



# INDIAN PROVINCE NEWSLETTER

*Dear Brothers and friends of Edmund,*

Greetings from Goa.

On September 11th, exactly 20 years ago the hijacking of 4 planes and the crashing of three of these planes into the Twin Towers and one of the buildings of the Pentagon in the United States killed nearly 3000 people and injured 25,000. It has been undoubtedly the most savage attack in history and one that changed the world economically, politically and socially forever. Families of victims are still grieving and they are also angry at the perceived intelligence failures of the FBI and CIA and the fact that 15 of the hijackers were from Saudi Arabia. And yet ironically the people that suffered the most as a consequence of the terror attack were the people of Afghanistan.

Bishop John Shelby Spong died on the 13th of September. A very compelling, and witty though controversial speaker, he grew up in the racist Bible belt of the United States but changes his beliefs with the passage of time. His most popular book was "Why Christianity must change or die". I have listened to his last talk before he died. He stood for an hour giving his last message and then patiently answering questions at the age of 90!

Thanks to the efforts of Br. Willie and previous vocation Directors- Sameer and Maurice, we now have 3 Novices in Bhopal, 9 candidates in Bajpe and 7 candidates in Shillong. We have 3 interesting accounts from our Novitiate in Bhopal and our study houses in Bajpe and Shillong. The study house in Bajpe also put up a play- Oliver Twist. An account of the experience will be published in next month's newsletter.

In the last 2 newsletters, there were 2 parts of a report on a panel discussion in which a report co-authored by Sr. Hazel D'Lima was discussed. A Jesuit priest-Fr. Myron Pereira has responded to this report and it is included in this Newsletter. Attitudes towards women are a very critical challenge for the entire world.

Your prayers are requested for Steve Rocha's elder brother -Luke who is very ill in Mumbai.

Yours fraternally

*Mark*



## COMMANDMENTS FOR THE LONG HAUL

Daniel Berrigan once wrote a wonderful little book entitled, "Ten Commandments for the Long Haul". It was intended as spiritual sustenance, sustaining food, for those who walk the lonely, long road of faith and often find themselves discouraged and running out of gas.

Here are some of my suggestions that might serve us well as we walk the long road:

### *Pray prayers of helplessness, gratitude, and praise.*

Pray always! Hold the world up each day to God. Hold up both its wonders and its pain. Pray in gratitude, thanking God, not just for "this or that", but for life itself, for light, for this earth, for those who love you.

### *Pray from your weaknesses and helplessness.*

"Lord, hang on to me lest I slip away from you. Do for me what I cannot do for myself." Welcome and accept the present moment.

Life is what happens to you while you're planning your life. Don't let the busyness, pressures, and heartaches of life steal the present moment from you. Only it is real. Drink it in, with all it carries. It's the only place you will experience love and joy.

### *Bless what's good and beautiful, even as you stand where the cross of Christ is erected.*

Bless what's good in the world. All that's good and beautiful has God as author. Honour it, before speaking any word of challenge to the world. Imitate Christ: First bless the world and its goodness and, only then, go stand where the cross is perennially erected, where the excluded ones in the culture find themselves.

### *Accept aging.*

Rely more on the paschal mystery than on cosmetics. All that dies brings rich new life, even our own bodies. Paschal wisdom will do more for your joy than a facelift.

Aging needs to be defined aesthetically. Your soul must be properly aged before it leaves and your body, like an old wine-barrel, takes on a different function and beauty as you age. Aging is an art form.

*Ron Rolheiser OMI*

*"God is More Domestic Than Monastic"*

THE MYSTERY WE CALL GOD IS THE  
GRACE OF OUR EXISTENCE

KARL RAHNER





## It's high time religious sisters in India break their silence

I recently watched a debate at the Oxford Union on why Arab men hate women. Egyptian feminist Mona Eltahawy, who was the main speaker, brought forward numerous instances of women's oppression in the Muslim Arab world.

These were not unique to Islam, she emphasized. They occur with variations wherever patriarchy holds sway.

The truth is that similar attitudes of patriarchy dominate the Catholic world as women themselves have reiterated for decades.

A recent report commissioned by the Conference of Religious Women in India, "It's High Time, Women Religious speak up on Gender Justice in the Indian Church," edited by Hazel D'Lima, Cletus Zuzarte and Pallavi Xalxo, brings this out sharply.

The hierarchy of the Church, the report says, is steeped in patriarchy. This contributes in no small way to its oppression of all women — but to religious sisters in particular.

What actually is patriarchy? Simply put, it is the "rule of the father" — the rule of men at every level, intent on dominating women and keeping them subservient. The activist Rosemary Ruether put it succinctly: "Where God is a man, there men want to play god."

***Much of what passes for religious formation in the Church is indoctrination and it is important for sisters to realize this***

- ◆ Patriarchal attitudes are found everywhere — in offices, classrooms, homes, parliament and on the street.
- ◆ What forms of oppression do Catholic religious sisters suffer from the clergy here in India?
- ◆ Here are some;
- ◆ Verbal abuse (sexist jokes about women in general, and about nuns in particular) and abusive language from the pulpit;
- ◆ Refusal to say Mass for religious communities because of some grievance;
- ◆ Sundry forms of petty harassment, demanding that the sisters are always at the priests' beck and call;
- ◆ Ignoring the professional competence of sisters, shown particularly in not paying them a







commensurate salary for their work, but just a token amount, a stipend;

- ◆ Tensions between the hierarchy and sisters' congregations regarding the ownership, use and transfer of properties.

Brother Philip Pinto, former superior-general of the Christian Brothers, said: "I have heard such stories from sisters over the years and gone through a whole gamut of emotions, from anger to disbelief at male arrogance, to frustration, sorrow and shame. Enough! Now is the call to action!"

The options are many, but it is important that they start from the sisters themselves and are not imposed from without.

The first is education, both religious and professional. Many sisters — like most women in India — have limited general knowledge that usually doesn't go beyond domestic matters. Many are diffident about holding themselves in public. With proper training, this must change.

Much of what passes for religious formation in the Church is indoctrination and it is important for sisters to realize this.

How does one know that one is being indoctrinated? When there is no freedom to question, to criticize.

For most religious women (and men too) questions arise related to finances, relationships of governance and mission, and sexuality. These are all areas of control where hierarchy resents any questioning of its decisions. This too must change.

The second option is a work environment outside the convent walls so that those religious sisters can experience for themselves the world of the working woman with all its joys and successes, its tensions and harassment.

There's nothing like professional work to give one a sense of one's worth and self-respect. It's an important counterpoint to the pettiness of religious community life.

A third area, unmentioned in the report but increasingly a cause of concern, is the sexual exploitation of religious sisters by the clergy. The paedophile crisis has fractured the western Church and exposed its rotteness.

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**KARL RAHNER**





***The Indian situation is peculiar in that it is rigidly authoritarian and pervasively hypocritical***

How do religious sisters protect themselves from predatory priests and bishops in this country with its skewed attitudes to gender equality? We urgently need answers.

In many respects, the Catholic Church lives in a time warp of its own, and many of its major problems are related to this feudal mentality.

While the world outside lives in a democracy with relative freedom of expression, priests and sisters continue to live in systems where the accountability and transparency of their superiors is almost nil, and where human love and sexuality are fiercely repressed.

In several places in the West, such forms of religious life are in a process of disintegration. The Indian situation is peculiar in that it is rigidly authoritarian and pervasively hypocritical. This gives patriarchy in this country certain resilience.

But the world is changing, and changing rapidly. Indian women are speaking out, challenging familial mores, demanding their rights. In many respects, they have shown themselves to be as skilled as men, if not superior.

Will Indian Catholic women lag behind their Dalit, Muslim and Adivasi sisters? It's high time they broke their silence.

*(Father Myron Pereira SJ is a media consultant based in Mumbai. The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official editorial position of UCA News)*

## **The Chandigarh Community responds to the Season of Creation**

Francis Hall invited us in India to send to our Newsletter something of what we are doing community-wise in response to the cry of the Earth, emphasized by the Pope's highlighting of the same issue. Thank you – both Francis!

Here in Chandigarh we had already adopted eco-friendly practices on the campus: LED lighting, water harvesting, solar electricity, the planting of trees, the attention given to educating our children in the care of the earth and avoiding waste, use of plastic, saving water, and ourselves to care more particularly for our vegetable garden. We hope somehow to involve the teaching staff of the school in our efforts. Like everybody else we are severely constrained by Covid 19 – but glad that this very pandemic has reminded us of our filial obligations to Earth, so long neglected. The beauty of our campus is something we are all happily conscious of. We were listing these in a community discussion arising out of an article we were sharing by Andrew Hamilton. Francis' reminder was superadded to





our conversation.

*Brendan, Chandigarh.*

*We lose our souls if we lose the experience of the forests, the butterflies, the song of the birds, if we can't see the stars at night...We have broken the great conversation...Gardening is an active participation in the deepest mysteries in the universe. Thomas Berry.*

### *Season of Creation Prayer*



Creator of All,

We are grateful that from your communion of love you created our planet to be a home for all. By your Holy Wisdom you made the Earth to bring forth a diversity of living beings that filled the soil, water and air. Each part of creation praises you in their being, and cares for one another from our place in the web of life.

With the Psalmist, we sing your praise that in your house “even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young.” We remember that you call human beings to keep your garden in ways that honor the dignity of each creature and conserve their place in the abundance of life on Earth.

But we know that our will to power pushes the planet beyond her limits. Our consumption is out of harmony and rhythm with Earth’s capacity to heal herself. Habitats are left barren or lost. Species are lost and systems fail. Where reefs and burrows, mountaintops and ocean deeps once teemed with life and relationships, wet and dry deserts lie empty, as if uncreated. Human families are displaced by insecurity and conflict, migrating in search of peace. Animals flee fires, deforestation and famine, wandering in search of a new place to find a home to lay their young and live.

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In this Season of Creation, we pray that the breath of your creative Word would move our hearts, as in the waters of our birth and baptism. Give us faith to follow Christ to our just place in the beloved community. Enlighten us with the grace to respond to your covenant and call to care for our common home. In our tilling and keeping, gladden our hearts to know that we participate with your Holy Spirit to renew the face of your Earth, and safeguard a home for all.

In the name of the One who came to proclaim good news to all creation, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

## Season of Creation Week 5, 23 September 2021

Dear Brothers

As we approach the end of the Season of Creation the reality of the strain on the planetary system seems ever more obvious. Here are some highlights from the latest report from the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), compiled on behalf of Antonio Guterres, the UN Secretary General. The report combines data from the various global bodies studying climate change, environment, health, weather, oceans and doing climate research.

Guterres writes: We are still significantly off-schedule to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement. This year has seen fossil fuel emissions bounce back after Covid, greenhouse gas concentrations continuing to rise and severe human-enhanced weather events that have affected health, lives and livelihoods on every continent.

Professor Taalas, The Secretary-General of WMO writes: This report shows that so far in 2021, we are not going in the right direction. Global temperatures in 2017–2021 are among the warmest since meteorological measurements began. We see the evidence of warming in less sea ice, the melting of glaciers and sea-level rise.

Guterres continues ...Unless there are immediate, rapid and large-scale reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, limiting warming to 1.5°C will be impossible. This will have catastrophic consequences for people and the planet on which we depend.

So what can we in the rich world do about this?

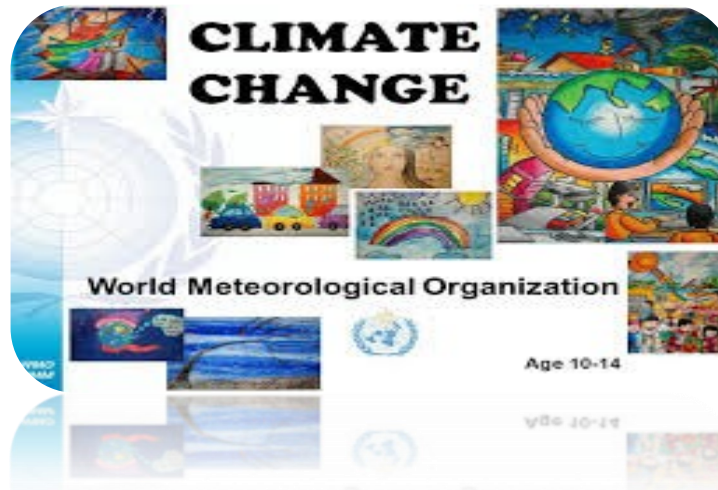
1. Take some clear action to reduce use of fossil fuels ... less driving; invest in electric hybrid cars; less flying; improve insulation in our houses; careful cooking.
2. Begin a conversation with at least one other person in the community about the WMO report







and COP 26 (see attached Guide).



Wishing you blessings in this season of creation and for St Francis' feastday.

*Francis Hall*

On behalf of David Ryan, Jim Donovan and Phil Ryan.

## SIMRAM BHOPAL

The month of September has been eventful and exciting in Bhopal.

In class, we had sessions on Self-Discovery by the Novice Master. We also had the Chapter Documents of Christian Brothers done by Br. Elton, a topic on Current Affairs by Br. Conrad. All the sessions were very knowledgeable and interesting for us.

On 5<sup>th</sup> September, Sanjoy and Dilip started our retreat to prepare ourselves to enter formally into the novitiate. During our retreat we reflected on the theme, *Our Call*. Also Br. Mark took a session on the Suffering World and made us reflect on the resurrected



Christ, saying 'PEACE BE WITH YOU'. With the help of Br. Conrad, we were able to make a meaningful and prayerful 3 days. During the retreat, we also had the opportunity to attend a novena in the church, in preparation for the Nativity of our Blessed Mother.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> we had our investiture ceremony. In this ceremony we received the kurta as our formal dress, and we are now called

Brothers, as a novice. We were blessed and delighted to receive the kurta.

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That evening, we gathered in the parish church, with around four hundred people to celebrate the feast of Mary's Nativity. We finished our celebration with a meal.

On the 19<sup>th</sup>, the parish youth invited us to join in the football and basketball parish team. We went to play football in the Champion School ground. We had a great match but in the end, lost 3-2, in a penalty shoot-out.



On the 26<sup>th</sup>, we had a basketball match on the same grounds, and again lost 20-33. Nevertheless, we enjoyed participating in the tournament, and making new friends. During our match we learnt how to control our feelings and maintain team-spirit to play against more-experienced players from other parishes. We await our basketball match for the 3<sup>rd</sup> position on 3<sup>rd</sup> October.

We now await another exciting month, as the Monsoons leave us.

*Dilip Kerketta*

## Our two months experience at Edmund Rice Study House Bajpe

Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end.

We arrived in Mangalore on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July. Our journey was exciting and pleasant. As soon as the flight landed, Br. John and Br. Samuel came to take us to our new home. We were happy and glad to see them. We also enjoyed the weather and the beauty of the place during our short journey from the airport to the house.

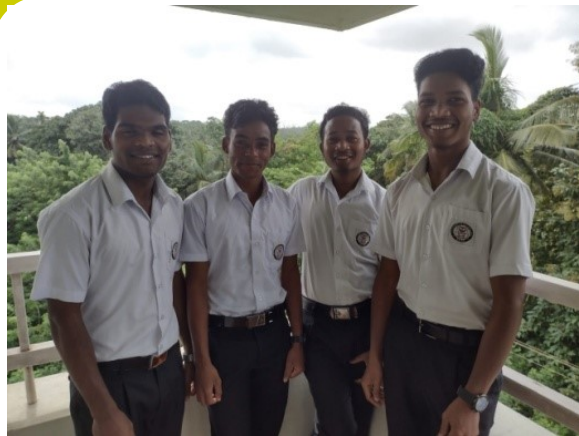


Ritesh, Emilianus and Sonshine

We met Br. Frank and our new companions who were already present in the house. They were very friendly to us. We were in quarantine for a few days and we got separate rooms to stay. During our quarantine, we were given dialogues and songs to learn by Br. John for our upcoming concert. We spent the rest of the time in reading newspapers, and books and also admiring the house. It is a lovely place for our studies. It also has a courtyard which grabs everyone's attention.

Three of us are doing our BA studies from St. Aloysius (Autonomous) College, Mangalore. Ritesh and





Eliyas, Anglus, Romanus and Joseph

Emilianus have taken Journalism, Psychology, and English Major. Sonshine has taken Psychology, Sociology and Social Work. We are very happy with the subjects we have chosen; some of the subjects are completely new..

Taking up the above mentioned combinations is not a piece of cake. A lot of effort and hard work needs to be invested, since these subjects are very pertinent in today's world. We hope that we can do our

best and make our academic year fruitful and meaningful.

After our quarantine, we shifted to our respective rooms and started to follow the daily schedule in the house. We participated in leading prayer, cooking, games, liturgy classes, and spiritual reading. We began to learn more about each other by introducing ourselves. The brothers are very helpful to us. We are fifteen members in our community (three brothers included). There are three candidates each from Odisha, Jharkhand and Assam, two from Meghalaya and one from Delhi. Five of them are doing their second year Graduation, four are doing PUC and three First year Graduation. We are very happy with the return of Anglus after a gap of a year and a half.



Mukesh, Sagit, Selwyn, John and Abhinash

This house provides experiences for better living. We hope to grow to our full potential in all the aspects of our life.

*Ritesh, Emilianus and Sonshine*



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## Shillong Study House English Course

As reported last month, we now have 7 candidates in the study house in Shillong. They are in the capable hands of Shawn Viegas. Addie Pinto and Agnelo Benjamin also form part of the community.



**Amrit Horo**

17 yrs, Class 10.

Borchola Tea Estate, Dhekiajuli, Assam.

Parents: Late Marthin and Anita Horo

**BilliamKujur**

20 yrs, Class12.

Dherai Tea Estate, Dhekiajuli, Assam.

Parents: Rajesh and RejenaKujur



**Ennosent Lugun**

17yrs, Class 10

Kutungia, Jharkhand.

Parents: William and SkolasticaLugun.



**James Topno**

17, Class 10.

Bernard Bosti, Dhekiajuli, Assam.

Parents: Romanus and PuspaTopno.







**Mathew Topno**  
 15, Class 10  
 Noinajuli, Dhekiajuli, Assam.  
 Parents: Agustush and SusnaTopno.

**Rosan Bajro**  
 16 yrs, Class 10.  
 Tea Estate, Dhekiajuli, Assam.  
 Parents: Prodip and Jyoti Barjo.



**Sunil Lugun**  
 22 yrs, Class 12.  
 Nazenjuli, Dhekiajuli, Assam.  
 Parents: Late Daud and Christina Lugun.

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Left to right: James, Rosan, Amrit, Mathew, Billiam, Sunil and Ennosent





# Poetry Section

## TREE

I tried counting the rings on the half- sawn tree  
 Sprawled on the lawn outside my door.  
 They told me this tree would make excellent furniture,  
 But it wouldn't grow those rings any more.

Like currants in a cake, nests had honoured it once.  
 But the pine, they said, had sensed it would fall.  
 Sure enough, I saw no eggshells shine through the  
 wreckage.  
 I wondered how the little ones' parents knew at all.



Was it first the branches, or the roots, that felt it?  
 Or the whole, now a mere log of timber?  
 Does its life transmute, seeking elsewhere to hide  
 To celebrate the mystery of surrender?

I can muse, I can ponder, but I don't know the answers.  
 Right now I had to reclaim my lawn!  
 I traded this monster for a new set of fences.  
 I felt a twinge when the last frond was gone.

\* \* \* \* \*

I once read a poem in which it was written  
 That trees are from god, poems from mere men.  
 God of poets and trees, in your Big Bang reversal,  
 Let your light make us one when our now becomes then.

*Brendan September 2021*







## Connect Me Lord

Connect me Lord to your universal plan,  
Just a speck – that's all I am.  
Antigua to Mithapur is only a stretch,  
The Solar System just a stone's throw away.

Hazy and spiraled – the milky way I spied,  
Shooting stars rushing across the speckled sky.  
Black holes and Galaxies way off they seem,  
Can I fathom this moment or is it just a dream.

Spotted night skies – sparkled and lit,  
Sounds of the night time – blows me to bits.  
Was there a passion – evolving you let go?  
All in its own time – meaningful and slow.

Divine Energy – spirit of God,  
Shape us and fashion us, Lord of all life.  
Let every fragment, exist in this power,  
Standing in awe – God of all light.

Can I stay aloof as a human being?  
Connect me Lord to the earth and the sea.  
Andromeda galaxy is worlds far apart,  
Through this emptiness – connect to my heart.

I marvel and stare on a moonlit night,  
I wonder and think of a spot in the sky.  
Someday I'll leave this bodily physical self.  
To wander and float somewhere so nigh.

Intimidate me Lord by this movement or bang,  
Skeptic or resilient assaulting my way.  
Let me resonate and create in me this space,  
Excluding no one – and bringing it to grace.

*Ceddy Andrade*



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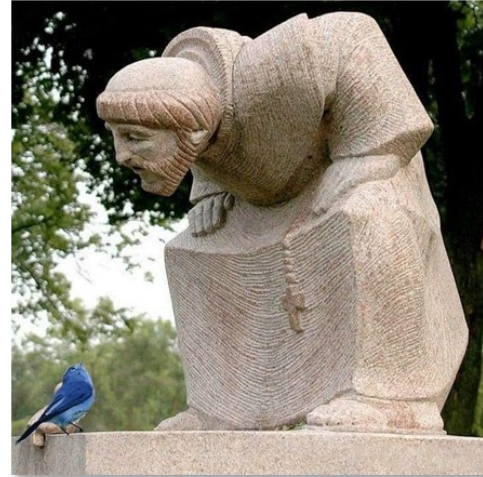


**JTI CLUSTER BULLETIN  
OCTOBER 2021**

*On Brotherhood Day and  
Feast of St Francis of Assisi.*

*“BEST OF ANY SONG  
IS BIRD SONG IN THE QUIET,  
BUT FIRST  
YOU MUST HAVE THE QUIET.”*

*–Wendell Berry*



**UMTYRKHANG**

With the opening of schools in the villages in September, Brothers discontinued with the remedial classes and returned to their earlier plan of helping out in the 3 schools. All the brothers are involved for an hour in the school in Umyrkhang before school hours focusing on the English and Maths for classes 1 to 6. Bipin is involved with the teaching of English in the two villages, Pamlatar and Mawlaho in the morning whereas Jerry helps the Anganwadi teacher in Umyrkhang.

The construction of the Edmund Rice Hall has begun. Edwin has been engaged with buying the materials for the same. The people have been generous in providing stones and sand besides labour.

The piggery project had a minor mishap with the female pig delivering dead piglets. Ferrying the gilt all the way from Mairang three weeks into pregnancy could be one possible reason for the piglets' deaths.



The Anganwadi (kindergarten) children with their teacher



Village people making stone chips for the new Edmund Rice Hall





The above two projects which involves the involvement of the village people has given us its fair bit of learnings. Community Engagement calls for a lot of patience and trust that people can come up with their own solutions. Periodic meetings with the concerned groups for the ministry activities are a common feature of our work here in Umtyrkhang.

### PATHARLYNDAN

Following the protocols issued by the Government of Meghalaya, the schools in Patharlyndan met with the parents, in connection with reopening of schools. There was a positive response from most of the students as they were tired of sitting at home. Ajay and Vinod, are back to class room teaching, helping the students in their learning which they had lost due to the Covid lockdown. The remedial teaching done earlier by Ajay and Vinod during the lockdown was helpful in catching up with the syllabus and learning.

Gambhir and Theo are conducting Spoken English classes with the village youth. This includes both out of school youth and school going youth. The students are putting in a lot of effort to learn English as they realise the value of communication in English.

The Brothers are exploring various ways as to how to enhance the income of the people. The government of Meghalaya has a scheme named Meghalaya State Piggery Mission which helps people in rearing pigs. There is a great demand for meat but most of the supplies come from other states. This is an initiative from both the government and the people to become self-sustainable in this area.

The Brothers met Mr. E.B. Chyrmang, Senior Cooperative Officer, Mairang Circle to gather more information on pig rearing and procedures to go about it. This information was shared with the Village Self Help groups during their monthly meeting.

The Brothers attended a Covid awareness camp organised by the PHC on 13th September. They wanted the help of religious leaders, teachers as well as all forms of leadership to support them in this venture.

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Information sharing on govt schemes with the Self Help groups



At the Cluster gathering in the Hub

### ERPAKON

The Hub hosted the two communities for a Cluster gathering in the first week of September. It was wonderful time of sharing, reflection and planning. Jockey led the Check-in and Ceddy facilitated the sessions on Cluster updates and discussions. On the second day, Sunil led a generative conversation session on Self Care concluding with the Bread and Wine ritual. The Brothers were happy to meet each other after a long time.

Jerry was tested positive some time later. Five of us including the cook and the driver were tested as primary contacts and we too were positive. We are back to our daily activities. Thanking you for holding us in your prayer.

*Sunil Britto*

## *Beatification of Blessed Edmund Rice*

1996 - 6 October - 2021

*Twenty-Five Years*

