

CBCB Newsletter

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Editorial

Pope Benedict XVI and 15,000 priest concelebrants closed the Year for the Priests with a solemn Eucharistic Celebration in Rome on the feast of Sacred Heart of Jesus. St. Peter's Square was teeming with rows of white vested priests from every corner of the globe, as well as 80 Cardinals and 350 Archbishops and Bishops. Hymns and texts alluding to the priestly vocation enabled the thousands of concelebrants and participants in this event to recollect themselves before the Eucharistic liturgy. As is customary for such events, the liturgy was conducted in several languages, with readings focusing on the theme of the Good Shepherd.

Pope Benedict's words were full of encouragement for the priests. The Bishop of Rome told them that the priesthood is 'a gift concealed in the earthen vessels which is ever anew, even amid human weakness, makes (God's) love concretely present in this world. "The Priest is not a mere office-holder, like those which every society needs in order to carry out certain functions", the Holy Father told the 15,000 priests participating in the Mass. "Instead, he does some thing which no human being can do of his own power: In Christ's name he speaks the words which absolves us of our sins and in this way he changes our entire life." At the end of the Mass, Benedict XVI entrusted the priests of the world to the Virgin Mary, asking her to make priests worthy of their 'sublime vocations' and to protect them from the 'suggestions of the Evil One.'

The Year for the Priests closed but a new era began with Three Year (2011 – 2013) pastoral plan for the Church in Bangladesh with a view of New Way of Being Church. In order to implement the Asian Vision of "New Way of Being Church" we have to animate Small Christian Communities at the base level and form the families as domestic Church. In our context we must adopt a common journey together with clear objectives and process to achieve objectives of the three year plan. The objectives may be to animate and form small Christian communities in the diocese, to evangelize the Christian Communities at the base with the power of the Word of God, to build Eucharistic Communities at the grass-root level and to provide formation and Catechesis on the Word and Breaking of the Bread. 2011 is dedicated to an assessment of the basic religio-cultural character of Bangladesh land and peoples, in the light of the Scripture/Gospel; 2012 to an overview and planning of the basic social life and 2013 becoming a self-giving Church.

As we journey together to achieve the common objectives of the Pastoral Plan we wish you all the best.

Feasibility Study of a Catholic University in Bangladesh

A special meeting was held on April 21, 2010 at the CBCB Centre to study the feasibility of a Catholic University in Bangladesh. Archbishop and all other Bishops, representatives (Provincials/delegates and Principals) of the Holy Cross Congregation attended the meeting. The meeting commenced with a short prayer and words of welcome by the President of CBCB and moderated by the Secretary General of CBCB.

Prior to the discussion there were two presentations. In the first presentation, Bishop Theotinius Gomes CSC highlighted the involvement of the Church in the field of education in Bangladesh and need of a Church's private university. Church played a very prominent role in primary and high school of education over centuries. Later on Church's entrance into college education in mid 20th century has been a prophetic role. Although further development in this sector has been slowed down, yet now entering into the new phase of university education will be a logical development in order to address the aggravating and persistent indiscipline in the field of education.

Bro. Bejoy Harold Rodriques CSC made a multi media summary presentation of his dissertation entitled "A Feasibility Study for a University in Bangladesh under Catholic Sponsorship" in USA in 2009. In his presentation Bro. Rodriques gave the background of Bangladesh, it's reality on literacy rate and educational situation, strength and weakness of Catholic community, educational needs, contribution of Catholic Church, statistics of diocesan and religious personnel and lay people with higher degrees. His presentation also included education policy in Bangladesh, management, structure, goals and objectives of higher education by the private sector. Based on the findings of higher education in the private sector he set some concrete recommendations including recommendation for further research. Finally Bro. Rodriques came to the conclusion that despite much enthusiasm and felt-need, the Catholic community in Bangladesh is not adequately prepared to establish a university at this time due to its shortage of personnel and resources. Attention must be paid to have quality education and it must be within the reach of average people.

After the above two presentations, open discussion took place. In principle all foresee the need of a University and the meeting of the CBCB with the Holy Cross is already a stirring of the Holy Spirit. There were some concrete proposals from the members present in the meeting. Considering the long history of the Holy Cross involved in the field of education, the CBCB refers to the three branches of Holy Cross to look into the matter seriously. A task force has been formed to collect data and in depth study with Bishop Patrick D'Rozario CSC, Bishop Theotinius Gomes CSC, Bro. Bejoy Harold Rodriques CSC (Convener), Fr. Hemonto P. Rozario CSC and Sr. Shikha L. Gomes CSC. The committee will submit a report to the CBCB in August 2010.

Special Meeting of CBCB

A Special meeting of Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB) was held on May 14, 2010 at the CBCB Centre. Archbishop and all other Bishops were present in the meeting. The Bishops studied the concept paper prepared by Bishop Theotinius Gomes CSC on the next three year (2011 – 2013) plan for the Church in Bangladesh and approved its general contents. A few more pastoral issues will be added to the text, considering the

situation of the dioceses. A more detailed paper for the theme for 2011 will be also prepared by Bishop Theotonius Gomes CSC.

In this special meeting Most Rev. Joseph Marino communicated important matters of Rome especially Ius Commissions which is related to sending out priests as missionaries to the developing Catholic communities, Statutes and Complementary Norms in conformity with the New Code of Canon Law, Re the Motu Proprio "Summorum Pontificum, Controversial issues concerning the apparition of Mary of Fatima and some other confidential matters of the Church in Bangladesh.

Bishop Moses to USA

Bishop Moses Costa CSC left for the United States of America on May 11 for Mission Appeals, to visit friends and benefactors. He returned on July 9, 2010.

Inter religious Dialogue Training Course

The Episcopal Commission for Christian Unity and Inter religious organized a training program on Inter religious Dialogue at Caritas Regional Office, Chittagong from May 14 – 19, 2010. Mr. Noel Gonsalves was the over all coordinator of the program. Bishop Bejoy D'Cruze OMI, Fr. James Cruze CSC, Chairman and Secretary respectively of the Commission and 56 other participants were present in that training program. The purpose of the program was to learn the teaching, activities, strategies of the Church and sharing of experience on inter religious dialogue, building up greater awareness and making those working for inter religious activities more efficient. The subject matter and resource persons of the training program were: Concept of Inter religious Dialogue (Bp. Patrick D'Rozario CSC), Documents of Second Vatican Council and its post Theology (Bp. Bejoy D'Cruze OMI), Spiritual Dialogue (Mr. Robi Christopher D'Costa), Attitude of Catholic Church towards other Religions (Bp. Theotonius Gomes CSC), Brief Theology of Universal Church on other Religions (Fr. Ajit V. Costa OMI), Documents of Asian Church and Asian Theology (Fr. Jacob Swapon Gomes), Pontifical Council for Inter Religious Dialogue and its activities (Fr. James Cruze CSC), Dialogue in the Pastoral Plan of the Church in Bangladesh (Fr. Patras Hasdak). The program also included dialogue of life, dialogue of activities, experience sharing in the field of dialogue, brief introduction of Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. Besides these, open discussion, group discussion and evaluation of the training program were held. The program ended with the distribution of certificates to the participants.

Bishop Bejoy to USA

Bishop Bejoy D'Cruze OMI left for the United States of America on June 23 for Mission Appeals, to visit friends and benefactors of the diocese. He returned on August 10, just before the CBCB Meeting.

Annual gathering of Dhaka City Seminarians and Aspirants

Like other years in the past, this year too, a whole day gathering of the seminarians and aspirants of Dhaka city was held at the Holy Spirit Major Seminary, Banani on May 15. A committee was formed with Fr. James Cruze CSC as convener to plan and execute the

programs of the day. Bishop Moses Costa CSC, Bishop Bejoy D'Cruze OMI and Bishop Subrato L. Howlader CSC, nine priests, two Brothers, 320 seminarians and aspirants were present on this auspicious occasion. The theme of the celebration was "Our Role as Kingly, Priestly and Prophetic Mission of the Church." The program began with a rally from the main entrance of the seminary. Bishop Moses formally inaugurated the program by releasing some pigeons and a banner. The Eucharistic celebration was presided over by Bishop Moses Costa. Talks were given on the theme by Bishop Bejoy D'Cruze OMI and Bishop Subrato L. Howlader CSC. Small skits based on the Bible were performed by the participants. The day long program ended with a football competition.

Seminar on Liturgical Guidelines of the Roman Missal

The Episcopal Commission for Liturgy and Prayer organized a seminar on Liturgical Guidelines of the Roman Missal on May 27 - 29, 2010 at the CBCB Centre. Bishop Theotinius Gomes CSC conducted sessions on General Instructions of the Roman Missal followed by general sharing. A draft was presented to the members present for the implementation of the liturgical guidelines in Bangladesh. Holy Eucharistic celebration was held following the guidelines. 35 persons from all the dioceses participated in this seminar. Fr. Patrick Gomes, secretary of the commission was the organizer.

Justice & Peace Workshop

Episcopal Commission for Justice and Peace and Caritas Bangladesh jointly organized a training program on July 5 – 9, 2010 at Caritas Development Institute (CDI) on Human Rights, Justice and Peace. 40 participated in that training program from six dioceses of Bangladesh. Mr. Joseph Rozario, senior faculty member of CDI was the coordinator of the training program. In the inaugural session Bishop Gervas Rozario, Chairman of the Commission for Justice and Peace, Mr. Prodip Stanley Gomes FCMA, Mr. Akhila D'Rozario and Ms. Irene T. Rozario of Caritas Bangladesh were present. Bishop Gervas narrated how human rights are being violated and highlighted on the importance of peace through settlement. The subject matters of the training program were: Participatory Method, Group Activities, Areas of Learning etc (Joseph Rozario and Shafiqul Islam); Social Teaching of the Church, Economic and Political Life in the light of Social Teaching of the Church, Human Rights, Development (Fr. Adam Pereira CSC, Fr. Dick Timm CSC & Fr. Bokul Rozario CSC); The Sacrament of Matrimony, Problems and Solutions of Marital Life (Fr. Proshanto T. Rebeiro & Fr. Mintu L. Palma); Social Dispute and Strategy to solve dispute (Mr. Chayon H. Rebeiro & Mr. Joseph Rozario). Archbishop Paulinus Costa of Dhaka Archdiocese and Dr. Benedict Alo D'Rozario, Executive Director of Caritas Bangladesh were present for the closing ceremony and distributed certificates to the participants. Fr. Albert T. Rozario, Secretary of the Commission, Pius Nanoar and Kusum Gregory among others organized the training program.

The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue

The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue organized a meeting on July 12 – 18, 2010 at Baan Phu Waan Pastoral Centre, Sam Phran, Thailand with its Asian members and consultants.

36 Asian officials, mainly Bishops attended the meeting including Council President Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran. The participants reported on three areas of dialogue in their own countries, "Christian Dialogue with Buddhists, Taoists, Confucianists and Shantoists"; Christian Dialogue with Hindus, Sikhs and Jains, and Dialogue with Muslims."

This is the fifth meeting of the Pontifical Council with its Asian consultants. The first one was held in 1988, also in Thailand. Members of the Council also visited Indonesia last year, from November 24 – December 1 and met with Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim leaders. Fr. James Cruze CSC, Secretary of the Episcopal Commission for Interreligious Dialogue and Christian Unity represented Bishop Bejoy D'Cruze OMI in that meeting of interreligious dialogue.

8th Asian Teachers Team Seminar

The 8th Asian Teachers Team Seminar was held at the CBCB Centre on July 26 – 31, 2010 attended by the 30 participants from the Philippines, Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan and host country Bangladesh. The theme of the seminar was "To Promote a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence through Education." Bishop Patrick D'Rozario CSC presided over the inaugural Eucharistic Celebration. Topics and resource persons of the seminar were: To Promote a Culture of Peace and Non-violence through Education in the context of Family and Society (Bishop Patrick D'Rozario CSC), To Promote a Culture of Peace and Non-violence through Education in the context of the Scripture (Bishop Theotonijs Gomes CSC), Class room Teaching and Value Education (Mr. Jyoti F. Gomes, Mr. Raihan Jamil and Dr. Anwar Hossain), Psychological aspects of promoting a culture of peace and non-violence through education (Dr. Bro. Bejoy Harold Rodrigues CSC and Sr. Gloria Lipi Rozario OLS), Matters of Asian Teachers Team (Fr. Herve Morissette CSC and Ms. Rosalinda Francia). Other matters of the seminar were group discussion, country reporting, election of Asian Team, excursion at BARACA, Savar, cultural program by the students of St. Francis Xavier Green Herald International School and Bottomley Home High School. Archbishop Paulinus Costa was the main celebrant for the closing Eucharistic Celebration and distributed the certificates to the participants. It may be noteworthy that Fr. Herve Morissette CSC and Rosalinda Francia are the Asian Chaplain and Asian Coordinator respectively. Bro. Subol Lawrence Rozario is the Chaplain of Bangladesh. He and his local teacher team members organized this great event.

Week long Training on Liturgical Music

Episcopal Commission for Liturgy and Prayer organized week long training – seminar on Liturgical Music at the Holy Spirit Major Seminary, Banani, Dhaka. 64 persons participated in that training program representing six dioceses and religious congregations of Bangladesh. The inaugural Eucharistic Celebration was presided over by Most Rev. Theotonijs Gomes, Chairman of the Commission for Liturgy and Prayer followed by devotional dance and lighting of the candles. Subject matters presented and resource persons in the training program were: Theological aspect of liturgical hymn, history of Bengali hymn and Gregorian Chant (Bishop Theotonijs Gomes CSC), Indian Music and notation in Hymn (Fr. Patrick Gomes and Fr. Leonard P. Rozario), Active participation in the liturgy (Fr. Louis Sushil Pereira), Inculturation in Liturgy and teaching self composed songs (Fr. Francis Gomes Sima and Mr. Dipok Bose). The training seminar had both theoretical and practical aspects. In addition to that, there were solo and group hymn

competitions among the participants. The Commission members headed by Fr. Patrick Gomes, secretary of the commission organized the training seminar. The closing Eucharistic Celebration was presided over by Fr. Patrick Gomes who also distributed the certificates among the participants.

Seminar for Priests and Religious

A day long seminar was held for the priests and the religious arranged by the Episcopal Commission for Clergy and Religious on August 6, 2010 at CBCB Centre. The theme of the seminar was "Our role and responsibility as priests and religious in the field of pastoral apostolate." The seminar began with the Holy Eucharistic Celebration presided over by Most Rev. Subrato Lawrence Howlader CSC, Chairman of the Commission for Clergy and Religious. Fr. Stanley C. Costa shared on the main theme of the seminar. In his sharing he explained three ministries and our participation in it. The ministries are: preaching, teaching and healing. Fr. Stanley gave importance to the spirituality as an effective means of pastoral apostolate. Spirituality is not something abstract but it is manifested in our prayer, behavior and attitude of the priests and religious. The seminar also included open discussion, group discussion and reporting. 53 participated in that seminar.

CBCB Meeting

The second meeting of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB) in 2010 was held on August 10 – 11, 2010 at CBCB Centre, Dhaka. Archbishop Paulinus Costa and all other Bishops were present at the meeting. The main discussions were as follows: Three Year Pastoral Plan for the Church in Bangladesh (concept paper, orientation to the Episcopal bodies, opening date etc.), Diocesan Finance Council, Laity Organizations and Chaplaincy, Caritas Evaluation, BILA on SCC and Asipa Training Program, Theme for the X FABC Plenary & 40th Anniversary of FABC, New Spiritual Director of HSMS, Counseling Centre, Progress on Catholic University in Bangladesh, Extension of facilities at CBCB Secretariat, CBCB Registration etc.

Most Rev. Joseph Marino and Msgr. Mark Kadima met the Bishops during the CBCB meeting. The Nuncio shared some important issues with the Bishops. As usual, the meeting began with the Holy Eucharistic celebration presided over by Most Rev. Paulinus Costa of Dhaka. The Nuncio invited the Bishops for dinner on August 10 at the Nunciature. Bishop Michael D'Rozario CSC, Bishop Emeritus of Khulna also joined the Bishops for dinner.

CCP National Workshop

Christian Communities Program, a desk under Episcopal Commission for Laity organized a national workshop for the Bishops, selected number of priests, religious, laity and Committee members at CBCB Centre on August 12 – 13, 2010. All the Bishops and 80 persons participated in that workshop from six dioceses. The purpose of the workshop was to become aware of the importance of Small Christian Communities (SCC) in the Universal, Asian and Bangladesh Church and to share experiences of SCC and pastoral planning in the light of SCC. SCC is a process in the Church to form communion of

communities. FABC states, "It is the Gospel and the Spirit of Jesus that assembles them." It manifests a new way of being Church. The workshop began with a short prayer. The subject matters and resource persons of the workshop were: Pastoral direction of Universal, Asian and Bangladesh Church on SCC (Bishop Theotonius Gomes CSC), Sharing of Experiences in SCC (Fr. Albin Gomes & Team members), Pastoral Planning on SCC (Bishop Patrick D'Rozario CSC). Other matters of the program were Bible sharing conducted by CCP Team, Diocese-wise planning and sharing. The concluding Eucharistic Celebration was presided over by Archbishop Paulinus Costa. In his homily the Archbishop encouraged the participants to be more active in the Church. SCC started in Bangladesh in 1976 and celebrated its silver jubilee in 2001.

National Workshop of EC – for Family Life

Episcopal Commission for Family Life organized a national workshop at CBCB Centre on August 19 – 21, 2010 with the theme, "Pastoral Care of the Church to the Families to face the Challenges in the age of Globalization." Altogether 95 persons participated in that workshop all from six dioceses. Archbishop Paulinus Costa DD was present as chief guest while Bishop Ponen Paul Kubi CSC presided over the inaugural session. Archbishop in his speech narrated the challenges that families are facing now a days and urged all to commit for a better family life. The contents and resource persons of the workshop were: Globalization and challenges of Family Life (Bishop Theotonius Gomes CSC); Family Spirituality in the light of 21st Century (Bishop Gervas Rozario); Duty of the Family and Pastoral Care to save Life (Fr. Mintu L. Palma & CH-NFP Team); Pastoral Care in the Parishes: Means and Prospect (Fr. David S. Gomes & Couple from Dharendra); Sharing on the problem of migration and the challenges they face in the Families (Mr Mrs. Mrigen & Putul Hagidok); Working Parents and Challenges of the Families (Mr Mrs. Brien & Anna Sampson); Inter-religious Marriage: Challenges of the Catholic Church and Expectation from the Church (Mr Mrs. Ashim & Monira Gomes); Challenges of the Youth in Today's Family Life (Ms. Christina Baroi); Marriage Encounter: A Movement of Family Pastoral Service (Mr Mrs. Marcus & Florence Gomes) etc. The participants prepared Diocese-wise planning and made a statement of recommendations. The concluding Eucharistic Celebration was presided over by Bishop Ponen Paul Kubi CSC, Chairman of Episcopal Commission for Family Life.

Congress Sends Messages to Pope, Asian Laity

The Congress of Asian Catholic Laity in Seoul, South Korea, has ended with messages for Pope Benedict and for lay Catholics in Asia.

The message to Pope Benedict highlighted the specific mission of the laity "not only in building up their local Christian communities but also in making new pathways for the Gospel in every sector of society," AsiaNews reports.

The message also underscored the inadequacy of the tasks given to the "small flock" of Asian Christians.

Yet despite everything, congress participants were enthusiastic because they knew that "the peoples of Asia need Jesus Christ and his Gospel" and that this continent "thirsts for the living water that only He can give".

“Holy Father,” the message said, “we live in difficult times and it seems that almost everywhere the Church faces strong headwinds and waves that prevail against her. At times, we even fear being shipwrecked. But, in these moments, we hear again those reassuring words of the Lord: “Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid (Mt, 14:27).”

The message to the Catholic laity of Asia stressed the “greatness and timeliness of this mission that stems from the grace of our Baptism.” Thus, “bearing witness to Jesus Christ, the universal Savior” is the “great mission”, the “supreme service and greatest gift that the Church can offer to the people of Asia.”

“Asia is currently undergoing unprecedented processes of growth and social transformation. Its immense population and rapid economic growth make it a significant epicenter at the international level. Nevertheless, it faces serious problems regarding the promotion of freedom, justice, solidarity and the development of more humane living conditions. In light of this, we are convinced that the unique Christian contribution could be essential towards the resolution of these problems for the good of our people.”

The message is full of gratitude for “those who bear courageous witness to their faith in civil societies where the religious freedom of the individual is either denied or restricted, or those who suffer hostility from religious fundamentalists, or those who because of their faith, are threatened and persecuted by government authorities.

“How true, also for our times and continent is the maxim of Tertullian: “The blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church!”

“Take courage friends!” the message said. “The Risen Christ has won for us the final victory! Evil no longer has the final word. Love has proved itself stronger than death, hatred, indifference! The power of the God’s grace strengthens our weakness.”

The message to Asian Catholic laity was read by Prof Thomas Han, who was the driving force and organizer of the congress. (Source: CathNews Asia)

Bishop Subrato to Rome for Seminar of Bishops

Bishop Subrato L. Howlader CSC left for Rome on August 29, 2010 to attend a seminar of the newly consecrated bishops. Thirty nine recently ordained bishops from Asia have joined 102 bishops from around the world in Rome organized by the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

The bishops are from 40 nations: 57 bishops from Africa, 39 bishops from Asia, 4 Bishops from America, and 2 Bishops from Oceania, Fides reports.

The seminar, underway at the Pontifical College of St. Paul the Apostle, began with the celebration of Vespers on Sunday, September 5, and will conclude on Saturday, September 18 with a concelebrated Mass at the tomb of the Apostle St. Peter.

The aim of the seminar, which continues a tradition started in 1994 by the Missionary Congregation, is to provide all newly appointed bishops with time to pray, reflect more deeply on their life and on their episcopal ministry, which especially in the early years may hold difficulties and problems.

The first talk, which began the session this morning, covered “The Reality of the Mission Ad Gentes in the World and the Church Today,” by Fr. Alberto Trevisiol, IMC. The Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, Cardinal Ivan Dias, and the Secretary, Archbishop Robert Sarah, will illustrate the origin, development, and skills of the Missionary Congregation and the entities that depend from it (universities, institutes, colleges).

On the morning of Friday, September 10, Archbishop Piergiuseppe Vacchelli, Assistant Secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and President of the Pontifical Mission Societies, will present the structure, working areas, and activities of the four Pontifical Societies.

Among the speakers who will give talks at the seminar are: Cardinal Antonio Canizares Llovera (Munus sanctificandi), Cardinal George Cottier (spirituality of the bishop), Cardinal William Levada (Munus docendi), Cardinal Francis George (Munus gubernandi), Cardinal Claudio Hummes (fatherhood towards priests), Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski (formation in seminaries and of the clergy), Cardinal Attilio Nicora (administrative service), Cardinal Frank Rode (consecrated life), Cardinal Walter Kasper (interreligious and ecumenical dialogue), Archbishop Nicholas Eterovic (Synod of Bishops), Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli (using media for evangelization), Archbishop Rino Fisichella (family and life), Archbishop Dominique Mamberti (relations with states), Bishop Joseph Clemens (participation of the laity in the life and mission of the Church), Archbishop Giampaolo Crepaldi (social doctrine), Archbishop Leo Burke (administration of justice) (Source: Cathnews).

Board of Editors:

Fr. Anton Rex OMI, Fr. Subroto B. Gomes, Mr. Atul Francis Sarkar

Published by CBCB Secretariat, 24/C Asad Avenue, Mohammadpur, Dhaka – 1207

E mail: cbcbsec@dhaka.net

Web site: www.cbcbsec.org