



Asian Ministry Seminar - 2020

As many as 35 Brothers and Sisters (delegates) from Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, Singapore, India and French-Polynesia gathered at Gopalpur, India from February 5-11 for the Asian Ministry Seminar 2020.

Members of General Government Sr. Margareta Claudia and Fr. Derek Laverty, Superior Delegate of the Sisters in Pacific-Asia Zone, Sr. Irene Barboza were also present along with CAP coordinator, Fr. Bonie Payong.

The Ministry Seminar Preparatory team members; Fathers Pankras Olak, Subal Francis, Sisters Vandana Narayan, and Lia gave orientation about the venue and led everyone towards the spirit of the seminar on the first day evening.

The event began with a Eucharist, officiated by Fr. Ajith Kumar Dass, the

regional superior of India. A beautiful entrance dance, by the Sacred Hearts Sisters' Candidates made up to an enriching nuance to the celebration. Fr. Ajith, in his opening remark expressed "It is a unique privilege for Indian Sacred Hearts community to host the gathering of Asian Ministry Seminar 2020 (AMS), a historical event".

The participants of the seminar expressed their joy to be able to be part of it. For many of them it was the first time to come to India. On the second day, Brothers and Sisters from different countries presented the ministry that they were engaged with.

Agustinus Suwondo expressed, "It is a unique privilege for me to be a participant in the Asian Mission Seminary. I was excited to share what I am doing in the mission. I thought I was doing something unique and great. Listening to others, I am humbled. I am in awe for the wonderful mission, the other SS.CC members are engaged with, he exclaimed. Fr. Suwondo is working among the indigenous people in Mentawai, a remote mission station in Indonesia.

Fr. Prasad Pinto, an Indian Capuchin, was the main resource person at AMS 2020. He spoke about the various challenges of religious in India today. He put forward thought-provoking questions like: "Is religious life relevant today? Is there a crisis in religious life in the Church?" Are you a happy religious? Fr. Pinto brought to our awareness that In India, the number of religious is growing every day, so also the number of unhappy religious! In a way as the quantity is increasing, the quality of religious life is decreasing. "Many religious are



fine only formally, heart of heart convictions of many are shallow and not deep enough”, he lamented. He also presented the missionary challenges of religious and called forth everyone to have a deep experience of God in personal as well as in communal life.

Sujata Jena, a final professed sister of the congregation (Indian) had an opportunity to share with the participants the fruits of her learnings on mission, collaboration-networking, project management- fundraising that she received from her studies, various national-international, workshops and her own engagement in mission and social development work.

Sujata emphasized that mission is to get out of oneself and reaching out to others crossing the boundaries of culture, language, philosophy, belief etc. with love, compassion and recognition.

The General councilors Sr. Margareta and Derek together updated the functions and dynamics of the general Government. While delivering their final message to the assembly gathered, they reminded that the past, more so the present and future mission of the congregation is compassion. In their words, “it implies to go out and find those who live in pain. To let we be touched by their vulnerability.”

With this, the participants went in groups to study the points gathered from the previous mission seminar as well as the challenges and responses that were presented in AMS 2020.

Finally, the Assembly determined together to foster family ministry. The AMS 2020 stated a resolution - “We, brothers and sisters of Asia-Pacific and French- Polynesia commit to foster family ministries beyond borders in collaboration with secular branch, to involve more deeply into the daily struggles of people through visiting families, building peace and reconciliation”.

Five objectives were made to build families. Concrete plan of actions was drawn as a specific response. “The reality is, the Asian countries face similar challenges with regard to broken families, abused children, single parents, gender-based discrimination, and addiction to drug LGBTQ and so on” explained Pankras Olak, one of the organizers of Asian Ministry

Seminar. He added, “therefore, our role is to build a strong family that will have a positive impact on their communities and church. It is an expression of our pastoral and missionary conversion in the area of family ministries”.

Irene

Barboza, the Superior delegate of



the Sisters in Pacific-Asia- Zone (PAZ) expressed, “The Asian Ministry Seminar is a wonderful forum to be together as Brothers and Sisters of a single congregation, to discern for an effective mission.”

“If we witness well, it is a wonderful gift that we are for the world. The challenge is to maintain the gift of who we are. It is for us to maintain and nurture this gift,” she added.

As part of ministry seminar, they had an opportunity to visit a rural Sacred Hearts Parish, Ludru, in the district of Gajapati, Odisha.

The training program was an initiation of Conference of Asia-Pacific (CAP). The objective is to make a ministerial commitment based on the signs of the times in light with the charism of the congregation, said Bonie Payong, the provincial of the Brothers in Indonesia.

The Assembly unanimously agreed to meet once in three years for similar training programs in the future.

After the common assembly, Brothers and Sisters met separately to discuss and discern other aspects specific to each.

- Sujata Jena, SS.CC.

New Year Celebration of Dangadigila Community

One of my favourite times of the year is Christmas and New Year, like for many Catholics. There is always a sense of anticipation and excitement for me because it invites me to a spiritual cathartic a time of reflection, and offers me hope for change. It invites me to make new choices. Every year I am reminded of a verse from the Bible: ***“Behold I make all things new.”*** New Year's Eve celebration was exciting for all of us here. In fact, it was celebrating a new life with a cheerful heart and this time the manner of celebration was different.

As Catholics, we know that the Holy Mass is the center of our faith and the source of divine

life. Therefore, we had the Eucharistic celebration from 10:30 pm to 12:15 am. We welcomed the end of one calendar year and the beginning of a new one.

In the mass, during the penitential rite, we repented of the failures of the past year and we went out of the chapel to burn the “effigy” (the effigy is consigned to the flames marking the end of a year and consuming with it all that was evil and bad that year) and entered into chapel with the song of Gloria reflecting on the gifts, giving thanks to God and resolving to do better in the coming year. Then, we had faith sharing after the readings and the Gospel; and the creed, professing our faith and some intercession prayers afterwards. The Holy Eucharist celebration uplifted us spiritually. Then we moved to another celebration, with the instruction of Fr. Felipe, taking the 12 grapes with the counting of 12 strokes of the bell. It was really fun loving.

On the first day of the New Year 2020, faithful from Badabagan came to celebrate the New Year with us and the solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. We were all so excited about the mass because it was in Hindi and Fr. Felipe was the president, to celebrate in Hindi.



He prepared the parts of the Eucharistic celebration to preside in Hindi with the help of the brothers. There was excitement in all our faces in joining with Fr. Felipe for the Eucharistic celebration. It was the first time for Fr. Felipe to preside over in Hindi mass and the Hindi words coming from Fr. Felipe was delighting the hearts of many of us. We were spellbound by his words, though it was the first attempt and not very fluent. We were overwhelmed by his first mass in Hindi.

So, we started the year with hope as we ended one year and looked at a new resolution to love one another more selflessly. ***“Whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold new things have come” (2Cor.5:17).***

- Vishal, SS.CC.

Ash Wednesday Celebration at Kuniaban

The Parish of Immaculate Conception in Serampore has a mission station known as Kunjaban. There are few other villages like: Jangipada, Nazibpur and Singur from where Catholics come to Kunjaban once a month when we have the Eucharistic celebration. The Catholics of these places belong to *Santhal* tribe. They are very simple and hard working people and most of them are ordinary daily laborers.



In spite of their busy life, they make every effort to participate in the monthly Eucharist. They are very firm in their faith. Last year, on Easter Vigil, around 21 people including few children received Baptism.

This year, I, along with Bro. Ashish, Sr. Banita, DC and two sister Candidates had the opportunity to celebrate the Ash Wednesday with the people of Kunjaban. As the mission station is far from the parish church, our travel involved an hour long travel by train and almost half hour travel by *Toto*. In my homily I spoke about the importance of Lenten Season.

After the Mass, the Sisters gave to the children and others present few note books, cookies and miraculous medals which they had brought with them. I also had the opportunity to discuss with the people about various pastoral needs of the people. During our discussion the people reminded me about the present condition of the chapel.



In fact, for a long time they have been requesting us to build a new chapel. It has been their long pending request. As of now, the people have been praying in a makeshift house made of mud walls and thatched roof. Due to unavailability of funds, we have not been able to build a chapel for them. Please pray that God may fulfill the wish of the people to have their own chapel.

- Umakant, SS.CC.

CAP INITIAL FORMATION ASSEMBLY

As per the decision of CAP (Conference of Asia-Pacific), the Assembly of Initial Formation, Japan in 2017, the just gone by CAP IF Assembly of the Formators was held from 12th – 15th February, 2020 in the **Vincentian Dhyanaashram**, Gopalpur-on-sea, Odisha, India. It was an opportune time for the CAP to look at its formation journey in its past, present, and design an alternative way of formation for the future. I, as a first-time participant, had a wealth of experience, exposure, information, and acquaintance with host of Brothers from the CAP and matters pertaining to Formation and Accompaniment. The Assembly was a forum for me to know the formation realities of CAP from the sharing of the formators. The sharing captured varied range of blessings and challenges the formation ministry faces in different phases of formation - be it coming from those under formation or from the scarcity of formation personnel.



Felipe Lazcano Hamilton, while presenting **“Religious life in Europe and USA: its challenges and opportunities for Religious life in Asia”** enlightened the Assembly on various models of formation. It was very comprehensive presentation ranging from the Pre-Vatican (Traditional) model of formation to that of the Integration (Re-defined) model of formation. The Assembly also had a resource

person-Fr. Joshy K Xavier, SJ to give to us a different world view on **“Internet and Communication Technology: Social Media for Formation”**. He took us through a very

interesting factual detail on the matter and how this modern achievement of man be used in formation.

These two presentations were the guiding map for the IF Assembly to design its proposals to be presented to CAP for its vision of the future of formation.

- *Tilleshwar, SS.CC.*

NEWS IN PICTURES



**Brothers and Sisters
participating in Asian
Ministry Seminar,
Odisha, India**



**Houses built by the
Congregation for the
people devastated in
cyclone 'Titli',
St. Damien Parish,
Ludru**

