Rev. Fr. Nebu Mathew said that for Don Bosco, Langjing the silver jubilee was a moment to look back to history and also towards the future. The

school had produced 19 rank holders and now the 27th batch was preparing to pass out from the school. He hoped the school would remain as glorious as in the past 25 years and said the school was hoping to rise up to the higher secondary level soon.

The chief guest L Jayentakumar Singh in his address, said that the future of the state is uncertain if the present state of violence continued. Development can take place when violence is shunned, he reiterated. He stated that the state had potential in sports and art and culture but unfortunately it failed to bring good results. He felt that people's moral values were wrong and these could be stopped if the students are disciplined in the schools. To run away from today's society or to fight would not bring any solution to the present situation, he said.



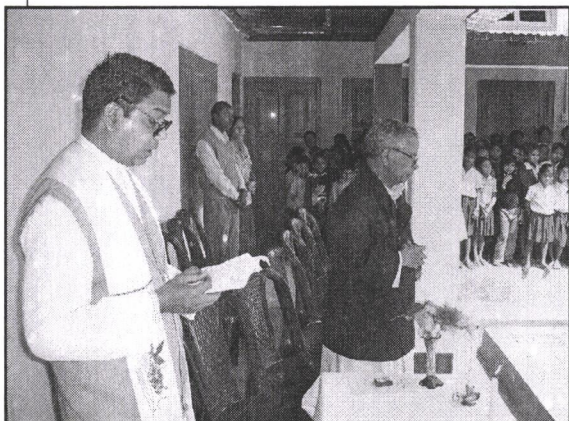
He further said that as education was the backbone of the society, the education system needs to inject moral values in the children. He appealed to the school authorities to take the responsibility for moulding the character and morals of the students who were our future leaders.

Fr. C.C. Jose, Rector, pointed out the fact that the school had faced many difficulties but the support and help the staff and the students, the school was able to continue its service.

The Imphal Free Press

Permanent Shelter for BOSCOME Blessed

A permanent shelter for Boscome was blessed and inaugurated by Rev. Fr. Nestor Guria, Vice Provincial of Dimapur on 29 February, in the presence of Fathers, Sisters, Parents, Friends and well wishers. The centre is located in Lohmthi village and is surrounded by three to four large colonies of slum dwellers.



It has already an enrollment of seventy children this year and has the capacity to accommodate a total of 200 children from classes I - IV. After Class IV, the children are put in some recognized schools. The venture has already succeeded in placing

100 children in the recognized schools.

Boscome has at present eight other centres on rented premises looking after around 466 children. It offers education free of cost to the marginalized children to enable them to improve the quality of life as well as live with dignity. In this context the opening of the new centre has a great significance. It is a lamp lighted to dispel the darkness of ignorance.

Fr. T.O. Sebastian

Career Guidance "Dekha Kail Ke" Course Organized

Dekha Kail Ke, See the tomorrow, was organized by AGUA, for the fourth consecutive time at Don Bosco, Doom Dooma from 12 – 16 March for those who appeared for the matriculation examination in 2008.

The programme saw the participation of 139 matriculates from 20 parish from Upper Assam: 3 from Amguri, 5 from Bimlapur, 2 from Chokihola, 3 from Doigrong, 2 from Deomali, 1 from Dibrugarh, 5 from Digboi, 1 from Duliajan, 12 from Golaghat, 1 from Margherita, 8 from Moran, 4 from Nazira, 6 from Nilmoni, 3 from Pengree, 17 from Philobari, 1 from Rajanagar, 2 from Sarupathar, 6 from Tinsukia, 4 from Tongna and an encouraging number of 54 from Doom Dooma.

The program was conducted in collaboration with DBYES, Dimapur and the resource persons were Miss Kaini, Mr. Gerald Minj and Mr. Amulio Lakra, the staff members. The topics covered were Personality Development, Self Discovery and Societal Responsibility. Tangible

amount of time was spent on Career Guidance, where the Matriculates were informed about the various Career Choices and the educational requirements needed to pursue them. Inter mingled with games and songs the whole program was to the liking of youth who expressed great satisfaction on having enhanced their personality in the four days that they spent at Don Bosco Doom Dooma.



One peculiar aspect of this camp was the vocation hunt carried out by both men and Women Religious Congregations, who realizing that Matric boys and girls have assembled in one place, utilized the chance to invite candidates to their congregations. Thus the girls saw and heard FMAs, MSMHCs, UFS, SMIs, SABS, CMCs, Bethany sisters, Mother Teresa sisters. And from men congregation there were the SDBs, Mother Teresa fathers, CST Brothers, St. Francis de Sales.

Fr. Bimal Lakra

Only a life lived for others in a life worthwhile.

Albert Einstein

Ambam Church Blessed

On 9 March, Rt. Rev. John Thomas, Bishop of Itanagar, blessed and inaugurated the magnificent chapel at Ambam in the presence of the Fathers, Sisters, and around 1000 faithful not only from Ambam but from neighbouring villages and substations of Mangio, Yazali, Rubde. It was preceded by a solemn 2 kms, candlelit Eucharistic procession, on the eve of the celebrations in which the people manifested their faith in Christ their light



and life.

The solemn Eucharistic celebration was presided over by the Bishop, in which the faithful participated with great devotion and fervour. After the mass Mr. Bath Teli, the zilla panchayat member of Yazali, inaugurated the Church, which was later blessed by the bishop. After the blessing there was a cultural programme, well performed by the people of Ambam and the nearby villages. Mr. Bath Teli was much taken up by the whole event and promised to donate the benches and the Altar for the

newly inaugurated Church of Ambam. The Zilla Panchayat member and the Bishop in their address to the people thanked Fr. Sebastian TJ, for the hard work and sacrifice that he had put in for the construction of the beautiful church in Ambam. At the end there was a fellowship meal to add joy to the whole celebration.



The occasion also saw the release of *Aogeda Yab Lamta*, the fourth edition of Nyishi prayer cum hymn book, by Bishop John Thomas, edited by Fr. T.J. Sebastian and Mr. Angelus. The book contains daily prayers, celebration of the sacraments and sacramentals, prayers for the Eucharistic celebrations, hymns etc. Other people who worked hard for compilation were Mr. Nangbia Tulo, Mr. Nangram Pingkap, Mr. Toku Stephen and Master Bijoy Joseph.

Fr. Anthony Mahimai Dass

Giving frees us from the familiar territory of our own needs by opening our mind to the unexplained worlds occupied by the needs of others.

Barbara Bush

Meeting of Principals and Headmasters Held

Under the aegis of the Commission for Education and Culture, the Principals and Headmasters, about 20 or so gathered in Provincial House on 20 April, for a day of Animation and meeting. The program began with a words of welcome and introduction by Fr. Benny Karinattu the Head of the Commission for Education and Culture.



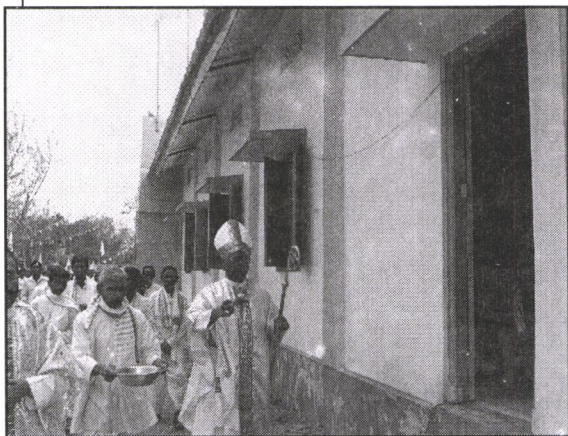
The dynamic Fr. V.M Thomas animated the morning sessions. He began with a prayer through a PowerPoint presentation leading the participants to self-reflection. After this he challenged us to think and perform creatively. The point of his emphasis was that we are in control of the system in which we operate. We were told that the change in the inner attitude of the mind could change the outside. He also said that within the system the center is me. We have the power to create the environment and change the system. Fr. V.M Thomas also made a wonderful multimedia presentation "The Power of the Dream".

From here he moved on to share ideas on the "All India Catholic Education Policy 2007". He highlighted the basic ideas contained in the document of the CBCI. In the afternoon session, the participants gathered to share ideas on issues relevant to our schools and colleges pertaining to the region.

Fr. R. K. Guangdiat Nicholas

Historic Chapel Renovated and Blessed

On 6 April, the renovated Sacred Heart Chapel at Rangajan Tea Estate, Golaghat, one of the historical chapels in Assam, was blessed by Rt. Rev. Joseph Aind, Bishop of Dibrugarh, in the presence of Fr. Nestor Guria, Vice Provincial of Dimapur, Fathers, Sister and around 6000 faithful.



After the colour welcome ceremony, the Solemn Eucharistic celebration was presided over by Bishop Joseph Aind. The faithful participated in the celebration with great devotion and melodious singing.

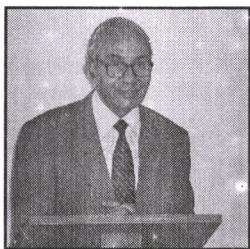


It is to be noted that the renovated chapel was first built by Fr. Leo Piasecki, known as the Lion of Brahmaputra valley, in 1932. He often traveled the length and breadth of the Brahmaputra valley looking after the scattered faithful from Dubri to Dibrugarh. In his missionary journeys, Rangajan Church served as a stop over between Guwahati and Dibrugarh.

Fr. Shaji Valiarambil

SEMINAR ON "GOOD TEACHER"

A day-long seminar on "Good Teacher" was held at Don Bosco School, Dibrugarh on 7 April 2008, for the teachers of the same school. The resource person was M. K. Sarma, former Prof. & Head of the Department of Education, Dibrugarh University (Assam), former Principal of Vidya Bhawan IASE (Udaypur, Rajasthan) and former Principal of the Himachal College of Education (Nalagarh, Himachal Pradesh).



While admitting the difference between a railway engine driver and a teacher (a teacher trains the mind while an engine driver minds the train), he also

underlined the similarity between a teacher and a train, at least on two accounts (1) a teacher must have a strong drive, that is, he/she should teach well, and (2) he/she should have a good traction, that is, should be able to pull along the students through teaching and good example. He underlined the importance of knowledge and formation more than the degrees one gets. A second or even a third class degree with first class information is better than a first class degree with third class information, Prof. Sarma added.

Fr. Jonas Kerketta

Spoken English Course Held

A twenty-day Spoken English Course was held at Don Bosco School, Doom Dooma, organized by Agency for Growth and Upliftment of All (AGUA), from 7–27 April.

The programme saw the active participation of 140 students from 20 parishes of Assam, who have appeared for the Matriculation Examination in 2008, from various Assamese Medium Schools. The parishes from which they came include: Kokrajar 6, Dbubri 6, Dibrugarh 7, Digboi 2, Doom Dooma 27, Golaghat 17, Jagun 3, Japrajan 1, Khobong 8, Margherita 12, Mariani 2,

Moran 3, Naharkatia 5, Naojan 2, Pengree 1, Philobari 12, Rajabari 2, Tinsukia 11, Tongna 11, Vikasika 2.



The aim of the programme was to make them conversant in English which is an important National as well as International language. Various methods such as quiz, drama, group activities, etc were used to make them pick up the language as well as utilize it in daily conversation.

Fr. Bimal Lakra

Pioneer of Manipur Missions Goes to his Eternal Reward

The Funeral Mass of Fr. Peter Bianchi, who died on 8 March at Imphal, was celebrated at St. Mary's Church, Punanamai, Mao, in Manipur, on 10 March, presided over by Rt. Rev. Dominic Lumon, Archbishop of Imphal and concelebrated by Rt. Rev. Joseph Mittathany, Archbishop Emeritus of Imphal, Rev. Fr. Nestor Guria, acting provincial of the Province of Dimapur, Rev. Fr. Linus Neli, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Imphal and about 60 priests

on 10 March. The Funeral Rites were presided over by Fr. Nestor Guria, the acting provincial of Dimapur Province.

After his death, the mortal remains of Fr. Peter Bianchi was honoured at Don Bosco Chingmeirong, Imphal. The requiem mass was presided over by Rt. Rev. Dominic Lumon, archbishop of Imphal, after which, the body was taken to Dimapur. The cortege stopped at Maram for the faithful to pay their last respects to Fr. Bianchi, a Holy Eucharist was celebrated at St. Joseph's School, Shajouba, the community to which Fr. Bianchi belonged until recently, and cortege left for Dimapur.

On 10 March a requiem mass was celebrated at Salesian college, Dimapur presided over by Rt. Rev. Jose Mukala, Bishop of Kohima and assisted by Rt. Rev. Robert Kerketta, bishop emeritus of Tezpur, Rev. Fr. Nestor Guria, acting provincial of Dimapur Province, Rev. Fr. Linus Neli, Vicar General of the archdiocese of Imphal, Fr. Joy Pallikunnel, Vicar General of the Diocese of Dibrugarh, and about 70 priests. The Eucharist was attended by a large number of Sisters and faithful from Dimapur and various parts of the province. There were also representatives from various places, like Halflong, where Fr. Peter Bianchi worked.

Speaking at the introduction of the holy Eucharist Rt. Rev. Jose Mukala described Fr. Bianchi as a pioneering missionary who loved the people and underwent immense sacrifices for the spread of the Gospel. He said, "In the passing away of Fr. Peter

Bianchi a chapter in the era of pioneering missionary activity has come to an end. Speaking at the homily Fr. Nestor Guria, described Fr. Bianchi as "a lover of the poor who was close to the people." He further said that Fr. Bianchi underwent much hardship and sacrifice for the sake of the people. He also recalled the life and last days of Fr. Peter Bianchi in his homily.

Rt. Rev. Robert Kerketta, Bishop emeritus of Tezpur, Fr. Linus Neli, Vicar General of



the archdiocese of Imphal, and Fr. Joy Pallikunnel, expressed their sadness and sense of loss at the passing away of Fr. Peter Bianchi, in their condolence messages. Mr. D. Cajetan Mahung expressed sorrow and grief at the loss of Fr. Bianchi on behalf of the Salesian Co-operators of the Province

Dimapur. He said, "Fr. Peter Bianchi was the first Provincial Delegate of the Salesian Cooperators and had done much for strengthening the Salesian Family and organizing the Salesian Cooperators.

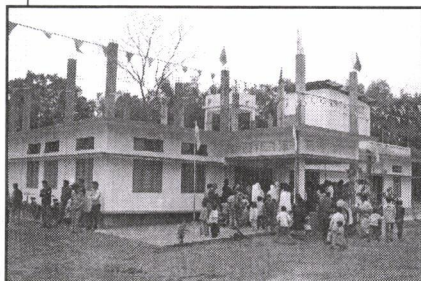
Fr. Peter Bianchi was born on 28 January 1922 at Passano Coriano in the North Eastern coast of Italy. He left for India in 1938 and made his first profession on 2 April 1940. On 6 January 1951 he was ordained a priest by Bishop Stephen Ferrando at Shillong Cathedral fulfilling his long cherished dream. From then on he served the people of the region in various capacities. But a large part of his life was in Manipur missions, pioneering many of the centres and works.

Fr. Sony Pottenplackal

Khobong Presbytery Blessed

On 4 April 2008, Fr. Nestor Guria, Vice Provincial of the Salesian Province of Dimapur, blessed and inaugurated the newly constructed presbytery of the Mary Help of Christians parish at Khobong, in the presence of eight priests, five Sisters and 200 Catholics.

It may be mentioned that Khobong was recently carved out from the Parish of Doom Dooma in the Diocese of Dibrugarh (Assam) and declared as a new parish. Out of the total of 58 tea gardens and villages of Doom Dooma parish with 11,500 plus Catholics, Khobong has inherited 15 tea gardens and villages with approximately 2,700 Catholics. Fr. Jerome Minj SDB is the first pastor of this fledgling parish.



Fr. Jonas Kerketta

Foundation Day Celebrated

The 6th Foundation day of Bosco College of Teacher Education was celebrated on 14 March, with Professor K. Kannan, Vice Chancellor of Nagaland University, as the Chief Guest.

“The aim of education is to bring out the best in everyone to make a multi-dimensional human person,” said the Chief Guest, while addressing the students.

Fusion dance, a comical skit ‘The Triumph of Innocence’, An Accapella, Songs, etc., were the highlights of the celebrations. “We all have dreams because we are not dead people, but fully alive, but we need to realize those dreams and contribute our

share to the world” pointed out Fr. Jose, Principal in his welcome address.



The occasion also saw the release of “The Wanchos in Transition”, by the Chief guest, a book written by Fr. V. T. Thoma.

Bro. Innocent

Runways 2008 Organized at DBYC, Kohima

Runways 2008, was held at Don Bosco Youth Centre, Kohima from 10 – 23 April, with the theme “In Search of Excellence” with thirty seven students of Classes X and XII participating in the programme.

The programme got to a colourful start on 10 April, with Mr. L. Kenneth, State Liaison Officer, National Service Scheme, Directorate of Youth Resources and Sports, gracing the occasion. The chief guest in his address dwelt on the benefits of Runways, preparing the young for their future.



In the course of the programme, the participants were privileged to get in touch and listen to many important personalities such as Mr. Arupe Zeliang, Joint Director, Youth Resource and Sports, Shri. Baptist Lobo, Senior Branch Manager, Vijaya Bank, Kohima, Fr. A.J. Sebastian SDB, HOD, English department, Nagaland University, Col. Gautham Ganguly, Commandant 26 Assam Rifles, Dr. I.P. Khala, Deputy

Director, Veterinary and Animal Husbandry, Nagaland, Mr. P. Francis Solo, Director, Administrative Training Institute, Nagaland, Mr. K.T. Thomas, Asst. Director, Tourism, Nagaland, Mr. Kenei Sekhose, Technical Assistant, Department of Horticulture, Kohima, Mr. Thejakielie Zuyie, sound engineer, Life Pro, Sound solution, Sr. Ivy D'souza, Superior, Little Flower School, Kohima, Fr. T.T. Joseph, Principal, Don Bosco School, Mao, Manipur.

Prof. K. Kannan, Vice Chancellor, Nagaland University, also visited the participants of Runways and interacted with them. In his speech he demonstrated that in life we must realize what we want to do. All of us have to make our life better. He told that the Naga society has a culture of civilization. He often dwelt on the dream and vision he has for Nagaland especially in the field of education.

The other resource persons included Fr. Anto Chowaran, Fr. P.X. Francis SDB, Fr. Bosco Perianayagam SDB, Fr. M.C. George SDB, Fr. C.J. Mathew SDB, Mr. Charles Chasie, Miss. Asangla Imsong, Fr. Cijichen SDB, Mr. K.S. Charles, Mr. Augustine, Mr. Bharat, Mr. Viko and Mr. Ketho.

All through the programme the participants were closely followed up under the direction of Mr. Charles, Mr. Augustine, Miss Akuno and Miss Anna. The students were enabled to run through the runways of their lives and they are helped to pick up the

momentum that is needed to take off into the world, the plane of their lives, "in search of excellence" through various activities, sessions, and interactions.



Runways 2008, came to a close with a grand finale on 23 April with Shri, Pollem Tep, Deputy Director, Directorate of School Education, Kohima, as the chief Guest at the grand function. Rev. Fr. James Poonthuruthil, Provincial of Dimapur province graced the occasion as the guest of honour. The campers, their parents and guardians, friends and well wishers and guests were present. Chief Guest in his speech dwelt at length on environment and on the role of the youth of today in preserving it. He demonstrated life situations to make the participants understand it and advocated life skill education.

It is to be noted that RUNWAYS is an annual, non-residential youth leadership, awareness cum animation programme organized ever since 1995, with the theme "In Search of Excellence."

Fr. Cijichen

Vocation Camp Held at Borduria

A three-day vocation camp was held at the Parish of Borduria from 25 - 28 March. Sixteen boys and twenty girls from classes VII - XII participated coming from the parishes of Borduria, Kanubari, Khonsa, Laju, Longo, Mintong and Ngissa of Miao diocese.

The animators from different congregations FMA, MC, MSMHC, SMI, MINIMS, and SDB sowed the seeds of religious and priestly vocation in the vibrant and youthful minds and hearts of the campers with their animation talks and activities.



Fr. Peter Salew SDB, animated the participants with his talks on meaning of life, vocational discernment, proper understanding of one's life and God-given talents in the light of the Gospel. Fr. Dennis Panipitchai, saw to the details of the camp as well the material and spiritual well being of the campers for the three days.

Bro. Jomi

Summer Thrill at DBYC, Itanagar

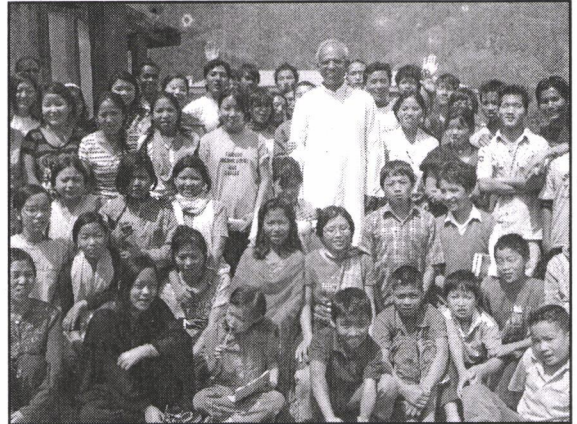
Don Bosco Youth Centre organized three youth programmes under the banner "Summer Thrill" during the Annual holidays of the students.

The three programmes were Career Track (career guidance and vocation camp for five days) for the students of classes VII to X from various centres of the Diocese was conducted from 3 – 7 April, at Holy Cross School, Nyokum Lapang. Altogether sixty four participants turned up. In addition to general career guidance, Fathers and Sisters belonging to various religious congregations and the Diocese spoke to the participants on their congregation and diocese.

The second residential programme was Group Leaders' Orientation Workshop for two boys and two girls from the various centres of the diocese who are to be leaders in their centres was held from 8 – 12 April, at Holy Cross School, Nyokum Lapang. In all forty four participants took part. Sessions on character formation, saying no, making an emotional bank account, Leadership, Communication Skills, Addictive Habits, HIV/AIDS and Education to Love were some of the themes touched upon.

The third programme, RUNWAYS 2008, was held for students of classes X and XII who have completed their board examinations, from 4 – 24 April, at Holy Cross School, Nyokum Lapang. Sessions on Life Coping Skills, Career Guidance, Goat setting etc. were taken. The nineteen active and enthusiastic participants also got the opportunity to learn skills such as

creative writing, Guitar, Keyboard, Ball room dancing and Street Theatre.



It ended with an exposure trip to Gangtok and Darjeeling and rare privilege of interacting with Dr. Pawan Chamling, Chief Minister of Sikkim and to participate in the dedication of the War Memorial at Nathula Pass. The resource persons were Fr. Ashok Kujur sdb, Fr. John Burman MSFS, Bro. Michael sdb and Sr. Sevarina SC.

Fr. Policarp Xalxo

"Being busy does not always mean real work. The object of all work is production or accomplishment and to either of these ends there must be forethought, system, planning, intelligence, and honest purpose, as well as perspiration. Seeming to do is not doing."

Thomas A. Edison

Annual Administrators' Meeting Held

The Annual Administrators' Meeting was held on 29 March, at Don Bosco Provincial House, Dimapur. There were twenty seven participants from various institutions of the province.

In the morning session Fr. K. C. Jose, animated the participants on different aspects and implications of Tax Deduction at Source (TDS) and Stock Market Recession and on their repercussions and implications. He also discussed at length on Pay Scale Fixation, Gratuity, Provident Fund, etc. The participants also got an opportunity to interact with the animator and clarify many of their doubts regarding accounting, banking, etc.



The afternoon session was taken by Fr. Joseph Pampackal, the Province Economist on various aspects of accounting and keeping proper record of the house. On 30 March the participants were given hands on experience on TALLY, an accounting programme.

Fr. C. T. Varghese

Keyhung Church Blessed

The beautifully built church of Keyhung Jungle Line, under Tinsukia Parish, was blessed by Rt. Rev Joseph Aind, Bishop of Dibrugarh on 27 April in the presence of Fr. Nestor Guria, Vice Provincial of Dimapur Province, five Fathers, fifteen Sisters and around five thousand enthusiastic, jubilant faithful.

In his homily Bishop Aind expressed his joy and gratitude to all those responsible for the building of the church. He reminded all of the fact of being 'temples of the Holy Spirit'

quoting St. Paul, one of the greatest of missionaries of the Church. He also urged them to be living Churches and reminded of the responsibility of spreading the light of faith and the Gospel to all around.

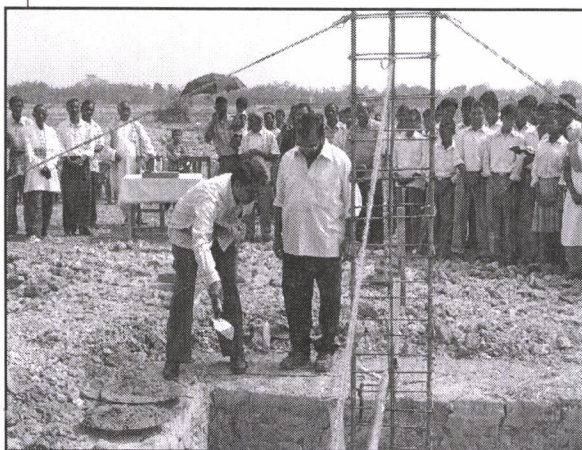


After the Holy Mass, a short felicitation programme was held in which the rich cultural heritage of the people was exhibited through dances and songs to the joy and satisfaction of all. After which a family meal was served which brought the celebrations to a fitting conclusion.

Fr. Sanjeev Linda

Foundation Laid for DBS, Rangajan

The foundation stone for the new Don Bosco Jivon Jyoti School at Rangajan, Golaghat, was laid by Fr. Nestor Guria, Vice Provincial of Dimapur on 11 March.



Present for the occasion were the Fathers, Staff and students of the school and the parishioners of the place. With this new premise the school hopes to fly high in the field of education and empowerment of the people in the area.

Fr. Shaji Valiaparambil

Salesian Launch "Project Europe"

The Salesians are aiming to have a greater impact on Europe, particularly by finding new ways of evangelizing youth. The religious community has launched "Project Europe," with the aim of leading the continent back to its Christian roots. The initiative is one of the conclusions of their General Chapter, celebrated in Rome from March 3 to April 12, with the participation of 232 Salesians.

According to a statement from the congregation, this project is similar to "Project Africa," which was launched by the Salesians of the late 1970s and resulted in a surge of missionary activity on that continent.

"Project Europe" responds to desires expressed by Benedict XVI when he received the chapter fathers in audience March 30.

Father Pascual Chávez, Rector Major of the Salesians, mentioned the initiative in the closing address of the General Chapter. "Today, more than ever, we become aware that our presence in Europe needs to be rethought," he said. "This consideration is aimed at redimensioning our Salesian presence for greater impact and effectiveness in this continent. That is, seeking a new form of evangelization in order to respond to the spiritual and moral needs of these young people, who to us appear as wanderers without guides and without destination."

The Rector Major focused on imitating the founder of the Salesians, St. John Bosco.

"What would Don Bosco do today?" he asked. "We don't know. But we know what he did yesterday and therefore we can know what to do in order to act like him today. It is a question of knowledge and imitation." Father Chávez stressed the saint's identity as a "priest-educator." "This is the model that we have," he said, "and we are called upon to reproduce as faithfully as possible."

ZENIT

Assam Govt. Gives Go Ahead for DB University

The Salesians of Don Bosco, Province of Mary Help of Christians, Guwahati, has been given the letter of Intent by the Ministry of Education, Government of Assam, for setting up of the Don Bosco University at Guwahati.

This is the first catholic university in India. The project has been sanctioned by the Rector Major and his Council. The Government of India has welcomed the move to set up a Catholic University in India. The Ecclesiastical authorities in India have been very positive in their attitude to the setting up of a Catholic University in India.

BIS

Dreams pass into the reality of action. From the actions stems the dream again; and this interdependence produces the highest form of living.

Anais Nin

The Word of God: The Last Voice Resounding in the Chapter

"On the point of returning to the Provinces and taking up again our ordinary life and mission, the Word of God is the last voice to speak in our Chapter, to enlighten our path, sustain us on our journey as viaticum, provide the agenda for our life", said the Salesian Rector Major, Fr Pascual Chávez, as he began his homily during the closing Mass of the 26th General Chapter.

Fr. Chavez briefly recalled the main stages of the Chapter and stressed how the liturgical seasons of Lent and Easter had "been the suitable time for this conversion and rebirth", "50 days of an experience of Pentecost."

The Rector Major re-read the experience described in the Acts of the Apostles (9:31-42) and presented in the first reading of today's liturgy, of "a very young Church... by now spread among a number of communities, faced with everyday problems: with prolonged illness, with the unexpected death of committed people and so on. In our case", said Fr Chávez, "it is a matter of the pressing commitments of educational and pastoral activities. Daily life is marked by the holy fear of God and the consoling assistance of the Holy Spirit." For the Rector Major, "Knowing we are not alone," and that "the Lord who, through his Spirit has sent us, guides and assists us" is a comfort, which combined with the conviction of being able to "live as disciples under the eyes of God," and "to model our lives on him and on his holy will".... lets us

“dedicate ourselves by vow to the service of the young, like Don Bosco. In this way the Congregation is being built up interiorly and becomes docile to the action of the Spirit who expands it exteriorly.”

The Acts of the Apostles, noted Fr Chavez, “totally concerned with spreading the gospel, does not forget daily life in its simplicity and in its demands, a life that becomes more human through its contact with the gospel and precisely because of this becomes the foundation for every subsequent proclamation.”

Commenting on the end of chapter six of John's gospel (6:60-69), Fr Chavez explained that being a disciple of Jesus “sharing his life and mission, in fact is not an easy occupation nowadays; it never has been”. He also noted that “for Jesus it was easy to call some to follow him, but that he did not manage to keep them faithful to him for long”, and that the fourth gospel had left

us a record, “as memorable as it is dramatic, of the difficulty that Jesus' closest disciples found in staying with him.”

“Today, as yesterday”, he added, “the true disciples stay with Jesus, despite the difficulty of his words, because there is no one else who really deserves their faith and because only his words give hope to our expectations, and assure life without end. And there is no one else who deserves our life because there is no one else who has given it to us and for us in the Eucharist.”

And so Fr Chavez invited Salesians to “start afresh from Christ, the Word of God, the Only One who can ensure - for us and for the young - life in abundance. I beg you to start afresh from Christ, the Bread of Life, the only one who has given himself to us as food for the journey and as the fount of life.”

ANS

MOM! HOW IS THAT SHE IS NOT GETTING TIRED

Ever since time began, a legend got its birth in a remote village of a parish. Feast of Mary Help of Christians occasioned this story. It was 24th of May. Being the feast day of their church, people were all mighty happy. After the first bell had just rang - village was in the habit of ringing 3 bells before they started Sunday and other services - people with their best dresses were seen moving towards the church, which was decorated with their own artistic design and wisdom, especially the statue of Mary Help of Christians.

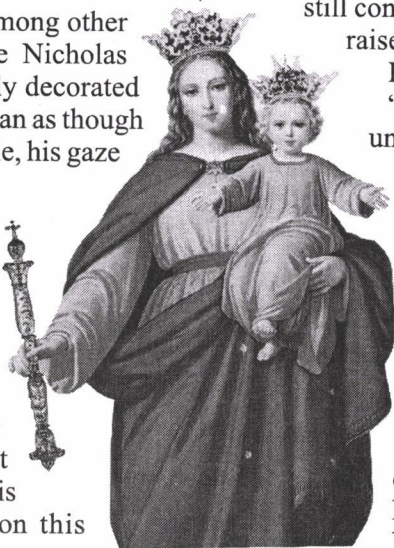
For this great occasion, the Parish Priest was invited to preside over the Holy Eucharist. Among the church going gathering, there was a mother with her child, Nicholas of about 2 years. As they always did, the mother and the child occupied the first pew. By the second church bell, all the people were in the church waiting for the Parish Priest to arrive. With the sound of his vehicle, all the people came out of the church to welcome the parish Priest. No sooner had they finished the welcome ceremony, with the third church bell, people

commenced the greatest and the most important act of the day, the Holy Mass with good singing and devout participation.

As the Mass was going on, among other things, the attention of little Nicholas was arrested by the beautifully decorated statue of Mary Help of Christian as though he was watching a Hindi movie, his gaze was fixed

on the statue. Realizing that his mother was holding him just as Mary did to Jesus in the statue, Nicholas was extremely happy. As the sermon was long on that day, towards the end of it, getting tired, his mother made him sit on the pew saying softly in his ear "My son, please be seated on this pew for a moment, I got tired."

Being a curious sort of child, at this decision of his mother, after many seconds of observation took a leave from his personal world and pointing at the statue of Mary Help of Christian the child said to his



mother loudly "Mom! How is that she is not getting tired. She has been holding her son much before we entered the church and she

still continues to do so." The question raised by the child left the parish Priest in awe who concluded "Even this child as well understood my sermon and has contributed to what I have just said and confirmed my reflection that Mary is the timeless helper of us all in all our needs."

The parish Priest said so because he was depicting Mary as the most willing helper in contrast to the daughter of delay, stressing on Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth in haste and the wedding feast at Cana. From

then on this story became an often-said story during the feast of Mary Help of Christian.

Bro. Blasius Tete

LIVING THE LEGACY

We have a very rich legacy handed to us by our Father and Founder Don Bosco; DA MIHI ANIMAS, CAETERA TOLLE. This is a program of life well defined and efficacious and still proves to be relevant today as it was in Don Bosco's days. However, its relevance and efficacy will find its mark only when lived enthusiastically and committedly. The DA MHI ANIMAS is an imperative invitation, challenging us to greater fidelity to our

charism, spirit and tradition. It beckons us Salesians to conform to the style of life enunciated by Don Bosco.

The various Provincial Chapters and the just completed GC 26, have intensely deliberated on this theme. Rich documents have been formulated. And I guess wonderful lines of actions have been articulated. If we are to shelve this rich legacy and the wonderful documents we

have formulated in archives, we will do no good to ourselves and to the young who are the target of our DAMIHI ANIMAS.

Personally, the DA MIHI ANIMAS is the yardstick of the efficacy of my mission and vocation. I would view all that I do as a Salesian with this as the focal point. I would test the relevance of my apostolate by this. Is what I am doing, saying, thinking and planning in concurrence with DA MIHI ANIMAS? If the ultimate goal of my every activity is not the salvation of souls, I run the risk of losing my focus and operating in my myopic vision. DA MIHI ANIMAS will inspire me towards the following points.

(1) To put God and this kingdom first. (2) To seek the primacy of the spiritual. (3) To deepen characteristic love of the Good Shepherd. (4) To be free of the self to seek the interest of the young, especially the salvation of their souls. (5) To be prompted by disinterested love. (6) To live in harmony with my confreres in the community. (7) To live impelled by a missionary zeal. (8) To live my Salesian Vocation enthusiastically and happily to give witness of the values of the kingdom and the richness of Don Bosco's legacy. (9) To learn to assess my works and life periodically.

I believe all of us trying are our best to further God's kingdom and spread the

charism of Don Bosco. However, at times with good intentions but with poor witnessing, we jeopardize our mission. What do I mean by this? I fear our community living often is not the most peaceful, and internal strife are exhibited in public platform. Two confreres may disagree and get into conflict, and one party or both the parties solicits outside support and airs grievances.

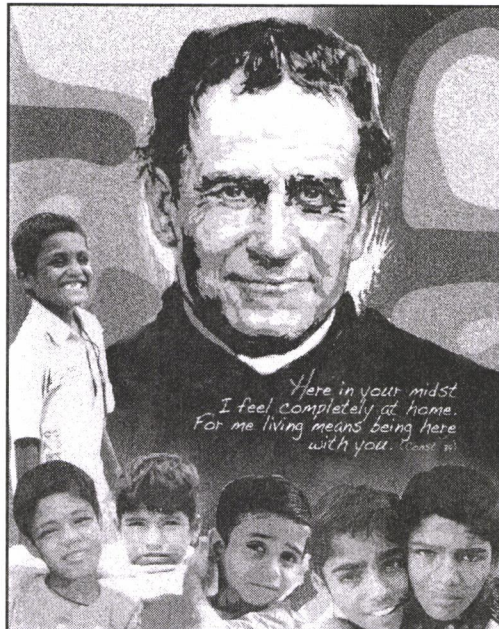
The end result is instead of conflict resolution we have conflict aggrandizement. We think we are teaching the other a lesson, but in the process sell our self-image and dignity and hollowness of our existence.

The DA MIHI ANIMAS is a rich legacy, which must be nurtured by committed and genuine community life. We are all individuals with different temperaments, attitudes and interests.

If we can all learn to

accommodate one another, we can live the family spirit with much joy and authenticity. At times we may have to sacrifice personal interest to accommodate that of the other. I cannot be always the one who calls the shot. If I want always to be the Mr. Right then I can turn out to be wrong. At times it takes a little humility to ensure peace in the community.

I strongly believe in community living. Here, one can experience a breaking or



building experience. Every member in the community has his share to contribute. The DA MIHI ANIMAS can only find true expression only in a community that builds. I doubt how a community that is not living in one accord, can claim to live the DA MIHI ANIMAS. Whose souls will we in any way thirsting for? My humble exhortation is, let us live our community life in true family spirit of sharing, in an attitude of forgiveness, in building warm relationships, and the DA MIHI ANIMAS will indeed be lived as the legacy of our Father.

Fr. R.K. Guangdiat Nicholas

HIGHWAY TO ALIENATION

With the advent of the twenty-first century we have already entered the epoch of omnipotent technology. The present generation is undoubtedly faced with the phenomenon of unprecedented technological progress sweeping humankind. The advances in electronics and telecommunications, combined with those in space technology and digital breakthroughs, have transformed global realities. The world has shrunk because of the gigantic strides in information technology and the speed at which knowledge is both deepening and expanding. The spin-offs are mind-boggling. About every particle of life and living is revolutionized for those entangled in some way or other in the whirls of the technological revolution.

Methods and techniques are getting transformed beyond recognition with every

passing day. New products are arriving in overwhelming flow. Innovations considered to be of path breaking character turn out to be hopelessly outdated by the dawn of tomorrow. Innovations follow innovations; the latest models are in no time evaporated by the supermodels. Technological progress is reaching such a peak that it is beginning to acquire, shall one say, an automatic, *persona*. Technology is becoming the king-emperor. It presides over the human race and claims to regulate even its instincts and impulses!

In such a situation, human civilization is rendered into a helpless witness to the emerging cataclysm of occurrences. And often we become mute witnesses and victims of this ever-alienating phenomenon. Caught up in a web of gadgets and equipments, before long, every moment of our existence can become burdened by the frightening thought that the meaning of meaning is beyond our grasp; the world we seek to understand is getting metamorphosed at every instant and the crisis is beginning to acquire calamitous proportions. In a society dominated by information technology and associated activities, the human beings will certainly face the prospect of constant downsizing.

One of the grave dangers that we should be aware of in such a situation is the fact that a consumer society fosters isolation and loneliness in a special way because of its emphasis on the importance of things. People are encouraged to judge themselves by the things they possess. We are so inundated by the absurd advertising that we fail to reflect on what such advertising is really telling us. They give us dangerously false self-image. It may be telling me that I am what I possess. A steady diet of such

advertising can strongly influence both our consciousness and our conscience. We can start judging people, both others and ourselves, by their possessions, by their financial successes, their wardrobe, or the size and the price of their automobile. It is a frightening frame of mind to experience but easy to slip into. Do we ever need to conform ourselves to a happiness that is approved and advertised by the media? To judge the value of personal existence by the things advertised and the possessions accumulated is to court isolation, enslavement, and ultimate unhappiness.

Fr. T.C. Joseph

WORKERS' DAY IN SALESIAN PERSPECTIVE

May Day or the International Workers' Day, commemorates the Haymarket Riot in Chicago (USA) of 1886 in which the Chicago 'anarchists' (workers) demanded the reduction of 10 - 14 hours of work to eight hours a day. The US police and National Guards tried to suppress this eight-hour movement with brutal force. The Chicago Commercial Club even purchased a \$2000 machine gun to be used against the strikers. The authorities accused Albert Parsons, August Spies, Adolf Fischer, George Engel, Louis Lingg, Samuel Fielden, Oscar Neebe and Michael Scwab of murderous conspiracies. The first four were hanged on 11 November 1887. Lingg committed suicide in prison. The last three were pardoned in 1889.

The heroic struggles and sacrifices of the strikers did not go wasted. It had a rippling

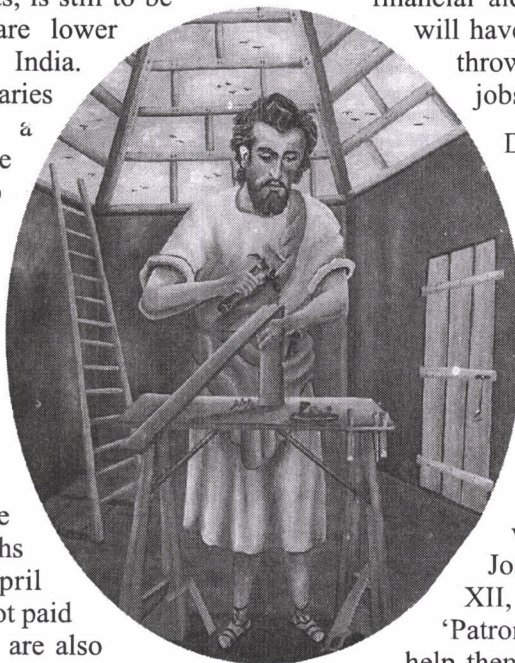
effect and the eight-hour movement spread like wild fire to other countries. May Day is celebrated with marked solemnity in communist countries like China, Cuba and the former Soviet Union. But in the USA May 1st is declared as "Law Day" and the workers are given a Labor Day on first Monday of September – a holiday without any historical significance.

Despite universal acceptance of May 1 as International Workers' Day, the rights of the working classes have not been respected. In many parts of the world, governments have still to secure the workers' rights to (1) improved working and living conditions, (2) implementation of the minimum wage laws, (3) equal treatment, regardless of race, gender, origin and appearance, religion, (4) form and belong to unions, etc. The Human Rights Watch lists many problems such as "non-payment of wages, extended working hours without overtime compensation, unsafe working environments resulting in death and injury, squalid living conditions in labour camps, and withholding of passports and travel documents by employers."

Even in India, where the first May Day was celebrated (in Chennai) on 1 May 1923, workers' rights are still a distant dream for many Indians. The sense of the dignity of labour is confused due to deep-rooted caste system. There is discrimination based on caste and gender. Bonded labour is still in vogue. Child labour is rampant. Wages are low. Living and working conditions are poor. Unemployment is growing by the day.

Within the region of the Salesian Province of Dimapur, perhaps the people who are most deprived of their rights are the tea plantation workers. The Plantation Labour

Act (PLA) 1951, which promises healthy working and living environments, just wages and other benefits, is still to be implemented. Wages are lower than anywhere else in India. Delayed payment of salaries in many gardens is a common feature. Suffice to cite one example to illustrate this point. The 15 Assam Tea Corporation (ATC) gardens of Assam pay Rs. 48.50 as daily wage to the tea pluckers. In the same gardens the daily wage for similar works is Rs.54.80. What is worse for the last seven months (October 2007 to April 2008) the workers are not paid their full salaries. They are also deprived of their other benefits like gratuity, Provident Fund, monthly rations, etc. As a result the employees in these gardens are facing serious financial



constraints. Their future too seems bleak, because if the government does not provide financial aid to these gardens they will have to be closed. This will throw the tea workers out of jobs.

Don Bosco, the founder of the Salesian Congregation, devoted his entire life for the welfare of the working classes especially the youth. As church personnel and members of the Salesian Society, the Salesians have much to do for the uplift of the working classes. May St. Joseph, whom Pope Pius XII, on 1 May 1955 declared 'Patron Saint of the workers', help them to be diligent workers and defenders of the rights of today's workers

Fr. Jonas Kerketta

Benedict XVI's Address to Catholic Educators

"Freedom Is Not an Opting out, it Is an Opting In"

"How beautiful are the footsteps of those who bring good news" (Rom 10:15-17). With these words of Isaiah quoted by Saint Paul, I warmly greet each of you - bearers of wisdom - and through you the staff, students and families of the many and varied institutions of learning that you represent. It is my great pleasure to meet you and to share with you some thoughts regarding the nature and identity of Catholic education today. I especially wish to thank Father David O'Connell, President and Rector of the Catholic University of America. Your kind words of welcome are much appreciated. Please extend my heartfelt gratitude to the entire community - faculty, staff and students - of this University.

Education is integral to the mission of the Church to proclaim the Good News. First and foremost every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth (cf. Spe Salvi, 4). This relationship elicits a desire to grow in the knowledge and understanding of Christ and his teaching. In this way those who meet him are drawn by the very power of the Gospel to lead a new life characterized by all that is beautiful, good, and true; a life of Christian witness nurtured and strengthened within the community of our Lord's disciples, the Church.

The dynamic between personal encounter, knowledge and Christian witness is integral to the diakonia of truth which the Church exercises in the midst of humanity. God's revelation offers every generation the opportunity to discover the ultimate truth about its own life and the goal of history. This task is never easy; it involves the entire Christian community and motivates each generation of Christian educators to ensure that the power of God's truth permeates every dimension of the institutions they serve. In this way, Christ's Good News is set to work, guiding both teacher and student toward the objective truth which, in transcending the particular and the subjective, points to the universal and absolute that enables us to proclaim with confidence the hope which does not disappoint (cf. Rom 5:5). Set against

personal struggles, moral confusion and fragmentation of knowledge, the noble goals of scholarship and education, founded on the unity of truth and in service of the person and the community, become an especially powerful instrument of hope.

Dear friends, the history of this nation includes many examples of the Church's commitment in this regard. The Catholic community here has in fact made education one of its highest priorities. This undertaking has not come without great sacrifice. Towering figures, like Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton and other founders and foundresses, with great tenacity and foresight, laid the foundations of what is today a remarkable network of



parochial schools contributing to the spiritual well-being of the Church and the nation. Some, like Saint Katharine Drexel, devoted their lives to educating those whom others had neglected -- in her case, African Americans and Native Americans. Countless dedicated Religious Sisters, Brothers, and Priests together with selfless parents have, through Catholic schools, helped generations of immigrants to rise from poverty and take their place in mainstream society.

This sacrifice continues today. It is an outstanding apostolate of hope, seeking to address the material, intellectual and spiritual needs of over three million

children and students. It also provides a highly commendable opportunity for the entire Catholic community to contribute generously to the financial needs of our institutions. Their long-term sustainability must be assured. Indeed, everything possible must be done, in cooperation with the wider community, to ensure that they are accessible to people of all social and economic strata. No child should be denied his or her right to an education in faith, which in turn nurtures the soul of a nation.

Some today question the Church's involvement in education, wondering whether her resources might be better placed elsewhere. Certainly in a nation such as this, the State provides ample opportunities for education and attracts committed and generous men and women to this honorable profession. It is timely, then, to reflect on what is particular to our Catholic institutions. How do they contribute to the good of society through the Church's primary mission of evangelization?

All the Church's activities stem from her awareness that she is the bearer of a message which has its origin in God himself: in his goodness and wisdom, God chose to reveal himself and to make known the hidden purpose of his will (cf. Eph 1:9; Dei Verbum, 2). God's desire to make himself known, and the innate desire of all human beings to know the truth, provide the context for human inquiry into the meaning of life. This unique encounter is sustained within our Christian community: the one who seeks the truth becomes the one who lives by faith (cf. Fides et Ratio, 31). It can be described as a move from "I" to "we", leading the individual to be numbered among God's people.

This same dynamic of communal identity -- to whom do I belong? -- vivifies the ethos of our Catholic institutions. A university or school's Catholic identity is not simply a question of the number of Catholic students. It is a question of conviction -- do we really believe that only in the mystery of the Word made flesh does the mystery of man truly become clear (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 22)? Are we ready to commit our entire self -- intellect and will, mind and heart -- to God? Do we accept the truth Christ reveals? Is the faith tangible in our universities and schools? Is it given fervent expression liturgically, sacramentally, through prayer, acts of charity, a concern for justice, and respect for God's creation? Only in this way do we really bear witness to the meaning of who we are and what we uphold.

From this perspective one can recognize that the contemporary "crisis of truth" is rooted in a "crisis of faith". Only through faith can we freely give our assent to God's testimony and acknowledge him as the transcendent guarantor of the truth he reveals. Again, we see why fostering personal intimacy with Jesus Christ and communal witness to his loving truth is indispensable in Catholic institutions of learning. Yet we all know, and observe with concern, the difficulty or reluctance many people have today in entrusting themselves to God. It is a complex phenomenon and one which I ponder continually. While we have sought diligently to engage the intellect of our young, perhaps we have neglected the will. Subsequently we observe, with distress, the notion of freedom being distorted. Freedom is not an opting out. It is an opting in -- a participation in Being itself. Hence authentic freedom can never be attained by turning away from

God. Such a choice would ultimately disregard the very truth we need in order to understand ourselves. A particular responsibility therefore for each of you, and your colleagues, is to evoke among the young the desire for the act of faith, encouraging them to commit themselves to the ecclesial life that follows from this belief. It is here that freedom reaches the certainty of truth. In choosing to live by that truth, we embrace the fullness of the life of faith which is given to us in the Church.

Clearly, then, Catholic identity is not dependent upon statistics. Neither can it be equated simply with orthodoxy of course content. It demands and inspires much more: namely that each and every aspect of your learning communities reverberates within the ecclesial life of faith. Only in faith can truth become incarnate and reason truly human, capable of directing the will along the path of freedom (cf. *Spe Salvi*, 23). In this way our institutions make a vital contribution to the mission of the Church and truly serve society. They become places in which God's active presence in human affairs is recognized and in which every young person discovers the joy of entering into Christ's "being for others" (cf. *ibid.*, 28).

The Church's primary mission of evangelization, in which educational institutions play a crucial role, is consonant with a nation's fundamental aspiration to develop a society truly worthy of the human person's dignity. At times, however, the value of the Church's contribution to the public forum is questioned. It is important therefore to recall that the truths of faith and of reason never contradict one another (cf. First Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith *Dei Filius*, IV: DS 3017; St. Augustine,

Contra Academicos, III, 20, 43). The Church's mission, in fact, involves her in humanity's struggle to arrive at truth. In articulating revealed truth she serves all members of society by purifying reason, ensuring that it remains open to the consideration of ultimate truths. Drawing upon divine wisdom, she sheds light on the foundation of human morality and ethics, and reminds all groups in society that it is not praxis that creates truth but truth that should serve as the basis of praxis. Far from undermining the tolerance of legitimate diversity, such a contribution illuminates the very truth which makes consensus attainable, and helps to keep public debate rational, honest and accountable. Similarly the Church never tires of upholding the essential moral categories of right and wrong, without which hope could only wither, giving way to cold pragmatic calculations of utility which render the person little more than a pawn on some ideological chess-board.

With regard to the educational forum, the diakonia of truth takes on a heightened significance in societies where secularist ideology drives a wedge between truth and faith. This division has led to a tendency to equate truth with knowledge and to adopt a positivistic mentality which, in rejecting metaphysics, denies the foundations of faith and rejects the need for a moral vision. Truth means more than knowledge: knowing the truth leads us to discover the good. Truth speaks to the individual in his or her entirety, inviting us to respond with our whole being. This optimistic vision is found in our Christian faith because such faith has been granted the vision of the Logos, God's creative Reason, which in the Incarnation, is revealed as

Goodness itself. Far from being just a communication of factual data - "informative" - the loving truth of the Gospel is creative and life-changing - "performative" (cf. Spe Salvi, 2). With confidence, Christian educators can liberate the young from the limits of positivism and awaken receptivity to the truth, to God and his goodness. In this way you will also help to form their conscience which, enriched by faith, opens a sure path to inner peace and to respect for others.

It comes as no surprise, then, that not just our own ecclesial communities but society in general has high expectations of Catholic educators. This places upon you a responsibility and offers an opportunity. More and more people - parents in particular - recognize the need for excellence in the human formation of their children. As Mater et Magistra, the Church shares their concern. When nothing beyond the individual is recognized as definitive, the ultimate criterion of judgment becomes the self and the satisfaction of the individual's immediate wishes. The objectivity and perspective, which can only come through a recognition of the essential transcendent dimension of the human person, can be lost. Within such a relativistic horizon the goals of education are inevitably curtailed. Slowly, a lowering of standards occurs. We observe today a timidity in the face of the category of the good and an aimless pursuit of novelty parading as the realization of freedom. We witness an assumption that every experience is of equal worth and a reluctance to admit imperfection and mistakes. And particularly disturbing, is the reduction of the precious and delicate area of education in sexuality to management of 'risk', bereft of any reference to the beauty of

conjugal love.

How might Christian educators respond? These harmful developments point to the particular urgency of what we might call "intellectual charity". This aspect of charity calls the educator to recognize that the profound responsibility to lead the young to truth is nothing less than an act of love. Indeed, the dignity of education lies in fostering the true perfection and happiness of those to be educated. In practice "intellectual charity" upholds the essential unity of knowledge against the fragmentation which ensues when reason is detached from the pursuit of truth. It guides the young towards the deep satisfaction of exercising freedom in relation to truth, and it strives to articulate the relationship between faith and all aspects of family and civic life. Once their passion for the fullness and unity of truth has been awakened, young people will surely relish the discovery that the question of what they can know opens up the vast adventure of what they ought to do. Here they will experience "in what" and "in whom" it is possible to hope, and be inspired to contribute to society in a way that engenders hope in others.

Dear friends, I wish to conclude by focusing our attention specifically on the paramount importance of your own professionalism and witness within our Catholic universities and schools. First, let me thank you for your dedication and generosity. I know from my own days as a professor, and I have heard from your Bishops and officials of the Congregation for Catholic Education, that the reputation of Catholic institutes of learning in this country is largely due to yourselves and your predecessors. Your selfless contributions - from outstanding

research to the dedication of those working in inner-city schools - serve both your country and the Church. For this I express my profound gratitude.

In regard to faculty members at Catholic colleges universities, I wish to reaffirm the great value of academic freedom. In virtue of this freedom you are called to search for the truth wherever careful analysis of evidence leads you. Yet it is also the case that any appeal to the principle of academic freedom in order to justify positions that contradict the faith and the teaching of the Church would obstruct or even betray the university's identity and mission; a mission at the heart of the Church's *munus docendi* and not somehow autonomous or independent of it.

Teachers and administrators, whether in universities or schools, have the duty and privilege to ensure that students receive instruction in Catholic doctrine and practice. This requires that public witness to the way of Christ, as found in the Gospel and upheld by the Church's Magisterium, shapes all aspects of an institution's life, both inside and outside the classroom. Divergence from this vision weakens Catholic identity and, far from advancing freedom, inevitably leads to confusion, whether moral, intellectual or spiritual.

I wish also to express a particular word of encouragement to both lay and Religious teachers of catechesis who strive to ensure that young people become daily more appreciative of the gift of faith. Religious education is a challenging apostolate, yet there are many signs of a desire among young people to learn about the faith and practice it with vigor. If this awakening is to grow, teachers require a clear and precise

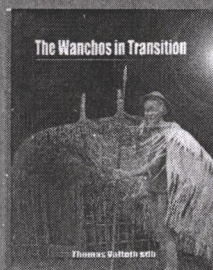
understanding of the specific nature and role of Catholic education. They must also be ready to lead the commitment made by the entire school community to assist our young people, and their families, to experience the harmony between faith, life and culture.

Here I wish to make a special appeal to Religious Brothers, Sisters and Priests: do not abandon the school apostolate; indeed, renew your commitment to schools especially those in poorer areas. In places where there are many hollow promises which lure young people away from the path of truth and genuine freedom, the consecrated person's witness to the evangelical counsels is an irreplaceable gift. I encourage the Religious present to bring renewed enthusiasm to the promotion of vocations. Know that your witness to the ideal of consecration and mission among the young is a source of great inspiration in faith for them and their families.

To all of you I say: bear witness to hope. Nourish your witness with prayer. Account for the hope that characterizes your lives (cf. 1 Pet 3:15) by living the truth which you propose to your students. Help them to know and love the One you have encountered, whose truth and goodness you have experienced with joy. With Saint Augustine, let us say: "we who speak and you who listen acknowledge ourselves as fellow disciples of a single teacher" (Sermons, 23:2). With these sentiments of communion, I gladly impart to you, your colleagues and students, and to your families, my Apostolic Blessing.

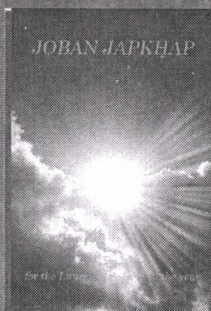
ZENIT

NEW RELEASES



The Wanchos in Transition

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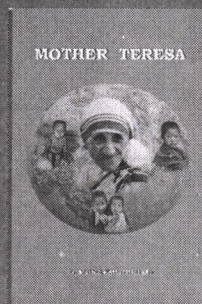


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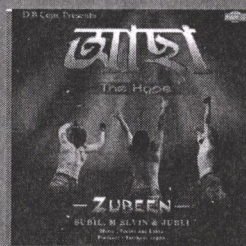
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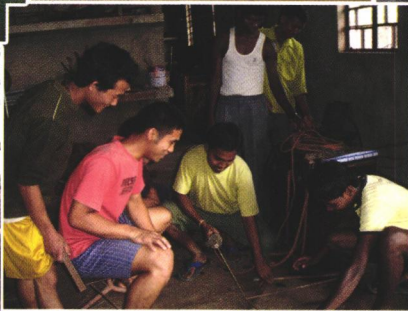
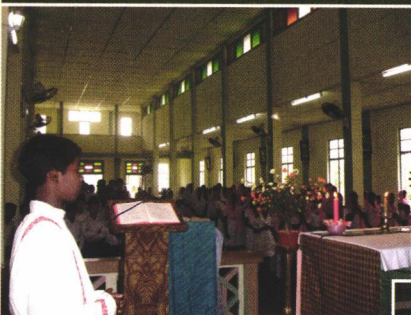
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