



# Tea Leaves

DARJEELING DIOCESE NEWSLETTER

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2018 Bishop House, Darjeeling - 734101, INDIA November-December

## Message from the Bishop's Desk:



"When they saw the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. " Matthew 2:10

Christmas is a time when the grace of God was bestowed on man. *Seeing man in darkness the Father Almighty our id love for His people, sent His own beloved Son, Jesus Christ as the Light of the World so that man would no longer wander in darkness. Jesus abounds in grace and He is the source of light. In John 8:12 we read " I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. "*

*We know that the chosen ones to be part of the first Christmas were Mother Mary, St. Joseph, the shepherds and the three wise men. They were the ones who not only heard but also believed in the message of the Angel Gabriel. The three wise men too followed the Star of Bethlehem and came to adore the Newborn King. They were the first to meet the Light of the World.*

*Christmas is a true historical even not a figment of imagination. It is said that History repeats itself. For us who are still lost in different kinds of darkness prevalent in today's world, Christmas has come again. Revelations 3:20 says "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me. "Hence every day, every moment we must be eager to meet Jesus, to make room for Him in our hearts and to allow Him to brighten every darn corner of our lives. Jesus Christ is the light that dispels fear, provides assurance and showers enduring peace and joy.*

*My dear readers in Christ, let us all hear the loving voice of God and go adore Him so that this Christmas becomes a memorable one for us.*

*May the beautiful lights of every Christmas season remind us of Him who is the source of all light.*

*Wish you a Merry Christmas and a happy new year!*

**+Stephen Lepcha**

## Quasiquintennial year closing ceremony

The closing ceremony of the 125 years jubilee celebration of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception was held on 8th December 2018 on the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It was a day of great thanksgiving and jubilation for the people of Darjeeling. The event commenced with the Eucharistic Celebration. The main celebrant was Bishop Stephen Lepcha who offered the Thanksgiving mass along with Fr. Samuel Lepcha, the Vicar General, Fr. Alexander Gurung, the Pro- vicar, Fr. Edward Sangnes, the Co-pastor and other priests. The faithful of the parish as well as from neighbouring parishes were present in large numbers along with religious sisters from different congregations. It may be recalled that the Catholic Church first came to Darjeeling with the Irish Loreto nuns and thereafter by the grace of God and the spiritual zeal of the early fathers the Church has grown. Bishop Eric Benjamin, the first Bishop of the Diocese devoted his life in serving his faithful and today Bishop Stephen continues to guide his flock with the same dedication.

As part of the celebration the Nepali Catholic Sahityik Sangh released the Souvenir magazine and the diocesan biannual magazine 'Bagdo Jharna' This was also a day when the parishioners above 70 years of age were felicitated for their lifelong contribution to the parish. 8th December being the 21st episcopal anniversary of Bishop Stephen and the 19th ordination anniversary of Fr. Alexander there was even more reason to be grateful to God. The event came to an end with Agape.



**PIX of the month**



## HAPPENINGS AT ST. JOHN BERCHMANS PARISH, KURSEONG:

### ANNUAL SPIRITUAL RENEWAL: RETREAT

Spiritual retreat refreshes and revitalizes, it gives the opportunity for more time to spend in prayer and contemplation. It is a special moment where one deepens his/her relationship with God. Three days Spiritual Retreat prior to the feast of CHRIST THE KING and ADVENT was organized in the Parish from the 9th to 11th November. Parishioners took this opportunity to more meaningfully and clearly hear God's call and seek His healing grace and be stronger in faith.

Rev.Fr.Peter Lingdamo led the Retreatants into three days of Spiritual journey and renewal. He stressed the need towards inner healing and conversion of heart that is deepened in faith and love for God through his Son Jesus Christ. While his team comprising of Mr. Francis Motey, Ms. Florence Gurung and Ms.Simran.M. Tamang made the Retreat more lively and fruitful with their appropriate hymns and prayer.

"In today's worlds full of distraction and agitation of modern life the need of Spiritual Retreat is the only way where one can meditate and reflect on their eternal destiny and move on towards the path that leads to God" was the theme for the Retreat by Rev.Fr Andrew Lama[PP].

The Retreatants expressed their joy and satisfaction in being able to participate whole heartedly and gain much blessing and inner healing during the three days Spiritual Retreat

The Parishioners expresses their heartfelt gratitude to Rev.Fr. Andrew Lama [ Parish Priest ] Rev.Fr.Augustine Lepcha [Assistant.PP] ,Guru Babus, Shayam Pariyar, Thomas Lepcha ,Thomas Subba and Bernard Sinchure ,Mr. Adolf Tamang and Mr. Gregory Moktan for preparing the ground work and making the Annual Retreat possible.

### DDCA/ MINORITY CENTRAL COMMITTEE crucial meeting held.

It is often felt that whenever Minority issues prop up in the Catholic Community we are not able to tackle the situation which yields satisfying results that benefits the Catholic community as a whole in the Diocese of Darjeeling due to lack of co-ordination and communication as far as Minority issues are concerned.

On the 6th of November DDCA/Minority Central Committee was formed, during the meeting of DDCA in Kalimpong .Rt.Rev.Bishop Stephan. Rev Fr. Michael Lepcha [Sr]. Rev. Fr.Prakash Rai ,Mr. Patrick Sada,President DDCA, Mr.Prakash Thomas Thapa, General Secretary all the executive members and representative from various parishes were present. The core objective of the committee is to look into the matters pertaining to Religious Minority issues at the National, State and local level.

The First issue taken up by the committee after its formation was the issue of the houses being built through West Bengal Paharia Minority Board in which Catholic community is also one of the beneficiaries besides others .Unfortunately it was found out during the survey made by the members of

DDCA/MCC that in St. John Berchmans Parish out of 12 houses sanctioned by the Government only 2 has been completed and rest 10 is yet to be completed even after a span of 1 year[ Construction began in Dec 2017 ].The conditions of the beneficiaries are miserable and are living like refugees in their own home village due to indifferent attitude of the WBPMB .Furthermore the funds allocated for the purpose and deposited in individual beneficiaries Account Pass book has been withdrawn without proper information to the beneficiaries.

DDCA/MCC in its meeting held on the 24th of Nov .2018 at DDCA's registered office Darjeeling, passed a resolution directing the present WBPMB, Government nominated Board member Mr. Anthony Yonzon, to look into the matter without further delay and get the incomplete houses of our people completed by 15th of December, failing to do so DDCA/MCC will move the matter further to higher authorities until and unless justice is done to the deprived and needy Catholic families.

Rev. Fr. Andrew Lama, PP of St. John Berchmans Parish, along with Mr.P.Sada, President DDCA, General Secretary DDCA, Mr. Edwin Chettri, Treasurer DDCA, Mr. Benedict Gurung, DDCA/MCC Darjeeling Division, Mr. Peter Kerr, DDCA/MCC Kurseong Division, and Mr. Anthony Yonzon, Govt. Nominated Member WBPMB Kurseong were present for the meeting. Mr. P.Sada Chaired the Meeting.

*Peter Kerr.  
St. John Berchmans Parish  
Kurseong.*

### BIRTHDAYS in December - January

Fr. Derek D'Souza	- 10th Dec.
Fr. Joachim Sada	- 12th Dec.
Fr. Clement Moni Lepcha	- 18th Dec.
Fr. Ronie Trikhatri	- 21st Dec.
Fr. Stephen Gyan Rai	- 21st Dec.
Bp. Stephen Lepcha	- 22nd Dec.
Fr. Alphonse Lingdamo	- 27th Dec.
Fr. Walter Fernandes	- 28th Dec.
Fr. Pius Marcus	- 31st Dec.
Fr. Valerian Veigas	- 01st Jan.
Fr. Elias Pinto	- 02nd Jan.
Fr. Fintan Moktan	- 02nd Jan.
Fr. Edward Baretto	- 05th Jan.
Fr. Marcel Rai	- 10th Jan.
Fr. Gilbert Chettri	- 28th Jan.



## 7th Regional Youth Convention 2018

The 7th Regional Convention was held in Don Bosco High School, Krishnagar from 16th -19th October 2018, the theme being "Young People the Faith and Vocational Discernment. About 500 youth participated in this Convention. The program commenced with the Flag hoisting ceremony as we were gracious to have Rt Rev Archbishop Thomas D'Souza, Rt. Rev Joseph Gomes, Rt Rev Cyprian Monis and Fr. Deepak Thomas, OCD who marked the beginning of this event which was followed by the Holy Eucharistic celebration. The diocese of Krishnagar had prepared a beautiful programme to welcome all the delegates of the 8 dioceses of West Bengal & Sikkim Region. The day ended with a cultural program put up by the eight dioceses showcasing their culture. Each day different diocese was given charge of the Eucharistic celebration and it was melodious to hear choirs singing in different languages. Each day had a theme to make the Convention more meaningful. The Themes for the various days were:

1. Love of God
2. Listening to the Call
3. Discerning the Call
4. Living the Call

The sessions were given by Sr. Seli who informed the youth about the legal aspects of Anti Human Trafficking, POXCO and RTI. The second session was given by Mr Simon John who spoke about Faith A Gratuitous Gift of God. Fr. Kanauj of Baruipur Diocese spoke on Vocational Discernment. A panel discussion chaired by Rt Rev Bishop Joseph Gomes, Fr. Ongshu Gayen, Ms Jacqueline Gayen, Mr Sushanto and Sr Meena D'costa who spoke on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment. The sessions helped the youth to clarify their doubts and grow stronger in their faith. Taize prayer and confessions also helped the youth to walk a step closer to Jesus. Each day different diocese animated the youth before the sessions.

The youth of all the eight dioceses had put up food stalls presenting the delicacies of their own diocese. Each one enjoyed the different flavours and colours presented by them. A Bible Quiz on the Gospel of Luke & ICYM helped the youth to study the Gospel and there was close competition between the teams. There were events such as Fashion Show and a Minute to Fame where the youth showcased their Talents.

The Regional Youth Award was Awarded to Mr Lawrence Prince Biswas and Ms. Julie Sarkar of the Archdiocese of Calcutta, Saikat Mondal and Nilmoni Hasdaof Krishnagar Diocese, Pritam Kujur and Lalita Lakra of Jalpaiguri Diocese, Bapi Soren and Dorin Sheikh of Asansol Diocese Simon Lepcha and Claudia Lepcha of Darjeeling Diocese, Sarbeswar Chakrabarty and Aparna Makhal of Baruipur diocese, Sylvester Mardi and Rita Panna of Raiganj Diocese and Meshak Xess and Anila Kujur of Bagdogra Diocese. The Life Time Achievement Award was awarded to Miss Anancia Fernandes from the South Zone and Mr Xavier Kujur from the North Zone. Mr Rajat Hembrom of Raiganj Diocese received the Award for the Best Logo, Fr. Rakesh Biswas and the team of Krishnagar Diocese was awarded for their Theme Song. This was followed by the prize distribution and Felicitation of the former-Rexco members and the present Rexco team.

The Convention ended with a Thanksgiving Mass by Rt Rev Bishop Joseph Gomes followed by Peace Rally from Don Bosco School to the Cathedral of Krishnagar. It was like the Blue Army of our Lady whilst going for the walk to Calvary in Krishnagar and finally the lowering of the Convention Flag.

The Convention ended on a good note, the delegates enjoyed the food and the stay they were able to meet and learn about different cultures and moreover grow an extra mile on their faith to inspire others and take Jesus with them.

A hearty thank you to each and every one who extended their hand to make this Convention a success. Our Chairman Bishop Rt. Rev. Cyprian Monis, the host, Krishnagar Diocese, all the Diocesan Youth Directors of the South & North Zone, Fr Ramen Pailan, DYD Rep. (Baruipur), Fr Nilu Murmu (Asansol) Fr Sandip Michael Biswas (Kolkata), Fr Rakesh Biswas (Krishnagar), Fr Nimai Mardi, DYD Rep., (Raiganj). Fr George Lepcha (Daarjeeling), Fr Michael Kerketta (Bagdogra) & Fr Raju Kermetta (Jalpaiguri) and the entire REXCO Team : Alex Hembram (President), Joyta Murmu (Vice President), Subhodeep Biswas (Secretary), Miss Claudia Lepcha (Joint Secretary), Miss Aparna Makhal (Treasurer), Mr Emmanuel Thapa (Male Rep.), Miss Mary Margaret Anthony (Female Rep.), Miss Priyanka Biswas (Spokesperson) under the leadership of Fr. Michael Singh, RYD and Miss Anancia Fernandes, RYLA, WB & Sikkim Region.



*Tea Leaves wishes all its Readers  
A  
Merry Christmas  
and  
A Happy New Year  
2019*

## Obituary



**Eric S.K. Rai**  
(5/3/1946-16/11/2019)

*Eric S. K. Rai was a dedicated member of the Immaculate Conception parish, Darjeeling, a stalwart who served the parish throughout his life in the social as well as spiritual aspects and one who worked wholeheartedly towards the holistic development of the Church.*

*Post the 2nd Vatican Council when the Church was undergoing a period of transformation he assisted late bishop Eric Benjamin, priests and church leaders of the time. He played a pivotal role in the foundation of churches in the then remote tea gardens like Lizahill and Glenburn. The people of these two regions fondly remember his contribution towards their faith formation. A soft spoken, humble and cheerful person, he worked diligently to keep the Small Christian Communities vibrant and active. He also worked as a voluntary catechist for many years catering to the faith formation of new members. His selfless contribution to the parish will always be remembered by one and all. His death has no doubt left a void in each heart but the exemplary life he lived in service of the Church is something to be emulated by all.*

## Obituary



**Jacob Shen**  
(22/2/1950-20/11/2018)

*Jacob Shen will always be remembered by the Diocese as a man who devoted his life to serving the Church. He worked for the Church selflessly in many capacities, be it in the Catholic Association, the DDCA, the Minority Commission or the Family Commission. As a Eucharistic minister he made it his priority to reach the Body of Christ to the sick and dying until his health failed him. Even in the darkest hours of his illness he bore the pain with fortitude and prepared himself to go to his Father's Home. His life was adorned with virtues of honesty and simplicity characterising a true follower of Christ. In him the Diocese has lost a committed faithful and the heavens have welcomed a worthy soul.*

*May he rest in eternal peace.  
May his soul rest in eternal peace.*

### Kindly Communicate !!!

Tea Leaves is the medium through which the individual parishes, communities and institutions can share with others, about the activities and events of your areas of work. So please send in the reports of your initiatives and programmes to :

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Bishop's House, Darjeeling**

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Published by Darjeeling Diocese Communication Centre on behalf of Diocese of Darjeeling. Edited by Fr. Alex Gurung and Printed & Designed at PEETSAR GRAPHICS, Darjeeling - 734101 [998320-33006]