



# INDIAN PROVINCE NEWSLETTER

*Dear Brothers and friends of Edmund,*

Greetings from Goa where the weather has become very warm. Besides the heat, the humidity is also high.

On the 3rd of March, we celebrated the Golden Jubilee of Arthur Rodrigues. Arthur joined the congregation when there was no Christian Brother school in Goa. On the 3rd we celebrated his Jubilee with the Brothers present in Goa at the time. And on Sunday, the 6th, his entire immediate family was present for the celebration. The celebration commenced with the Eucharist, followed by a reading of an appreciation of Arthur's life and a sumptuous lunch prepared mostly by Arthur's family.

Besides the Regina Mundi community, we had Larry from Delhi, David representing both the PLT and the CLT and Placid and Frank from the Edmund Rice Centre.

We now have 2 communities in Goa. Placid and Frank arrived at the beginning of the month at the Edmund Rice Centre, located near Bogmalo beach and immediately set to work to get the centre ready for a community of 4 Brothers. Wilfie will be joining them on the 28th of March and Len Noronha sometime later.



The war in Ukraine continues to drag on. Precious lives are being lost and millions of people will become refugees. Are economic sanctions, the only way to persuade Russia to end the hostilities? The church in India is silent about the grave situation the world is in at the present moment. And the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox church has forgotten the core message of Jesus.

Included in this Newsletter is an interview in which Sr. Nirmalini, President of the CRI speaks to the correspondent of "Global Sisters." It is heartening to see that after many years a religious sister has become President of the CRI and is able to say the things that no men presidents have said in recent years.

Yours fraternally

*Mark*



## AN OPPORTUNITY FOR TRANSFORMATION

The pattern is predictable. Founders are typically generous, visionary, bold, and creative, but the congregations/religions that ostensibly carry on their work often become the opposite: constricted, change-averse, nostalgic, fearful, obsessed with boundary maintenance, turf battles, and money. Instead of greeting the world with open arms as their founders did, their successors stand guard with clenched fists. Instead of empowering others as their founders did, they hoard power. Instead of defying tradition and unleashing moral imagination as their founders did, they impose tradition and refuse to think outside the lines. A religion/ congregation that cuts itself off from the example of its founder while still bearing the founder's name often becomes little more than a chaplaincy for other ideologies, offering its services to the highest bidder. No wonder so many religious today wear down, burn out, and opt out. **(Brian McLaren)**

We have an opportunity in this moment of our great transformation. We can approach this time as survivors, desperately clinging to our structures and ways of being. Or, we can see ourselves as pioneers, setting out in the face of the unknown to discover new ways to live faith-filled lives. The inevitable decline of our structures gives us the chance to let go of what might hold us back from that adventure. Nothing today will be the same ten years from now. Why not architect the kind of faith movement we want to see twenty-to-fifty years from now? What do we have to lose? **(Cameron Trimble)**

It seems that many great things in history start with a single human being. If a person says something full of life that names reality well, the message often moves to the second stage of becoming a *movement*. That's the period of greatest energy. The church is at its greatest vitality as the "Jesus Movement," and the institution is merely the vehicle for that movement. The movement stage is always very exciting, creative, and also risky.

It's risky because God's movement in history is larger than any denomination, any culture, or any tradition's ability to verbalize it. We feel out of control in this stage, and yet why would anybody want it to be anything less? Would we respect and love a God that we could control? I don't think so! Yet we move rather quickly out and beyond the risky movement stage to the machine stage. This is predictable and understandable.

The institutional or *machine* stage of a movement will necessarily be a *less-alive manifestation*. This is not bad, although it is always surprising for those who see

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church as an end in itself, instead of merely a vehicle for the original vision. We need “the less noble” parts of the Body to keep us all growing toward love (1 Corinthians 12:22–24). There is no other way; but when we don’t realize a machine’s limited capacities, we try to make it into something more than it is. We make it a *monument*, a closed system operating inside of its own, often self-serving, logic. By then, it’s very hard to take risks for God or for gospel values.

Eventually this monument and its maintenance and self-preservation become ends in themselves. It is easy just to step on board and worship at a monument without ever knowing why or longing for God ourselves. At this point, we have jumped over the human and movement stages and have become what authors Mark Gibbs and T. Ralph Morton called “God’s frozen people.” There is no hint of knowing that we are beloved by God and invited to an inner journey. In this state, religion is merely an excuse to remain unconscious, holding on to a *memory* of something that must once have been a great adventure. Now religion is no longer life itself, but actually a substitute for life or, worse, an avoidance of life. The secret is to know how to keep in touch with the human and movement stages without being naïve about the necessity of some machines and the inevitability of those who love monuments. We must also be honest: all of us love monuments when they are monuments to *our* human, *our* movement, or *our* machine.

*Richard Rohr* (Taken from the CAC Website)

## BR. ARTHUR RODRIGUES

### ‘AN APPRECIATION’

### ON THE OCCASION OF HIS GOLDEN JUBILEE

**Regina Mundi School, Goa :3<sup>RD</sup> March, 2022**

Arthur’s greatest blessing was being born into a large, loving and highly respected Goan family in the village of Chicalim.

The ancestral home is situated near a river, amidst a lush forest and the fairest of gardens. His parents took great care to instil in their large family the best of Goan culture, value of responsibility and discipline, and inculcation of Gospel values. These ideals and the example of their parents served them all well through life.

Arthur and his siblings attended the local Presentation Convent school which was co-ed at the time. It would come as a surprise to today’s youth that all the children walked to and from school, a distance of 10 kilometres or so, come heavy monsoon rain or scorching, summer sun. (The Christian Brother School,





Regina Mundi had not been built at the time).

In 1971, the late Br. Tony Keane, our enthusiastic and tireless Postulator visited the Presentation Covent seeking suitable candidates for the Brothers. God's call to Arthur, first nurtured by his parents, was strengthened and confirmed by Tony's powerful interaction with the pupils. With his parents' consent and encouragement from all the family, Arthur entered Mt. Carmel, Kurseong as an aspirant in March 1972.

Kurseong, 5000 feet up in the Himalayan foothills, is a nature lover's paradise. It was here that Arthur continued to enhance and become passionate about his lifelong love for nature and all it had to offer. Nothing gave him greater joy than to go on treks, catch and identify butterflies or simply stop and admire the breathtaking panoramic scenery. Times have changed and he now catches nature on camera.

As a student, his myriad interests were set aside for a while as he concentrated on his studies and the regimented life of the Aspirants and later as a Novice.

He is a hugely gifted Brother. The gifts and talents are God-given but the nurturing, practice and achieving excellence in them are entirely Arthur's. Musically, he is an accomplished classical guitarist and flautist. Artistically, he has reached a high level of expertise in art as varied as Calligraphy, thread-art, Origami, Kirigami and gardening. All this is done with an equal degree of perfection. Coming from Goa, he has a passion for soccer but being tall, and slightly built, he used his skill and shrewdness to outwit his opponents.

Arthur taught the middle and senior classes for well-nigh 40 years. He could walk into a High School classroom and teach maths, English, Geography if asked to: given no time for preparation. As a



teacher, Arthur prepared his classes meticulously and in class brooked no nonsense from the students. Slackers were dealt with firmly, but always given the help and encouragement they needed. Till today he can recall the names of students he taught many years ago. We attribute this more to his amazing relation with and interest in each student rather than just having a sharp memory. Arthur was truly an exceptional

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'school man' who took, when called for, 34 classes a week! Arthur gave his students a 'Beautiful Mind' like his. That was his signature.

He is best remembered in Salvation High School, Bombay and St. Mary's, Mt Abu where he spent most of his teaching years but also in poor, rural areas like Bassein and a difficult mission in Umarpada . He continues to show great respect to the poor, whether helping poor children or preparing tea and snacks for daily workers in our house and garden here in Goa.

Salvation School is in the heart of a large, bustling city and caters largely to the poorer Catholic population of Dadar. This stands in stark contrast to what was probably Arthur's all time favourite , St. Mary's , Mt. Abu; a boarding school in the middle of an oasis in the semi-arid regions of Rajasthan. The surroundings are teeming with wild life, butterflies and birds. The pupils are mostly well-off, city bred youngsters who during their years in Abu fell in love with nature and learnt to respect it.

Credit for this must be given to the Brothers of years gone by and to Arthur and others in modern times.

Few could be more generous with their time and talent. He would spend hours of his "free-time" teaching boys the intricacies of paper-cutting, paper folding and patiently guiding them as they stumbled over notes on the recorder or guitar. But his sphere extended beyond the school. So accomplished was he that he was often invited by Clubs and Companies to demonstrate and teach the fine art of Origami and other skills. Arthur always obliged.

His legion of ex-pupils, thanks to social media, keep in close touch with him from all parts of the world. Many visit their 'guru ' here in Goa with presents and profuse appreciation and gratitude for all he had done for them.

Some years ago Arthur developed a serious and debilitating medical condition. He struggled on bravely for a while but finding active teaching most difficult, Arthur was transferred to Goa. This demanded that he make regular trips to a specialist hospital in Bombay. Rather than put the Brothers to any inconvenience, his own brother, Alvito, would accompany him on these trips and take care of him while he was being treated. Again, a reflection of the esteem in which the family held him. Many would take Arthur's outwardly calm response to his troubles as stoic acceptance. However, those of us who know him would certainly ascribe it to a life of prayerful acceptance of all the joys and pains with which God tries us. Arthur is an example to us all.

Arthur has the outstanding gift of being totally available and generously sharing his abundance of talent. He continues to spend a major part of the day for others. Until Covid times, his Craft and Music room would be humming with activity and music as he shared his many skills with all who cared to come. No exceptions.





His generosity did not apply to his talents alone. He would use many of his beautiful, intricate pieces art to adorn the Brothers' house and Chapel or gift them away to pupils, friends and ex-students. The maintenance and beauty of the Brothers' garden owes much to Arthur's green fingers and artistic advice to the gardener.

Arthur's Christian Brotherhood was shaped first by his family that lives so interconnected, while his models for Teacher and Brother were Jesus and Edmund and DeBritto Curran , his 'Novie" or Novice Master.

As a person in the classroom and outside the classroom Arthur is gentle of heart.

- A quiet community man: often preferring to hold his peace rather than get drawn into an argument.

- Prayerful: rarely misses community prayers or Mass, except when ill. He's often seen in Chapel in private prayer. Arthur is a gem of a Brother which every school or community would welcome.

He was blessed with a unique sense of humour and joy which would be expressed in his word 'bajhaow'. For example he talked of how he 'bajhaowed' good food ora game or even Life itself. It is his way of living Life to the full in good times and tough.

Our Arthur 'Bajhaowed' life for 50 years as a Christian Brother and we wish him many more.

Thank you and Congratulations Arthur.

AD MULTOS ANNOS

## Down Memory lane



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Truly Free Truly Alive





## Interview with **Sr. Nirmalini** President of the conference of religious in India



Sr. Nirmalini Nazareth, superior general of the Apostolic Carmel congregation, is the new president of Conference of Religious in India, the national body of religious major superiors. She also heads the women's section of the conference.

She was unanimously elected the conference president during its national executive meeting Nov 13, 2021, but she assumed office only in January this year.

An educator most her life, Nirmalini was honoured with the Best Principal Award and Best Teacher Award by the state government of Delhi, and World Disaster Education Award instituted by the International Association of Educators for World Peace. She also was invited to address the German Bishops'





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Conference on the 2008 attacks on Christians in Kandhamal, in the eastern Indian state of Odisha.

In her first interview after becoming the head of India's more than 130,000 Catholic women and men religious, 103,000 of whom are professed sisters, Nirmalini on Feb. 21 shared with Global Sisters Report her views on various issues, especially the empowerment of women religious in India.

**GSR: Congratulations on being elected as the Conference of Religious India president. What were your thoughts when you were elected to this highly responsible post?**

*Nirmalini:* I was with our sisters in Pakistan when the CRI secretariat informed me about my election. Initially, I was a bit hesitant to accept the offer due to my busy schedule as the superior general of the Apostolic Carmel and the president of the CRI women's section. I prayed over it and decided to take up the challenge. I recalled that it was one of our members, Mother [Maria] Theodosia, who had played a key role in forming the CRI women's section in 1962 and served as its founder president. She inspired me to say yes. I knew my capacity or availability is not enough to shoulder this responsibility but, since I believe in teamwork, everything is possible. I believe, together, we can.

**What are your immediate priorities as the head of CRI?**

First, I have to address the mounting challenges faced by our sisters in India. I was first elected the head of the CRI women's section. So, let me start with them.

In February, the executive members of the women's section met at Goa. We discussed mostly the challenges of the women religious in India — **the mysterious deaths of nuns, clergy sexual abuse, patriarchal oppression and property disputes.**

We also took up a survey sponsored by the conference on challenges of the women religious in India. The survey results were presented as a book, "It's High Time." The conference did not officially publish the book, maybe because its findings revealed harsh realities and painful truths. But I assure you, my team will take up the recommendations.

**What are your immediate proposals to address the challenges of women religious?**

The first plan is to form a "grievance cell" with representations from women religious







doctors, psychologists, lawyers, counsellors and spiritual guides. If such a forum already exists, we will make it work. The forum will provide "confidential listening" to sisters from any congregation and assure them of our support. The thrust is not to make judgments, but to provide a platform for "listening, counselling and accompaniment."

Until now, we have not provided our sisters a platform to at least listen to them, forget about giving them support. We kept blaming patriarchal systems and clergy suppression. Time has come to empower sisters to become assertive and remain dignified while playing creative roles within the church. I want to see them "independent."

### **What are strengths and weaknesses of women religious in India?**

Our educational institutions are centers for transformation and empowerment. Our medical facilities give healing touch to all, our social work centers act as tools for justice, freedom and dignity for the least and the lost ones in society. We have a significant role in society, but sadly we have not realized our strengths or asserted our dignity as God's chosen women.

I was amazed to note that we have more than 1,000 qualified doctors, hundreds of lawyers, thousands of teachers, several engineers, social workers, psychologists and other professionals. And yet, we remain dependent, helpless and obedient. Our strength is our capacity to transform others, and our weakness is our ignorance about our own power.

### **So, do women religious need liberation from clergy imperialism?**

I am not in a fight with the clergy. The men religious also have put their trust in me by electing me as the CRI president. I am here to uphold the equality, freedom and dignity of men and women religious. At the same time, I want women religious to become dignified, assertive and confident.

### **How?**

The women religious serving dioceses should assert that they are there to serve the people, not the diocesan structures. Some women religious are afraid to protest if treated badly as they don't want priests to use the pulpit to belittle nuns before the laity. I have heard of such cases. It is such priests who need liberation from the patriarchal mentality that goes against the Christian spirit and witness.

### **What other challenges do Indian nuns face?**

Another issue is lack of exposure and coordination among us. The more we are exposed to similar situations in other congregations, the more we become broadminded and focused. Sisters working in the education field hardly get to know another ministry. I have observed some nuns in positions refuse to admit the poor, even Catholic children, in their schools saying they are "less intelligent." We





should not forget that we are primarily for "the lost and the least" in society.

This is similar in other ministries, too. This causes an imbalance. In my tenure, I plan to address this tendency nationally.

We also want to encourage more coordinated activities and exposure programs. People in education must serve in social apostolates or visit other fields. This can be done within the congregation or in collaboration with other congregations.

*Thomas Scaria*

#### REPORT OF THE NATIONAL SEMINAR FOR THE

### VOCATION PROMOTERS & MINOR SEMINARY RECTORS

*Held at: Nav Sadhana, Shivpur P.O, Tarna, Varanasi, UP- 221003*

*Topic: Vocation Promotion in India: Mission with Vision*

**Friday, March 11, 2002 - DAY 1**

The meeting began with the inaugural Eucharistic celebration at 8.45 AM which was presided over by Most Rev. Eugene Joseph, Bishop of Varanasi. He was accompanied at the altar by Fr. Raymond Joseph, Executive Secretary of CCBI Commission for VSCR and Fr. Francis D'Souza, Director of *Nav Sadhana*, Varanasi. In his preaching the Bishop expounded on the theme "Follow Me" (Jn 1:43). While explaining the call of Jesus to Philip "Come and See" he said everything begins with i) seeing, followed by ii) knowledge, iii) relationship, iv) intense participation which finally should end in v) proclamation. He invited the entire participant to go to their basic root (faith) and strengthen it so that they could walk together with Jesus carrying along with them the other members of the Christian community.

After the mass all the participants along with the bishop and resource persons (119 in number) posed for a group photo on the lawns outside the Church.

After a short coffee break **the Inaugural meeting took place in the auditorium of Kala Kendra at 10.00AM.** Fr. Nilesh Parmar of the Ahmedabad diocese compered the session of the whole day. He invited Most Rev. Bp Eugene Joseph, Fr. I. Raymond Joseph, the National Director and a few participants to light the lamp.

**In his welcome address Fr. I. Raymond Joseph welcomed the Bishop, Fr Subash Jose IMS (Keynote speaker), Fr. Francis D'Souza, Fr. Wilfred Moras, Agra Regional Secretary of CCBI Commission for VSCR, all the participating sisters,**

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**brothers and fathers as well as the resource persons.** He explained that the current seminar was mainly organized for the vocation promoters and Minor seminary rectors of the North and North East region to which some dioceses of the Western region too were invited.

**The presidential address was then delivered by Most Rev. Eugene Joseph, Bishop of Varanasi.** He congratulated Fr. I. Raymond Joseph for organizing this seminar physically in spite of us being still in the covid times. He explained the following 2 challenges that the church faces while proclaiming the gospel today: i) Task of accompaniment ii) ever changing reality of the present times. Quoting Pope Francis, he invited everyone to “Be Prepared” by ‘Renewing our Faith’ through i) commitment and ii) loyalty.

**The Keynote address was delivered by Fr. Subash Jose, IMS from Varanasi. He explained the theme “Vocation Promotion in India – Mission with Vision” through the following 4 points: 1. Trinitarian dimension of Vocation and Mission. 2. Positive Response to the Call. 3. Need of the Hour. 4. Future of the Mission in India.**

The Director of Nav Sadhana, Fr. Francis D’Souza then went on to explain the vision, mission, objectives and activities carried out by the center through its 3 institutes: Nav Sadhana, regional pastoral center, Nav Sadhana communication center and Nav Sadhana Kala Kendra.

Fr Wilfred Moras, Agra regional secretary for CCBI Commission for VSCR, then proposed the vote of thanks and brought the inaugural session to its end.

At 11.45 AM, we began the Phase one session “Vocation and Mission in the Past”. The resource person - **Fr. I. Raymond Joseph clarified the theme “Vocation and Mission: Biblical Perspective”** through the following 3 points: 1. *What is Vocation?* 2. *What is Mission?* 3. *Vocation and Mission.* He further explained the theme through the following 3 examples of call.

*Example 1: Vocation and Mission of Abraham. Example 2: The call of Moses = Searching for Identity. God calls Moses for a Mission. Example 3: Call of Jesus = Witness. Jesus of Nazareth comes with a mission.*

After lunch an arrangement was made for all the participants to visit **Matridham (Varanasi)** belonging to the congregation of the Indian Mission Society (IMS) where **Fr. Anil Dev, IMS** organizes Friday meetings for the **Christu Bhaktas**. Everyone participated in the way of the cross conducted at the place in a prayerful atmosphere.

At 3.30 PM, Session 2 on the theme “**Vocation and Mission in the History of the Church**” was offered by **Fr. Francis D’Souza**. He explained his theme through following 4 points. 1. *Introduction: relationship between Vocation and Mission.* 2. *Vocation.* 3. *Vocation and Mission (through 4-11<sup>th</sup> Century).* 4. *Priestly vocation in the post-Tridentine (Church till Vatican II).*





After tea break at 6.15 PM, the Self-introduction by the group delegates took place. It was followed by a **Sharing session on the topic "Experience in Vocation Promotion: Successes, Failures, Challenges and Questions"**. The participants shared frankly the various challenges and difficulties they faced in their respective vocation promotion ministry.

The day ended with Evening Prayer said in common followed by the Dinner.

At 8.45 PM, the artists from Kala Kendra gave a 45-minutes drama programme. The theme of the drama was "Mary forgiving Barabbas and the centurion".



### Saturday, March 12, 2002 – DAY 2

The day began with a morning prayer well animated in local Hindi language. It was followed by a Eucharistic celebration. On Day two, the sessions were based on "Vocation and Mission Today"

At 8.45 AM, the resource person **Fr J. Maria Antony from Sivangangai Diocese, expounded the theme "Vocation Promotion: Recruitment for Job or Invitation to Mission"**.

He began by differentiating what should be and what ought to be in order to 'live authentically'. He asked the participants to put 'Jesus' in front of us.

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After the coffee break at 10.15 AM **Fr Robert Pen, SDB, Western Regional Secretary for CCBI Commission for VSCR** through light upon the theme **“Ministry of Vocation Promotion: A Vision for Today”**. The participants were asked to “Carry Hope” for their vocation ministry by creating a Personal Vocation Plan and following it up with passion.

The session was followed by a time given for questions and clarifications.

After a short break the participants met again at 11.30 AM for **Group Discussion on the topic “Towards a Dynamic Understanding of Vocation and Mission for Today and Networking in Vocation Promotion”**. Following two questions were discussed: 1.What are the ways and means to address deeper longing of today’s youngsters? 2. Ways to develop a ‘culture of vocation’

After the lunch break participants gathered at 2.30PM for the Plenary Session. The participants were asked to answer the following 2 questions personally.

1. What are the learnings/take aways/ fruits gathered from this seminar?
2. Draw a personal vocation action plan for their own congregation/ Diocese?
3. After some time for sharing the participants then sat in their respective regions where they made an “Action Plan for the Region”. All the regions were then shared 3 imp points from their action plan with the entire group.

**Br. Jerome Ellens FSP**, then gave a vote of thanks on behalf of the participants.

In the evening the participants accepting the invitation of the Bishop of Varanasi for a tea went to the Cathedral Parish in the Varanasi City.

*William D' Souza*

## POETRY SECTION

### LET IT BE

If I look over my left shoulder  
 I can see God.  
 The window's there, and outside  
 A sliver of tree, sky and a wall.  
 If I were in that tree  
 Or that patch of sky or wall  
 I could look through the same window  
 And here see God  
 At this desk, barely able to write





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Because of what I've written  
Because of what is so.  
A helicopter's grundling overhead  
Rat-tatling away birdsongs and car-horns.  
Ah, there, God again, different.  
I am a little frightened.  
"Thou shalt not take  
The name of the Lord Thy God ..."  
I have long Santa Claused versions of God  
But now I am less brave –  
Or less brash?  
Dear God. Dear all-creating love –  
Ye gods. Dear me – God?  
"Thou'rt mad to say it!"  
Let it be true.  
Let it be not.

*Brendan (March 2022)*

## SPRING-TIME HOPE

Pained – Broken – Empty, tired men looking on.  
Hurt – Bruised – Rankled, the night is so long.

Heavy hearts – shuffling feet, struggling deep within.  
Surface smiles are vacant, the world around looks grim.

Dreary and in darkness, the road stands still.  
Was life so far wasted? Emptiness creeps in.

Summer turns to autumn, the trees at last are bare.  
Wintry winds are blowing, a cold – that does not care.

Frozen souls are groaning, behind walls so high.  
T.V. books a solace, far from the real cry.

Pained – Broken – Empty, growth and life are ours.  
Hurt- Bruised – Rankled, sins of our past.

Victories are not the answer, pain is everywhere.  
Justice to be sought for, like 'brothers' we should care.

Winter turns to Spring time; freshness breathes the air.  
Sunshine streams through darkness, Chirping everywhere.

Aching hearts are opening, to see the light again.  
Like Edmund – we must follow, new leaves of Hope we bear.

*Ceddy Andrade (Written in 2009-2010)*





## JTI CLUSTER BULLETIN APRIL 2022

### FOR PEACE

*As the fever of day calms towards twilight  
May all that is strained in us come to ease.*

*We pray for all who suffered violence today,  
May an unexpected serenity surprise them.*

*For those who risk their lives each day for peace,  
May their hearts glimpse providence at the heart of history.*

*That those who make riches from violence and war  
Might hear in their dreams the cries of the lost.*

*That we might see through our fear of each other  
A new vision to heal our fatal attraction to aggression.*

*That those who enjoy the privilege of peace  
Might not forget their tormented brothers and sisters.*

*That the wolf might lie down with the lamb,  
That our swords be beaten into ploughshares*

*And no hurt or harm be done  
Anywhere along the holy mountain.*

*John O'Donohue*



### PATHARLYNDAN

The weather has warmed up, and the farmers are out in the scorching sun preparing their fields for ginger and vegetables.

In the first week of Feb, Ajay went to Shillong for a one-day training on mushroom cultivation. This training could be of great help to the people to cultivate mushrooms for additional income. Jerry and some people from Umtyrkhang were also part of the training.

Bah Taining from Patharlyndan who has some experience in looking after cows, has agreed to buy one of our cows. The Brothers are in the process of transferring the Cow Project to the people.

In mid Feb, the RCLP school reopened for the new academic year. Gambhir and Vinod will be teaching in the school. A parent teacher meeting was organized to discuss issues like children dropping out, absenteeism, and all-round development of children. The meeting was successful with a good number of parents participating and expressing their support.





The Parish Priest who is also the manager of the RCLP school called for a meeting in the Brother's house. Those present included teachers and the Brothers. The topic of discussion was upgradation of the Lower Primary school into an Upper Primary School. During the meeting it was highlighted that the Upper Primary School will serve as a good foundation for English fluency and enhance children's confidence.

In the last week of Feb, there was an unexpected downpour with big hail stones lashing onto the feeble roofs of the people. The RCLP school and the people have suffered huge losses due to the hailstones piercing through the tin, leaving many holes. This will pose a challenge when the rainy season begins in June.

The Brothers are facilitating setting up of two Cooperatives in the village. There have been regular meetings of those wishing to be members of the Multipurpose and Dairy cooperatives. The Dairy officers have visited our village to meet those interested. There has been a vibrant exchange between members and the officers willing to move forward in registering the society.

Ajay moved to Umtyrkhang on March 15 to join his new community. He was given a very moving farewell by both the school he was teaching in as well as by the Catholic community in the village. He will be missed in Patharlyndan.



*Ajay saying goodbye to his class in Patharlyndan Primary school*



*Damage caused to houses due heavy hailstones*

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## UMTYRKHANG

One of the ways in which people of Umtyrkhang, Mawlaho and Pamlatar raise income on a small scale is through broom grass cultivation. So, the months of February and March people here have been busy with harvesting the broom grass and drying it







before selling it.

On 5th February, we were delighted with the sow delivering 9 piglets (of which 1 died) especially after the September mishap. While the SHG members will take some of them, a couple of the piglets will be given to the needy families for rearing.

The month of February otherwise by and large went in planning for the activities and budgeting for the upcoming year in addition to the existing activity of teaching English in the mornings to the primary children of Umtyrkhang.

From the 1st of March, the Brothers have started the teaching ministry in the two schools in Pamlatar and Mawlaho for half a day on 5 days of the week.

The English course candidates visited us for few days and during their stay here they interacted with the children in Umtyrkhang and Pamlatar besides joining the youth for football in the evenings and attending the jingiasengs (prayers services) in the church and in houses.

On 8th of March Women's Day was celebrated in the village organised by the Brothers and the youth. A prayer service followed by a short cultural programme and screening of a Khasi movie which portrayed the fight of a woman seeking to heal after a traumatic assault and find hope, love and new purpose were the highlights of the day.

The month of March also saw bidding of farewell to Bipin who had spent more than 4 years in the mission here. He will be greatly missed by us all. Meanwhile Ajay after his farewell in Patharlyndan joined the Umtyrkhang community this month.



*Bipin is facilitated by the village leaders in Umtyrkhang*



*Samuel Nonglait, our new Project Coordinator during his village visit*





## ERPAKON

Samuel Nonglait, the new Project Coordinator joined the Project Office in Erpakon on the 1st of March. He had been working as Project Manager for National Rural Livelihood Mission in Mawthadraishan and then in Myllem Block.

We had an intensive Induction program for Samuel, introducing him to the vision of Journeying Together and the RBM methodology of planning.

He visited Patharlyndan in the second week of March to do an in-depth study of the socioeconomic issues in the village. The transect walks with the Brothers and the field worker Tobias Jana to the various village subareas (locally called 'lums') were valuable.

In the second week of February, we had a three-day recollection in the Hub for our Annually Professed Brothers – Ajay, Jerry, Rashal and Vinod. Sunil did the presentations on the theme of Mystic, Brother, Prophet. The young Brothers found the recollection time as a helpful start to their discernment period before writing their applications and self-appraisals.

In mid-March, we welcomed Bipin into our community. His gifts and youthfulness has infused a new energy into the Hub.

*Sunil Britto*

THE MYSTERY WE CALL GOD IS THE  
GRACE OF OUR EXISTENCE

KARL RAHNER

