



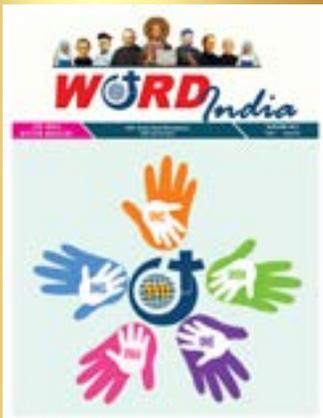
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EDITORIAL

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## SEEKING THE LAST AND THE LEAST!

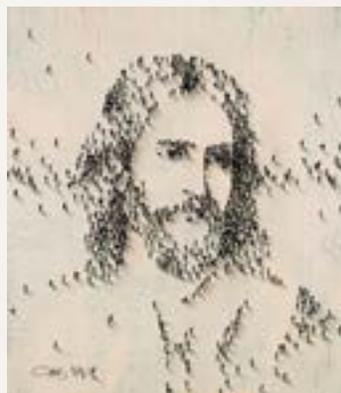
*Pandemic... What we have seen and shared, and the cries that we have heard during these days, call us to be givers of life... to be artisans of hope.... Might this be a new call to greater radicality on the part of the Society of the Divine Word!*

*Commitment to a common cause is becoming rarer. People are reluctant to join organizations to promote a cause. But human life can never be complete without caring for others. Should we not care and nurture rather than control and consume?*



*Every day 35,000 people, mostly women and children, die from hunger in the Third World. That's 24 every minute, states UN. It's like dropping a Hiroshima atom bomb every third day. People die of starvation, not because there is not enough food, but because they are too poor to buy it. There is, in fact, too much food in the world today. It's a world of plenty, where more food is produced than is eaten, where more money is spent on storing it, and then destroying it. As Pope Paul VI said, "The international trading system was devised by the rich to suit their needs; it ignores those of the poor."*

*Earth, our common home, "now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her" (Laudato Si, 2). We do not wish to be complicit in systems and dehumanizing, that are unjust we want to go the poor, but that we weave a new our Common*



*Justice, Peace is a sign of pandemic turned our missionaries food and medical people. Whatever*

*our apostolic mission makes visible our solidarity with those in the periphery. It's a passion to proclaim the Gospel.*

*and Integrity of Creation our commitment. The for the worse in India. But acted quickly, delivering supplies to impoverished may be our social activity,*

*I am happy this magazine is forming connections—connections among our missionaries, connections between our readers and the people our missionaries serve. We often call our supporters co-missionaries. Our ability to grow into new mission areas is largely due to the generosity of our friends and benefactors. As you continue to support us, we will continue to fulfil the needs of migrant or impoverished people. Our missionaries put the Last First!*

*I invite you to offer this prayer for all missionaries:*

*Lord, bless all missionaries that their work may bear fruit. Together with them, may we too share in the missionary work of the whole Church that your Kingdom of justice, love, and peace may come into all hearts and in all nations.*

Fr. Mathew Chennakudy SVD  
Editor



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## NEWS ACROSS THE PROVINCES



# FEED THE HUNGRY: DDW-MUMBAI

Susan Noronha

**SVD** Lay Partners – Disciples of the Divine Word (DDW) - Mumbai celebrated the second anniversary of Feed the Hungry Project on 8th September 2021, the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Foundation Day of the Society of the Divine Word. We are grateful for the collaboration and support of Atma-Darshan, Mumbai. We have an inspiring and passionate team of members of the Arnoldus family who are working on this project.

## Hunger in a world of plenty

Since the lockdown began in March 2020, the number of poor people, especially children struggle for food and for their basic livelihood. Food scarcity is one of the greatest challenges facing the poor and the homeless throughout this pandemic.

Every Saturday, we distribute around 800-900 packets of home cooked high-protein-lunch to poor people at the traffic signals, Cooper Government hospital, below the fly-overs, slums and of course on the roadsides in Mumbai. Along with the food, we also distribute water, bananas, biscuits, toiletries and so on. We are also helping the poor by providing health care and vaccinating them against COVID-19.

Rahul (name changed to protect identity) is a little boy living on the roadside. He usually took two packets of food from us every Saturday. When asked, he would say “Ek meri maa ke liye (one is for my mother)”. Sometimes, we doubted him but never disappointed him. Couple of weeks ago, he took only one packet and told us that his mother had died. Rahul was telling us the truth all the while. Every Saturday, we meet many homeless, especially children, who are living on the streets and telling us their life stories.



## We welcome new opportunities

We are thankful to God that we are able to help some poor families who prepare warm meals for our food distribution. We are also thankful to our donors and to everyone who supports this project. Their generosity makes it easier for us to reach out to those who are living in the most vulnerable environment. We have a growing circle of receivers and supporters. We welcome new opportunities which will bring joy to the lives of the poor, especially children, people with disabilities and the sick.



*There is a greater joy in giving than receiving*



# SARVA VIKAS DEEP, MANGAON: A VOICE TO THE VOICELESS

Richard Quadros SVD

**The** mission statement of the Sarva Vikas Deep (SVD) Mangaon, of the Society of the Divine Word, in Raigad district says: “We are building a society based on peace, justice and love, enhancing every human life to the fullest with a preferential option to tribals through awareness generation on Human Rights, Sustainable Livelihood initiatives and Empowerment process.”

Raigad, once the capital of the former Maratha Empire has 26.3 lakh people, of which 11.58% are tribals, a little more than 3 lakh. More than 80% of them are Katkari tribals who were historically forest dwellers. The name Katkari is derived from a forest based activity – the making and sale of kath from the khair tree. It is produced by boiling wood from the Khair tree and evaporating the resulting brew. Like most tribal communities, Katkaris are plagued with the issue of landlessness and subsequent distress migration making them vulnerable. Katkaris attribute their poverty and deprivation largely to them being landless.



Mangaon is one of the fifteen talukas/blocks in Raigad district, situated about 150 kms. south of Mumbai. It has a population of 1, 52,270 of which about 10,733 are Katkari tribals. Among them only 50% men and 29% women are literate. In this taluka, 2964 families are landless agricultural laborers who live below poverty line. Katkaris are vulnerable due to their poverty. Among the 85 tribes in Maharashtra, Katkaris are considered to be the most backward tribe, formerly known as 'primitive tribe'. One of the main causes of their backwardness had been landlessness.

The journey of Sarva Vikas Deep had been on bumpy roads. Initial suspicion and doubts in the minds of the tribals, local politicians, and village leaders constituted the several humps on the pathway. Notwithstanding them, Sarva Vikas Deep made deep inroads both in the lives of the poor in terms of interventions in socio-economic empowerment, and the rich in terms of taking them on board to take part in the intervention process. The admixture of approaches yielded a great amount of dividend to the organization in the process of tribal empowerment. The objectives set were really SMART(Specific, Measurable, Accurate, Realistic and



The Archdiocese of Bombay and the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) in 2006 began the noble work of empowering the underprivileged, poor tribals of Mangaon, Raigad district. Sarva Vikas Deep of the Society of the Divine Word, a registered nongovernmental organization ventured into addressing the overriding social issues of the Katkaris in 89 tribal hamlets. The Project took off with the appointment of Frs. Thomas Sequeira and Sursingh Bandor as the first mission animators and later continued through Frs. Calisto Gomes, Sylvester Rego, Cosmos Ekka, Richard Quadros, Dinesh Damor, Roy Karamulil (late), Jomet, Daniel Baretto, John Singarayar, Michael Peirera, Sushil Xess, Carmelite Sisters of Charity (Vedruna Sisters ) and of late Canossian Sisters pitched in their share of service.

Time Bound).In order to fulfill them, planning was done along with the village community. The activities were implemented and monitored by a group of social workers, village animators, para professionals, and community based organizations.

In order to assert their rights, the tribal community had been constantly made aware of the right to Forest Land Act, Right to Food Security Act, S.C & S.T. Atrocities prevention act, and self Governance/ panchayat raj Act. To this day, the tribal community in Mangaon has acquired 258 hectares community forest land claims, fructified 22 hectares individual land claims, and 100 hectares ownership in minor forest produce gathering. Another constant struggle of the tribal community was fight for food security. Proper



study and the community-involved implementation of the Food Security Act resulted in bringing all the tribal households under below poverty line category. This created proper identity for the poor tribals and it increased their self confidence.



Distress migration had been a reality for the poor tribals. Due to lack of livelihood opportunities, the tribals do migrate to distant places. The children and women are the most vulnerable in the process. Such opportunities were created for them, and the aim was to build a sustainable system to generate income from the traditional skills of the tribals.



Down the years collaboration and networking with different associations and groups had been another area of focus of Sarva Vikas Deep. Several activities have evolved for better and focused intervention through them. As a measure to growth, it has networked with likeminded NGOs, Academic institutions and individuals. In the livelihood programs which it runs for the tribals, it is a part of the network of 22 NGOs working with the same vision of empowering the marginalized. The partnership is made not just for financial assistance but also for participatory learning, contributing towards field based knowledge.



*Fifteen years in the field of social service is the short profile of Sarva Vikas Deep. A lot had been achieved for the last, least and lost. As the English historian, James Adams says, "There are obviously two types of education. One should teach us how to make a living and the other how to live." In the past ten years Sarva Vikas Deep has striven consistently to educate the rural poor and specially tribals enabling them for sustainable and dignified life. All along the way the organization has persistently committed itself to giving voice to the voiceless.*



# LEPROSY CARE AT KARUNALAYA

Rasal Xess, SVD

## Hansen's <sup>disease</sup> (leprosy) is an infection

caused by slow-growing bacteria called *Mycobacterium leprae*. It can affect the nerves, skin, eyes and lining of the nose. India has the highest number of new leprosy cases in the world, followed by Brazil and Indonesia. Every year, over 200,000 such cases are detected globally and India accounts for more than half of these, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

Society of the Divine Word in the Eastern province of Orissa has two main centres by which lepers and physically challenged persons are given care. They are Karunalaya at Puri and Vikas Deepti at Bargarh. Karunalaya primarily takes care of lepers while Vikas Deepti takes care of the physically challenged persons.

Karunalaya is a 20 bed hospital for leprosy treatment & care that provides both in - patient and OPD facilities. The Centre has 600 registered victims from the city and neighboring districts who visit the Centre during the year for consultation, counselling, medication and treatment. A senior Leprologist attends to the Clinic twice a week and attends to the needs of the victims. The para -medical staff dispense the medicine and other treatments on the advice and supervision of the Doctor. Special medical care and financial support is made available in case of emergencies, and hospitalization for major ailments.

Mercy Kitchen is a free nutrition facility for the old and abandoned victims living in the leprosy colony. The only condition for admittance is no begging.



This facility was created to promote self-worth and dignity of the victims who live on begging on the streets and around the temple. By providing free food 3 times a day daily save them from begging. Every child in the colony in the 1 – 9 year age group is provided 'a cup of milk & egg' on a daily basis to build their immunity.

**Rehabilitation Work:** Until a year ago, the centre ran a rehabilitation workshop providing job opportunities for victims & their dependents in the jute & coir centre. The tailoring unit trained women from the leprosy colony to empower them for self-employment. Dairy Farm provides employment for recovered victims to earn their livelihood.

**Formal Education:** BEATRIX SCHOOL has pioneered a bold fight against discrimination of the leprosy victims by providing a forum for their children to mix freely with children from normal society. It has a big role in bringing them into the mainstream of life. It provides free education for the children from the victims' families. The School is situated in a prominent place of the locality away from the colony where the victims live. One fourth of the students are from leprosy



affected families. Karunalaya supports the University education of every student graduating from Beatrix School by providing financial support for college studies.

Beatrix School Hostel provides free boarding and study facilities for children from victims families from outside the City. These children are provided a 'home away from home' where special attention is given to help them get out of their fear and inferiority feelings that are inbuilt due to the leprosy background.

**Housing:** Karunalaya has just completed an ambitious housing project for the victims. Due to the efforts and intervention of Karunalaya, every household in the colony has a decent house to live with all modern facilities. A trained and qualified person is engaged in visiting the families in the leprosy colony for family counselling and guidance.

Since last 25 years we are involved in the rehabilitation of patients with leprosy. First we took over Ruhunia colony where 44 families of leper patients are given houses, medicine and facilities for agriculture. Some years later we took over Jamurda Krishna leprosy colony which has over 576 inmates including children. We have already built 100 houses for them. As for income generation we have given goats to 59 families and cycle Rickshaws to 13 families. After that we took over Jeera colony where there are 24 families. We have already given them a bore well, an open well and the existing pond is widened and dug deeper. Sanitation is the new facility that has been provided to them.

Our main emphasis in these colonies is education. All three colonies have a school. There are about 87 children and we are happy that some are in the colleges and we hope they will bring better lives for many. Medical care is freely available to them. They are quite happy in the colonies with good drinking water and cultivable land for their sustenance. Almost 450 leprosy patients and their dependents are in our care in these 5 colonies.



## OISHO BANI SOCIETY OF AGARTALA

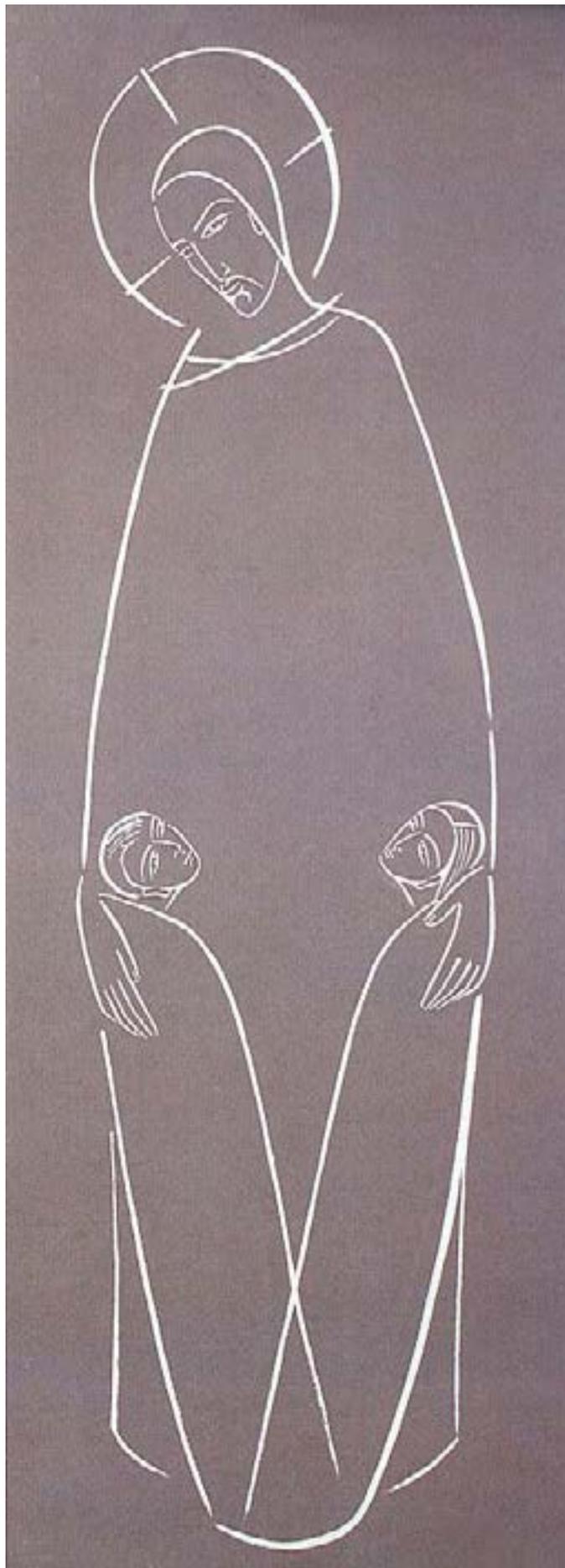
Jeevan Kennady, SVD

**In** the India Guwahati region, the Justice & Peace activities of the SVD is branched out to five states: Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh. We have three Societies “SHALOM SOCIETY – NRJPDS” (NORTHEAST REGIONAL JUSTICE PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY), Divine word Society and Oisho Bani Society. The objectives of these societies are Education, Health Care, Justice and Peace, Human Resource Development, Youth, Social Service and Social Welfare Programs. Besides daily ministries all our conferrers are involved in JPIC activities.

**FIGHTING AGAINST HUNGER:** On the occasion of Christmas celebration, construction and migrant workers are given food as an act of charity. During the time of lockdown the region very actively organized relief works in various parts of northeast India. Thousands of families were provided with food supplies and other essential goods, thanks to the support of donors and benefactors.

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES:** Our societies are working in line with the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. Many individuals, families and villagers have been beneficiaries of this sustainable development programme. We are helping out in the field of agriculture, fisheries, poultry, piggeries, rubber plantations, etc. for poverty eradication.

**EDUCATIONAL HELP:** Right to education has been the main campaign of the ING Region. Unfortunately



many children are still deprived of basic education due to poverty, ignorance, superstitions and social taboos. We assure the right to education to the poor children. Today the children of interior villages are enjoying the educational benefits. Children from Dhalai district of Tripura, East Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh have been provided with tuition and hostel facility with food and nutrition for the sole purpose of education. It is also continuously providing scholarships to most of the deserving tribal children to procure required books, uniforms and pay their school fees.

**AWARENESS PROGRAMS:** The JPIC has been conducting regular seminars and awareness programmes on health issues, literacy, women empowerment, advocacy etc. for the rural people of

**MEDICAL HELP:** The region takes utmost care to address the health issues of the tribal people. Seminars and retreats are organized at parish level for the people. Besides, psycho-social support is offered to the people in need. In case of emergency, medical help is offered to them. In addition health camps are frequently organized in the interior places. Medical camps have been organised at the school level and students are given vaccination by the doctors and nurses.

**WOMEN AWARENESS PROGRAMME:** Women awareness programme has helped the women to be aware of their rights and duties in the family, villages, and society at large. It is very much encouraging to see the gathering of large number of women for the programmes. The empowerment of women has led



Tripura, Assam, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh. This awareness programme has served the purpose of building the confidence level, leadership and self-reliance.

**CARE FOR THE NATURE:** Tree plantation in the schools and institutions bring greater awareness about the environment. Teachers and students play a vital role in this regard. There are also awareness programmes conducted by the JPIC coordinator on topics concerning conservation of the environment.

to empowerment of not only the families, but villages and rural communities as well. Our confreres in their respective parishes and JPIC centres have been very much instrumental in organising and conducting the awareness and empowerment programmes for women at different level.

The JPIC Office has been shifted now to Oisho Bani Niketan Agartala.



**COVID-19 RELIEF WORK:** The JPIC office at Agartala was set up amidst covid 19 pandemic situation. Hence, there was pressing need for carrying out emergency relief work for the people affected by Covid 19 and subsequent lock down imposed to contain the spread of the disease.

The covid 19 induced lockdown severely affected livelihood of the poor families, daily labourers , migrant workers, rickshaw pullers , tea garden workers, care takers of patients in the hospitals . The Relief work was carried out in two phases. Through the relief Programme more than 5000 families all over the SVD ING Region were provided with day rations comprising of Rice, dal , oil, onion, masala etc. Besides the dry rations, masks and sanitizers were also provided, and also cooked food for more than 800 people.

During the second phase of Covid 19 Relief work , besides the dry ration distribution especially in Tripura, 50 migrant workers' families were helped with Rs 6000 /- each to take up income generation activities like , piggery, goatery, fish farming etc, as a means of livelihood for the affected families.

**FARMERS' DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME:** As an initiative to improve the living standard of farmers, a farmer's development project titled STAND (Sustainable Transformation through Agriculture Nurturing & Development) has been launched in the month of February 2020 at Kamaranga. The project aims at ensuring food security.



# JAN VIKAS SOCIETY

Roy Thomas SVD

**Bal**ram Mujalde is a young boy from Khargone District of Madhya Pradesh. His father is a Farmer, and he completed his graduation with the help of the hard-earned money of his father, but is jobless.

Balram joined the three months' Assistant Electrician's course run by Janvikas in Indore. After attending the Spoken English and Public speaking classes, he successfully completed the course of Assistant Electrician, and is employed today at Madhya Pradesh Electricity Board (MPEB) as an electrician earning more than Rs.18,000 a month. He says, "Janvikas Society has transformed my life. I am grateful to all."

Balram is just an example of hundreds of students who are being trained every year in Janvikas and are helped to get jobs. Janvikas is an NGO based in Indore, in the state of Madhya Pradesh, in central India. It was started in the year 2000 as an initiative of the Society of the Divine Word, India Central (INC) Province. The activities of Janvikas come under three broad categories:- Community Development, Education, and Protection of Environment and Ecology

## 1. Community Development Activities:-

In the urban set up of Indore and Bhopal, the marginalized and the neglected ones live in slums. Most of them are unorganized laborers. Much of our community development activities are focused on the development of these slum dwellers.

Waste picking women form the most marginalized group among the unorganized workers. An estimated number of over 3000 families in Indore



earn their livelihood from waste picking. And three times more of them depend on allied activities with the waste collection and the waste recycling trade. Janvikas has been working with the waste picking women in order to mobilize them so that they gain from the privileges of a registered body.



*Women Empowerment Activities:* With the concern for women-empowerment, Janvikas works with the waste picking women and domestic workers. This has led to the formation of a cooperative society of unorganized women laborers called “Sarvodya Sramik Mahila Cooperative society Ltd” which has today over 3000 women waste pickers as members and 115 Self Help Groups that has over 1500 women members. The cooperative Society has welfare schemes for the benefits of its members such as emergency loan at low rate of interest, Group insurance, Social security schemes, Small saving schemes with attractive interest and guidance for better Entrepreneurship, etc. The cooperative movement empowers women waste pickers to join hands with the government and other non-government organizations, and business concerns to run the income generating activities and become active stakeholders of the recycling sector.

*Development of community based organizations:* Janvikas believes that the Community Based Organizations (CBOs) will give sustainability to the developmental efforts. Thus we give much importance to develop Women Groups, Cooperative Societies, and Trade unions for unorganized women labor in communities. In over thirty slums, we have programmes mainly for the empowerment of women. Informal training sessions are conducted, and they learn to take leadership roles through the basic community organization for women such as Self-

help Groups, cooperative Society, Slum Development Committees, etc. In each of these slums selected women are trained as multipurpose community workers and leaders, and as non-formal teachers.



*Empowerment of Youth:* Janvikas has initiated the process of organizing ‘Youth Clubs’ in ten major slums of Indore. The focus is on “Empowering Youth to Empower the Society” - enabling youth to become responsible citizens for social action. Youth are given training in leadership, health and sanitation, career guidance, employment opportunities, gender equality, environmental concerns, role of youth in promotion of peace and harmony, etc. Janvikas reaches out to more than 1000 youth in different slums.



*Health and Hygiene:* Waste Pickers are the most vulnerable section of the society who are exposed to hazardous working conditions as they deal with waste (paper, plastic, glass and metal) in their day to day life. Most of them have no access to basic health facilities as they live in slums and are poor. Janvikas organizes regular medical check-ups and medical camps in the slums along with a professional lady doctor.

*Community Support and Networking:* Janvikas has developed supportive networking and associations with various Govt. departments, NGOs, Institutions, Individuals. They offer support for our welfare activities for the benefit of the poor and the marginalized.

## 2. Education:

*Bridge Course Centers for the Drop-out and Working Children:* Janvikas runs bridge course centers in slums as models for prevention of child labour. Lack of proper facilities for education make the children child labourers. Through the bridge course centers, working children and the drop out students are prepared for the board exams.

*Children's Parliament:* In order to organize children and inculcate leadership qualities in them 'Children's Parliaments' are formed in different slums. This enables them to become responsible citizens of the nation.

*Railway Childline Project:* Janvikas has been selected as collaborative organization for implementation of CHILDLINE service through Child Help Desk at Indore railway station by Childline India Foundation under the Ministry of Women and Child Development. Railway Childline Help Desk (toll free no. 1098) run by Janvikas at the railway station in Indore functions 24x7 catering to the needs of the children in distress (run away, trafficked, begging, missing, etc.). The 12 member team creates awareness among the railway staff, GRPF members, and passengers on CHILDLINE Help Desk about the use of toll free no. 1098.



*Vocational Training Program:* Even the educated youth are not able to get trained to compete with the world outside due to lack of professional skills, poverty and their low social status. Janvikas works at providing a platform for these young boys and girls to equip themselves professionally to get employed through vocational training programs. Janvikas provides vocational trainings in Industrial Sewing Machine Operator (ISMO), Assistant Beauty Therapist, Office

Assistance (computer), and Assistant Electrician's courses. Over 500 women and youth are trained every year and are employed.

## 3. Protection of Environment and Ecology.

Environmental degradation is a serious threat to the whole creation, especially to humankind. This necessitates the integration of environmentally sustainable activities in our social approach. Therefore, in order to achieve sustainable development, we take full attention to the environmental dimension in all our development activities. Many of our activities are in fact geared to the reduction of environment pollution like promotion of recycling of solid wastes, use of renewable energy, awareness creation on decentralized waste management and disposal etc.

Janvikas thus facilitates the process of empowerment of the waste picking women, domestic workers and other unorganized laborers, youth and children. The process of learning continues with guidance and support so that these women and children who are the last, least and the lost of the society may live a dignified life and be empowered to stand on their feet.



# MISSIONARIES ALL THE WAY

Fr. Alwin Mascarenhas SVD

**Over** five decades of presence in the Hyderabad province, the poorest of the poor have made us aware of the day to day struggles of our sisters and brothers. Commitment to justice challenges us to seek the transformation of social and political situations which are the cause of human misery, whilst also seeking to meet practical needs in a compassionate way. Guided by the Word and strengthened by the Holy Spirit, we find the face of God in the suffering hearts of humanity. We find hope in initiatives towards solidarity and reconciliation, gestures of sharing goods and of caring for life, and words that console and challenge us.

**Covid-19 Crisis & the Emergency Relief:** COVID -19 has caused a massive disaster. The 'lock down' introduced to prevent the corona infection has destroyed the lives of common people especially the migrants, domestic labourers, rag pickers, daily wage earners and the ongoing construction workers. The SVD missionaries have not been silent spectators to this painful scenario. The compassionate situation demanded helping the poor people. A strategy has been worked out to relieve the people of their sufferings. Rice and groceries were distributed to the needy and affected people of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu states. We helped the suffering people in and around our own SVD mission stations and work places. About 2500 families were able to get the benefits from the emergency relief work initiated by the Province for a month.





**Child Rights & Protection of Girl children:** We have taken out a massive campaign on Awareness on Child rights and Protection of Girl Children by conducting seminars addressed by eminent speakers and holding cultural awareness programmes on these topics. We taught the children to be aware of all their rights, current issues and the laws pertaining to them. The programme was conducted in most of the Divine Word schools and other private and public schools. The response was highly encouraging.



**Bicycles to Girl Students:** Divine Word Social Service Society has distributed bicycles to the poor girl students who had to walk a long distance to the school for their education. It was like a dream come true for the poor rural girl students of remote villages. So far, we have been able to donate 500 bicycles to the girl students.

This was also an encouragement for other children to work hard and excel in studies. We plan to continue this good work in few more remote schools. The aim and the objective of this project is to encourage them all to continue their studies despite their practical and genuine difficulties. This has indeed brought smiles on their faces and happiness in their lives.



**Free Medical Health Camps:** We have organized 96 Free Medical and consultation camps in remote rural areas in Siddipet, Sangareddy, Rangareddy, Yadadri, Bhongir and Medak districts. General medical test as well as free Eye check-ups were conducted. Free medicines, tonics and spectacles were distributed to the poor people.



**Awareness Programs on Health and Hygiene:** 72 Cultural Awareness programmes on health and hygiene were conducted in remote rural areas in Siddipet, Sangareddy, Yadadri, Bhongir and Medak districts. The local people were able to understand the concepts of health and hygiene through useful shows enacted very well by the cultural artists. Through the cultural programs we taught the rural masses the simple health and hygiene practices, which they need to follow for their good health.

**Reaching out to the Migrants:** The immediate need now is to address and safe guard the welfare of the migrants locally with a special focus on the domestic

workers. The following are the concrete steps we have taken up towards the welfare of the migrants.

**Visit to the Families of Migrants:** We visit their place of residence and work area in order to understand the issues of poverty, socioeconomic disadvantage, interpersonal and community violence, mental health problems, social injustice and discrimination. It helps to learn how they impact the urban client system as demonstrated by the ability to identify problems, determine solutions and access appropriate community resources. Collecting data during the family visit is vital to understanding their problems.

**Educational and medical Care:** The migrants need food, shelter, medical care, safety, and healthy social interactions with family, friends and others — just like anyone else. As they live in poverty, they are vulnerable and have the least access to medical care. They are unable to educate their children, as they are unable to afford costly education in private schools. It is only education that can help them gradually for their economic development. Hence, we focus on providing educational and healthcare assistance for migrants for their overall development.

**Pastoral Care:** The Catholic Church encourages migrants to fuller participation in the evangelizing mission of the Church. We organize catechism, confession and Holy Mass for these people with the help of priests, sisters and lay faithful.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He sent me to proclaim release to the prisoners and sight to the blind, to send those who are oppressed into liberty, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4:18-19) Therefore, we are involved in discovering the love of Christ by rendering services, especially in matters of pastoral and socio-economic needs of the poor, the sick, marginalized and the downtrodden.



# GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR

Rasal Xess, SVD

**Working** for justice and peace is the characteristic dimension of every SVD missionary activity. The INE Province has 8 centres working for this cause. They are CWS Roukela, UPAYA Ramabahal, Vikas Bhawan Bargarh, Karunalaya Puri, Dinabandhu Technical and Vocational Training Institute (DTVTI) Jharsuguda, Sanskruti Kendra Sundergarh, DSS Jharsuguda and Ganpada Navjevan Trust, West Bengal. There are also specialized apostolates such as Family and De-addiction, Animation on unsafe migration, Human Trafficking, Slum Animation and Social Justice Communication through Media Ministry.

Empowerment of tribals and dalits through Education Ministry: Twenty five confreres are involved in education ministry catering to 10,000 students in 8 different English and vernacular schools and hostels. Apart from the academic excellence, students are taught to love humanity, care for ecology and promote peace and brotherhood. They make preferential options for tribals, dalits and students from margins of the society. All the education institutions have mechanisms to safe guard the wellbeing of the students, teachers and domestic-staff by introducing Divine Word Education Policy.

Socio-Pastoral animation is important for the overall development of our communities. Twenty six confreres are working in 15 different mission stations animating men, women, youth and children. The parishes address issues of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, environmental care and migration concerns. More than 35,000 people are being cared for through them.



**Migrants:** Odisha has more than 2.5 million migrant workers, according to informal estimates. In April 2020, data collated by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) showed that the unemployment rate in Odisha was 23.8%, higher than the national average of 23.5% for the period. As SVDs in the province we promote safe migration through awareness programmes and public events. Unsafe migration and illicit human trafficking is a concern in the province. The less privileged, the tribals and the dalits become the target. We have a Migration Coordinator who looks into these matters. As part of the challenge we realize Covid 19 has triggered more unsafe migration as more people are becoming jobless.



**Care for Environment:** Odisha's geographic location on the east coast of India and its climatic condition have meant that the state has historically been highly prone to climate change and multiple hazards, mainly cyclones, droughts and floods. The state has been declared disaster-affected for 95 years of the last 105 years: floods have occurred for 50 years, droughts for 32 years and cyclones have struck the state for 11 years. As part of the integrity of creation, conferes have planted trees and inspired others to do the same, observed environmental day, consciously included awareness on pollution, and environmental care in their sermons, seminars and retreats.

Women empowerment is a way to bring about changes in the society. The objective is that the women grow in leadership, become empowered to tackle issues of women in the society. They also begin to earn for their living, and shoulder greater responsibility towards building families and society. This empowerment process is done through promoting the habit of saving, by involving them in decision making process in families, community and local self-governance. They are initiated into income generating activities and thus preventing exploitation and human trafficking. They are made aware of various government schemes for the upliftment of the marginalised especially the tribals and scheduled castes.

**Animation of the Urban Poor:** The urban poverty is characterized by inadequate and insecure housing, limited access to services like health, nutrition, water, sanitation etc. If not all but majority of urban poor live in slums. In urban areas, slums are deprived of basic amenities. There is a limited access to safe drinking water, sanitation and health services for the urban poor. Slums are marked by overcrowding, precarious living conditions, environmental hazards, improper sanitation and air pollution causing health hazards. In the towns of Rourkela and Jharsuguda, we have formed Self Help groups for women and youth, Creche for the children of daily wagers, animation of Rag pickers, tuition classes for slum children, training in tailoring, computer and spoken English. For those who drop out from schools early, special programmes to train their skills are given in the area of Driving, Tailoring, Computer, Nursing Assistance, and Welding.



Social justice team of the province is actively participating in the struggle of the people in the various ways. Conferes from their respective field have contributing towards building of peace and justice and environmental care. The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favour. (Luke 4:18-19) Therefore, we have discovered the love of Christ by rendering commendable service, especially in matters of pastoral, socio-economic activities for the poor, the sick, marginalized and the downtrodden.



# NEWS BRIEFS

## APOSTOLIC NUNCIO'S VISIT TO DWS



We at Divine Word Seminary had surprising news when we came to know on October 30, 2021 that on the following day the Papal Nuncio to India and Nepal, His Excellency Most Rev. Leopoldo Girelli, intends to visit us. The Nuncio had come to Pune to participate in the Sacerdotal Golden Jubilee of Most Rev. Thomas Dabre, Bishop of Pune, and after the celebration he wanted to visit the three major seminaries in the campus, i.e. Papal Seminary, De Nobili College and Divine Word Seminary to interact with the staff and students. The Nuncio arrived at 5.05 pm accompanied by Most Rev. Thomas Dabre and Rev. Fr. Malcom Sequeira. After welcoming the dignitaries in front of the parlour we took group photos. Then he was escorted to the main chapel where we sang the Veni Creator Spiritus, after which the Nuncio blessed the community. Fr. Rector in his brief welcome speech spoke about the humble beginnings of DWS, the alma mater for about 800 missionaries serving the universal church in all the continents. The Nuncio in his speech emphasized the need to cultivate a spirituality that will accompany us and sustain us. He encouraged us as Divine Word Missionaries to be rooted in the Word. He also shared some of his experiences in India. Since it was getting late the Nuncio left for the airport leaving behind a pleasant memory of witnessing the first ever visit of the Papal Nuncio to DWS.

## AJS ANIMATION TEAM MEETING

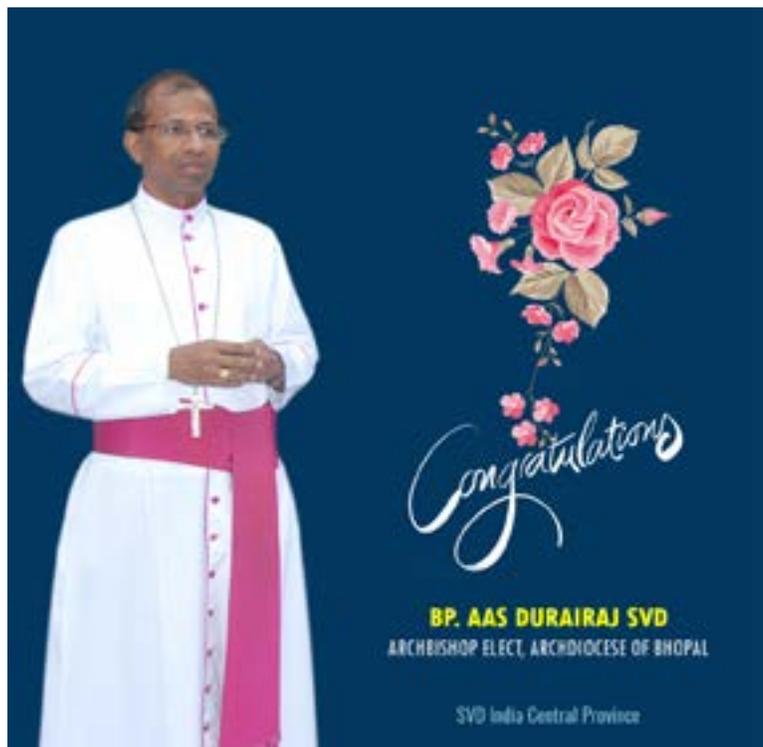


The SVD-SSpS St. Arnold Janssen Spirituality animation team of Central Indian Province was held on August 28, 2021 at St. Arnold's Seva Sadan, Indore to reflect and look back on what has been done and to look forward on how we can animate the confreres and sisters on the spirituality of our founding generation. 7 SVD Confreres and 4 SSpS sisters participated in the meeting under the leadership of Fr. Emmanuel Varghese, the Province AJS coordinator. During the meeting the Provincial Superior Fr. Joemon stressed on making St. Arnold Janssen our brand and promote His spirituality in all our institutions and daily life. The members after having reviewed the recommendations of the previous meeting shared their experiences in their effort to impart the Arnold Janssen Spirituality. They recommended to name the family feasts in our institutions as 'St. Arnold's Family Feast', to circulate small quotes/sayings of our founding generation in SVD –SSpS WhatsApp groups, organize quiz competitions, word puzzles and creative competitions on the Spirituality of the founding generation. The members also discussed on the possibility of celebrating St. Arnold's Sunday with various activities. They also decided to have self-animated seminar for the AJS team members. May St. Arnold intercede and inspire us to actualize the proposed concrete plans.

## RENEWAL PROGRAMME FOR THE ORDINATION/FINAL VOWS BATCHES OF 1986 TO 1992

A renewal programme for the Ordination/Final Vows batches of 1986 to 1992 will be held on 28 Feb. and 1 March 2022. The two days' workshop will be held at St. Arnold's Seva Sadan, Indore. Arrival is on 27 February and departure on 2 March 2022. Fr. Gregory Pinto will be the resource person for this workshop.





### ALL ABOUT BISHOPS

His Holiness Pope Francis has appointed His Lordship Alangaram Arokia Sebastian Durairaj, S.V.D., until now Bishop of Khandwa, as the new Archbishop of Bhopal. Bishop Telesphore Bilung SVD has been appointed bishop of Jemshedpur.

### INC MISSION AT MADRI & OGNA COME ALIVE

A much-awaited hostel for Boys at Madri was inaugurated by Fr. John Wakhla SVD, Vice Provincial and blessed by Most Rev. Bp. Dev Prasad Ganava SVD on July 1, 2021 in the presence of the Confreres of Udaipur District and a few religious sisters. This hostel can house 100 boys from the villages studying in the mission school. It was a long-felt desire of the mission at Madri to build a boy's hostel as the boys were staying for a number of years in two school class rooms. We praise God for the steady progress this remote mission has achieved over 32 years of its existence.

Giving priority to the ministry of education, which is the base for all change and progress, the first floor of the school at Oгна was blessed by Bp. Dev Prasad Ganawa SVD and was inaugurated by Fr. John Wakhla on July 2, 2021. With this new extension, the school can be up-graded up to 10th standard with all the facilities. Assunta Bhavan School, Oгна is a great blessing for children from a number of villages in the Tahsil to be educated by being in the hostels for boys and girls. We appreciate Frs. Abianus Tigga SVD, Jesbir Kullu SVD, and Bros. Ashwin Kiro SVD and John Menezes svd for steering this mission into new heights.



## SVD LAY MISSION PARTNERS MEETING IN INDORE AND MEGHNAGAR

The Province effort to initiate lay partner groups has found success with two groups being initiated to the spirituality, vision and mission of the Society. St. Arnold's lay partner group is being trained under the spiritual leadership of Fr. Charles Pinto coordinated by Fr. Johny D'Souza. It is a group of 15 members who are very active and eager to share the spirituality and mission of the society. They meet once a month for spiritual animation. Another two groups of lay partners is being formed comprising of ex-SVDs in Meghnagar and Badi Dhamni.



## FIRST ANNIVERSARY –DDW, PUNE

The first anniversary of the DDW-Pune Lay Partner group was celebrated on 3rd October 2021 at Divine Word Seminary, Pune and Fr. Jesuraj Rayappan, Rector, and Fr. Gregory Arockiam, Spiritual Director



celebrated the Eucharist. Due to the pandemic situation, the group continued to meet in a virtual mode using Google Meet. With the cooperation of the members, the group was able to take decisions

and coordinate the different initiatives and projects. Three DDW Pune members have sponsored three SVD Seminarians for their formation at Divine Word Seminary, Pune for four years. Some members and benefactors have contributed an amount of Rs.47,800/- towards cassocks for the novices in Khurda. Feed the Hungry project was launched in the presence of SVD fathers. The members were enthusiastic to cook and provide vegetable pulav and boiled eggs and sponsor pickle and bananas which were packed and distributed to the hungry on the streets of Pune. We continue to distribute food packets to the hungry twice a month. During the peak of the pandemic dry ration kits were distributed to the poor and needy. This was possible due to the generosity of the members who contributed Rs.44,000/- and rations. The group also volunteered to pack the rations before they were distributed by the fathers at Sarva Seva Sangh.

## SVD-FRATERNITY

SVD-Fraternity is an associate lay group of India Hyderabad Province (INH). Taking the cue from the General Chapters of SVD, this lay group formulated the Vision, Mission and Objectives on 28th April 2013 and was registered as a Society with the Registrar of Societies (India) on 9th October 2014, making it a legal entity. We have over 900 members officially registered.

## FR. JOMON JAMES HONOURED AS CORONA KARMAVEER

State team of journalists of Yuva Patrakar Ekta Manch honoured Fr. Joemon James SVD for his services in the Corona Pandemic. He was honoured as Corona Karmaveer with a letter of appreciation. Journalist Pandit Vijay Trivedi and the president of the Forum, Kunwar Vijay Singh said that it is very small in front of his services to the society. The team also appreciated his initiatives to visit the sick especially those who are affected with Corona.





## FORMATION BOARD MEETING

Our formation project is a large enterprise consisting of 20 communities, 604 formandi and 72 formators. The Formation Board meeting is an annual exercise to take stock of the activities on the formation front. It provides an opportunity for the formators and the Provincial/Regional Superiors to sit together and to collectively reflect on the issues and concerns that formators face in their important task of forming the upcoming generations of our congregation's members. The annual General Body meeting of the Sub-zonal Formation Board took place via Zoom on 16- 17 September 2021. Except for a couple of confreres who were absent due to some personal inconveniences, all the expected participants took active part in the meeting spread over two days. Taking into consideration the limitations imposed by the virtual nature of the gathering, some of the regular features such as the half-day on-going formation session and the lengthy reporting were dispensed with. There were a fairly large number of items on the agenda and on nearly every point there was much discussion and debate. Although the usually strong "we-feeling" factor that accompanies the face-to-face version of the gathering was largely missing, the participants felt happy that they had a chance to share their opinions and concerns and felt reaffirmed in their call to be formators.

## INTER-PROVINCIAL FORUM MEETING

The annual meeting of the SVD India Sub-Zone Inter-Provincial Forum (IPF) was held through online flat-form on September 18, 2021. The meeting started with a meaningful opening prayer led by Fr. Victor Rodrigues, Vice Provincial, INE. Then Fr. Maxim Rodrigues, the chairperson of India Sub-Zone welcomed all the participants. In his inaugural address he reminded that it is the 90th year of SVD presence in India and our mission is growing geographically as we have already branched out to Bangladesh. He emphasized the importance of the gathering saying that IPF meeting has an animating value and appreciated Fr. Luvis Ronald Pereira for his effort in bringing us together. Then Fr. Ronald presented a brief report of IPF with review of last year's recommendations. Many important concerns and issues pertaining to the common mission such as maintaining inter-culturality as our identity, Global Prayer – Rosary, Workshops on NGO and Finance Management and Migration, Constituting a designing team to create and maintain websites, rejuvenating MER, Old age contribution on transfer of a confrere to another province and preparedness to face the challenges of the pandemic were deliberated at length. The proceedings of the IPF consultation meeting came to an end with a short evaluation.



## SVD – LAUDATO SI – ACTION PLAN – TOOL

Seven Years to heal relationships with God's Creation

Animated by our General Superior and the SVD Leadership team, we answer to Pope Francis' call to Laudato Si (LS). With profound care for each other and all creation, we want to build a better future together with all persons of good will.

Our worldwide Society takes part in the "Laudato Si Action Platform" (<https://laudatosiactionplatform.org>). Within seven years, we seek the transformation of ourselves, as well as those communities with whom we work, following the seven Laudato Si Goals (2021-2028).

These are:

1) Response to the cry of creation; 2) Response to the cry of the poor; 3)

Ecological economics; 4) Adoption of ecological life styles; 5) Ecological education; 6) Ecological Spirituality; 7) Community engagement and participatory action.

Each year we focus on one of these goals. By doing so, we dedicate ourselves to a profound process of transformation. We try to achieve these goals through dedicated engagement in four areas, which we consider basic for this process:

**PRAYER:** Our personal prayer, our liturgical celebrations and services become explicit expression to the respective LS Goal.

**EDUCATION:** We educate ourselves about the ecological concerns and animate others to be sensitive to ecological issues.

**ACTION:** We do concrete actions for a sustainable lifestyle, promote eco-justice and fight against the climate change.

**ADVOCACY:** We take part in NGO-campaigns, manifestations or petitions that are related to the respective LS Goal.

"Our goal is not to amass information or to satisfy curiosity, but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it." (LS 19)

Every confrere is asked to commit to this process, as well as every community and every PRM. This tool will guide us through these seven special years of concerted effort against climate change. It helps to organize well our

procedures, to identify clearly our objectives, to plan concrete steps and to evaluate the outcome.

It is of utmost importance that every confrere/community/PRM seeks for those measures, which promise to result in a maximum of output. Thus, our contribution as SVDs can be relevant and worth to our worldwide role as mission congregation. The PRM Superiors are responsible to communicate this message to their members and JPIC Coordinators are responsible to animate the confreres. JPIC Coordinators will collect the results and submit them to the Generalate JPIC Coordinator in November every year.



## INDIA SUB-ZONE ONGOING FORMATION PROGRAMME

A three day online on-going formation programme is planned for the young confreres of India Sub-zone in two batches.

First Batch: 06- 08 Dec. 2021 (Ordination and Final Profession Batches 2017- 2021)

Second Batch: 09-11 Dec. 2021 (Ordination and Final Profession Batches 2012- 2016)

Theme: Animation for Personal Growth and Skills Development

Day 1: Developing Personal Spirituality, Personality Development and Working Towards Positive Spirit by Fr. Charles D'Souza SJ

Day 2: Emotional Intelligence by Fr. M.C. Abraham CSC

Day 3: Management and Administrative Skills for Missionary Life by Fr. Raja Reddy SVD

## SVD-ADMINISTERED CHARISMATIC CENTER

Most Rev. Polimera Jayarao, Bishop of Eluru, has invited the India-Hyderabad Province (INH) to begin a Charismatic Center in the diocese. Negotiations had almost started three years ago. The Provincial Chapter in 2018 had made a recommendation to start such a venture in Andhra Pradesh. But, unfortunately, due to coronavirus and its after-effects, we could not proceed and make headway. However, negotiations with the Bishop and visits to Eluru have resulted in our entry

into the Diocese of Eluru. Fr. Superior General has permitted us to open such a Center in Eluru. The Bishop has offered an acre of land, and we need to procure another four acres of land adjacent to that land from the diocese. The Bishop also has provided a parish or two. These parishes are for our pastoral ministry and vocation promotion in a couple of years in the diocese. Soon we will be agreeing and registering the land.

## SVD YOUNG CONFRERES MEET- 2021

As part of an ongoing formation for the first five years of ordination group consisting of 12 confreres, a young Priests meet was organized at Arnold Bhavan on 11 and 12th of August. It was planned and coordinated by Fr. Lawrence Bose, the priest In charge of the young priests in INH. Fr. S. Rajasekar reports, "Today, we live in the world of corruption, consumerism, materialism, self-centeredness, egoism, etc. In this reality of life, to live as a missionary becomes a challenge. Therefore, realizing the significance of the revival, the INH Province conducted two days of seminar and gathering of the young confreres to renew, reform, review, revive and strengthen their spiritual, psychological, intellectual and moral growth. The resource persons of the day Fr. Aloysius, Fr. Charan SDB and Fr. Antony Vino SVD, explained the topic: Ministry, Challenges faced by Young Priests in the Youth Ministry and Interculturality. These sessions, talks and their personal experiences enthused and renewed our spirits and increased our love for the mission. The following day was spent in sharing our personal experiences and insights to encourage each other. At the end of the seminar Fr. Provincial superior addressed the gathering. Soon after the lunch we had a trip to Salar Jung Museum, Golconda and Tank Bund to relax and spend time with each other.



## MIGRATION MINISTRY

Migration ministry is one of the important priorities of our society. INH Province has taken up this new and challenging task of caring and supporting migrants in the urban and semi urban areas. Most of the migrants are migrating due to financial problems in their native places. Fr. Samir Kumar Barwa, the in-charge of migrants in Hyderabad has already started his ministry with full zeal and enthusiasm venturing into the lives of poor migrants and helping them to feel secure and at home. People have migrated from different parts of India like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Odisha to Hyderabad city. Different activities are conducted for the migrants to fulfil their spiritual, social and economic needs.



## GREEN SUNDAY IN AMBASSA

Holy Spirit Catholic Church in collaboration with 'Oisho Bani Society' an NGO, planted 500 saplings in 8 villages in Ambassa Sub-Division. At the beginning of this month, the Diocese of Agartala intimated to all the parishes to observe environment day by planting saplings. The Social work wing of the Diocese. JUST (Jana Unayan Samiti Tripura) conducted a webinar and on the occasion a Forest Department officer of Agartala spoke well about the initiative taken by the Diocese. He quoted a verse from the Bible, John 1:3 "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made." Bishop Lumen Monteiro gave introductory speech on the theme 'Planting Trees, Restoring Hope'. He said, "Since the beginning trees have furnished us with two of life's essentials, food and oxygen. He further urged, "We plant the right trees in the right places to safeguard biodiversity, protect nature, and fight climate change." PPC of Ambassa decided to celebrate the green Sunday on 27th June. Prior to the event, leaders of the parish collected 500 saplings from the forest department and distributed to the villages.



## DIVINE WORD MISSION CENTRE AT CHAPIKARONG

On the occasion of Annunciation the Titular Feast of the Society, the newly constructed Divine Word Centre at Chapikarong, Manipur was blessed and inaugurated on March 25, 2021. Fr. Maxim Rodrigues SVD, the Regional Superior of ING Region inaugurated the Mission Centre in the presence of His grace Most Rev. Dominic Lumen DD, Archbishop of Imphal. There was the prayer of blessing, cutting the ribbon and blessing of the newly constructed Building. On this occasion there were many priests, nuns, faithful men and women, CSO and Chapikarong Chief Association present. There are number of catholic communities present in Chapikarong. A mission centre was indeed a requirement for their spiritual sustenance. Hence, this mission house will bring lot of spiritual assistance to our people of Chapikarong and neighbouring places.



## HEALTH CAMP FOR THE BRU MIGRANTS

Oisho Bani Registered Society Ambassa organized a Health camp in collaboration with the Catholic Church, Ambassa, in the Bru settlement camp at Haduklau village, which is 10 kilometres away from the District Headquarter. It was Mr. Philip Apeto, the Camp In-charge, who requested Fr. Ivan D Silva, the



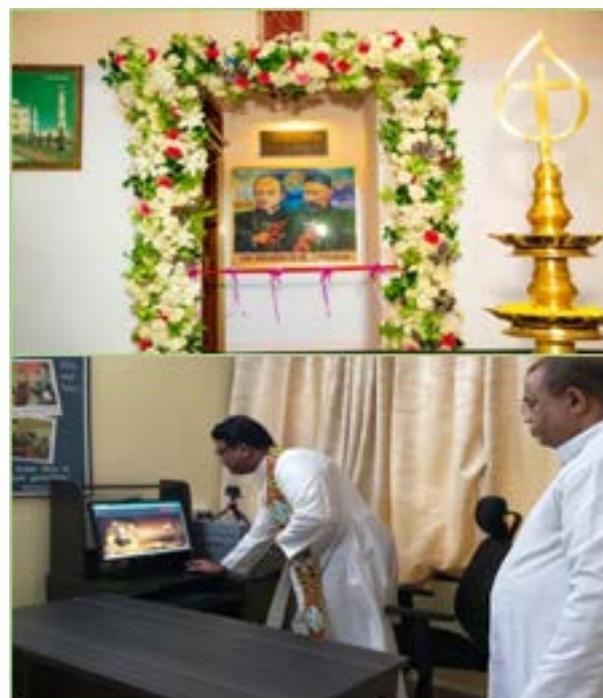
Parish Priest of Catholic Church Ambassa, to arrange a medical camps for the inmates. Oisho Bani had earlier coordinated a similar camp in June for the Bru settlers. According to Philip, out of 302 families who are more or less settled in their houses, there are additional 586

families who have come at the Bru settlement site to construct their houses. He wrote, "It is quite difficult to manage their basic necessities, like rice, vegetables and medication etc". More than 300 people were treated from morning till evening for different diseases. Two Doctors, two nurses and other staff helped to diagnose, dispense medicines and do the registration. Patients, mostly women and children with common illnesses; such as, cold, cough, fever, skin disease, allergy, dysentery, gastric etc. Malaria test was done on the patients who had symptoms but none of them was found with Malaria. Thanks to the donors who helped us to buy sufficient medicines and the doctors who gave their time to attend to these migrants. The Bru settlement camp looks like an improvised version of the refugee camp with tin roof and close by houses. In such camps, water borne diseases are likely to be common due to lack of safe drinking water, unhygienic drainage system and malnutrition. The distance from the primary health centre is very far and only serious patients are taken to the PHC because of expensive conveyance. We hope that the situation may turn out better in the near future.

## BLESSING OF MISSION OFFICE

### MISSION POSSIBLE - WITH HIS HELP AND YOURS

SVD- India Mumbai Province now has a Mission office at the Institute of Indian Culture, Andheri. This Mission office was blessed on 8th September 2021 by Fr. Richard Mathias SVD, the Provincial Superior of the India Mumbai Province. Many SVD conferees, SSpS Sisters and Lay Mission Partners joined the celebration as it coincided with the Birthday of our Mother Mary and the Foundation Day of the Society of the Divine Word. On the same day a new website was launched for the Mission office: [www.svdmissioninm.com](http://www.svdmissioninm.com). The theme of the Mission office is 'MISSION POSSIBLE- with His help and yours'. The Mission office is entrusted with the mission of Mission Awareness, Animation of confreres, Lay Mission Partnership, Vocation promotion and World Mission Fund. Come and be partners in His Mission. His Mission is Our Mission. Fr. Jolly M. SVD is the full-time Mission Secretary of the SVD India Mumbai Province.





### 28 NOVICES MAKE THEIR FIRST PROFESSION

“God’s will is my will” was the theme of the twenty-eight newly professed members. They were inducted into the family of the Society of the Divine Word on October 15, 2021. The solemn Holy Eucharist was presided over by Most Rev. Chacko Thottumarickal SVD, Bishop of Indore Diocese. In his inspiring homily, he exhorted the newly professed members to “let God be the driver on life journey; trust and rely on His skills either on the smooth road or difficult road, but sure of reaching the safe road.” Fr. Joemon James SVD, the INC Provincial Superior, received their vows and urged them to take forward the charism and spirituality of the Society, learned during novitiate time to the next level of formation. He exhorted them not to be caught up or be trapped in the world of consumerist attitude. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Khurda community did not take any chance to aggravate the situation. No invitation was extended to our mission partners. It was a simple yet edifying and colorful event to treasure!



### 23 POSTULANTS ADMITTED TO THE NOVITIATE, KHURDA

The COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent lockdowns caused disturbance to the normal schedule of our formation program. Due to the delay in completing graduation, the Novitiate could start only on Oct. 20, 2021 instead of mid-June. A new batch of 23 Postulants were received to the Novitiate by Fr. John Wakhla SVD, the Vice Provincial Superior in a Holy Eucharist. We wish Fr. Emmanuel Varghese, the Novice Master and Fr. Godwin Veigas, Assistant Novice Master, Fr. George Thottian, the treasurer, and the extended team of confreres in the parish and school and we pray that they may have God’s blessings during the Novitiate program.

*“Everything is possible by the Power and Grace of the Holy Spirit.” - Arnold Janssen*

### BLESSING OF SNEHALAYA : A CENTRE FOR PSYCHO-SPIRITUAL AND DIALOGUE

The much awaited building for Psycho-Spiritual and Dialogue Center at Snehalaya is in its completion and will be blessed on Nov. 14, 2021 at 10.30 by Rev. Bp. Chacko Thottumarickal svd. The vision set for the center is “Enhancing life in its fullness leading to Divine, Human and furnished building meetings, seminars bigger groups. The natural beauty and atmosphere for all us make the best our center with the vision to benefit from



harmonious relationship with the Nature”. The specious and well-is now ready to host retreats, and workshops for small and fabulous surrounding with open space create a serene those who enter the center. Let use, encourage and promote likeminded groups who share our the richness of this institution.



## 4TH NATIONAL MER INDIA CONFERENCE



The 4th National Missionary Education and Research (MER) India Conference was organized at St. Arnold's Seva Sadan, Indore from 22nd to 24th November 2021 with the theme Envisioning God's Mission in 2020s: Living the mandate in the changing contexts of India.

While explaining the concept of the conference Fr. Jose K. SVD, the National & ASPAC MER Coordinator said, "the ever-changing Indian context of our mission calls us to rethink and re-image our ways of responding to the needs and challenges of our country. How can we take this life mission seriously and become credible and relevant disciples of the Lord in such a scenario is the theme of 2021 conference."

It was the fourth time over the past 15 years that SVD confreres came together under the banner of the MER-India Subzone. Discussions were held in the light of various individual researches and contexts with special reference to SVD Characteristic Dimensions, Papal documents, most recent General Chapters of our Society, Priorities of SVD Inter-provincial meetings, and individual concerns of our SVD India Provinces/Region and other most far-reaching policies of our government and contemporary events taking place in the country. Other than the academic scholars who presented their research papers, confreres and Holy Spirit sisters involved in various specialized ministries and pastoral works also participated in the conference.

Missiological Education and Research is a collaborative venture of people involved in different ministries in the Society. It is a forum created to gather insights from varieties of missions and identify serious challenges and responses within our context. During the three-day conference, confreres presented scholarly papers

on the contemporary mission of the church in India. Some veteran and young missionaries shared their experience, major problems and challenges they faced in their mission journey. They also suggested ways and means to become more relevant in the changing context of India today.

The conference honoured the writers among the MER members who have published books recently—Babu Karakombil SVD, Ivan D'Silva SVD, Clarence Srambical, Jose K.SVD, Savari Rayan SVD, Jacob Kavungal SVD, Ignatius Soreng SVD, and Arch Bishop Thomas Menaparambil SDB. Their new books were introduced and released by Bishop Chacko Thottumarickal SVD.

Fr. Joemon James SVD, the provincial of India Central Province during his inaugural address, stressed the paradigm shift in the way we do mission. To be an active and creative missionary means to adopt the changes of the world today in our thinking, in our doing and our being, he reiterated.

Fr. Babu Joseph SVD, the director of Satprakashan in his keynote address, threw light on the socio-political situation of the present time. In his presentation, he asked how Indian Christians reinvent themselves to be relevant in fast-changing times. He further asked in what way Christians need to represent themselves to the Indian society that was increasingly getting Hinduised. During the valedictory address Fr. Richard Quadras, highlighted the need for professionalism in our mission work and the importance of public relations.

Besides this, the conference also felicitated the New PhD scholars of MER. Six confreres and two Holy Spirit sisters had finished their Ph.D. in the last two years.



## MISSION CROSS

On 22nd August 2021 at Divine Word Seminary, Pune eleven newly ordained priests were given the Mission

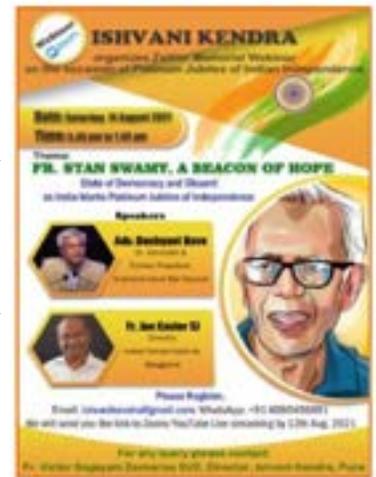


Cross during the solemn Eucharistic celebration presided over by Fr. Richard Mathias, the Provincial Superior of India Mumbai Province. The ceremony was held in a simple and meaningful way keeping in line with the tradition of our Society. Fr. Jesuraj Rayappan, the Rector of the Divine Word Seminary, welcomed and introduced everyone to the significance

of the event. The Provincial in his thought provoking homily emphasized that there might come numerous unknown crosses on our religious missionary journey and we should never miss our focus. Our focus must be on Christ the Crucified. Our readiness to serve Him in our neighbours would give us the strength to move on. He also emphasized the importance of giving our best in all our mission endeavours in spite of many challenges present in our life and mission contexts. After the homily Mission Cross was given to the new priests and they received it prayerfully. The conferring of the mission cross was a powerful symbolic gesture of being sent out to the Mission. This also marks the end of initial formation and beginning of the missionary service of the newly ordained priests. The event ended with the felicitation of the eleven priests and a fellowship meal. The path of the unknown is open before them and they are ready to step out. We wish each one of them God's choicest blessings and a happy religious-missionary-priestly journey ahead in the Society of the Divine Word.

## ZEITLER MEMORIAL WEBINAR ISHVANI KENDRA, PUNE

On the eve of the Platinum Jubilee of Indian Independence, on 14 August 2021, Ishvani Kendra organized a Zeitler Memorial Webinar focusing on the theme constitutional ideals and values of Indian democracy, particularly in the light of the arrest, custody and eventual death of Fr. Stan Swamy SJ, a tribal rights activist. The theme of the webinar was "Fr. Stan Swamy, a beacon of hope: State of Democracy and Dissent as India Marks Platinum Jubilee of Independence." Senior Advocate Dushyant Dave, a former President of Supreme Court Bar Council, dwelt on 'the state of democracy and dissent in the country,' while the Jesuit priest, Fr. Joe Xavier, the Director of Indian Social Institute in Bangalore, shared about the life and the prophetic mission of Fr. Stan Swamy. The participants applauded the speakers and the organizers for the choice of the topic.



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