

CBCB Newsletter

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Editorial

The Jubilee Year of the Apostle Paul has been followed by a year dedicated to priests. The theme for the priestly year is "Faithfulness of Christ, Faithfulness of Priests." The Apostle to the Gentiles lived and worked for Christ; for Christ he suffered and died. As we went through the life of St. Paul, we found that he was faithful to the point of shedding his blood for the faith. Priests can find no better model than him. But for this celebration, another great soul is presented to priests for imitation: St. John Mary Vianney, the Cure of Ars. On the 150th anniversary of his death, Pope Benedict XVI declares him as "patron saint of all priests of the world."

St. John Mary was certainly not a towering mind as St. Paul. Yet in his simplicity and humility, in his pastoral care for sinners, he is considered a "doctor of souls." As a priest, he had to 'wrestle with the Word of God' so that he could be found as a fitting messenger of the Lord of hosts.

Once again we celebrate Christmas, the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. The birth of Jesus is not something to be consigned to the past. Everything stands in reference to it. It is not something to be passively remembered. It is an occasion for active celebration and renewal of faith, for Jesus is the 'Living One' whom we encounter in the mystery of our lives. In the birth of the Savior as the Holy Father Pope John Paul II said in Terio Millennio Adveniente, "we see not simply a case of man seeking God, but of God who comes in Person to speak to man of himself and to show him the path by which he may be reached". In Jesus Christ, God not only speaks to man but also seeks him out. This is because God loves him from the very beginning; man is his special possession in a way unlike other creatures.

The hopes and fears of all the years are met in the crib. Men and women continue suffer, to struggle, and to love- to find the meaning of their lives. In the Son of God, whom we call Emmanuel, made man, their search comes to an end, their yearnings find fulfillment. It is because in Jesus, God searches for man and woman - and finds them. Therefore the Christmas happiness need not come from expensive gifts, lavish parties or colorful decorations but from small gestures such a kind thought, a small smile, a warm touch, and a joyful greeting. Let this Christmas be an occasion to welcome Infant Jesus as savior and master. He wants to be born into our hearts. Let us become instruments of sharing of peace, joy, happiness and love.

We wish all our valued readers and benefactors a Merry Christmas and Prosperous New Year 2010.

Meeting of the CBCB with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

Address of the Most Rev. Paulinus Costa, Archbishop of Dhaka and President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh in the Meeting of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh with the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence Jamuna on 27 August 2009.

Honorable Prime Minister,

On behalf of the members of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh, I thank you sincerely for receiving us today on such short notice. We the Bishops in Bangladesh, heading the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Dhaka, and in the Dioceses of Chittagong, Dinajpur, Khulna, Mymensingh and Rajshahi, bring to you the greetings and wishes from the entire Christian Community in Bangladesh. Joyfully we recall an earlier meeting of the then Bishops of Bangladesh with your Father during the first months of our Independence, as they prayed and wished with him God's blessings for our new nation and its peoples.

As Bishops and religious heads of our Community, we are first and above all pastors of our believers in our country, and our primary responsibility is to assist our people to grow in this land closer to God and their neighbors, as we teach them about the ways of God, encourage them to live an upright life and call them to help those most in need. As Religious heads here we also keep in our heart all our Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist brothers and sisters as also brothers and sisters of every race, religion and culture in this land, praying to God for their spiritual and earthly well being.

We especially pray for our Muslim brothers and sisters in this holy season of Ramadhan, for their spiritual renewal of purity and holiness of life through fasting and prayer.

We keep in our prayers you as well, who are called, along with all your colleagues and co-workers, to lead and guide our people and nation in these very important and challenging times of our land. We pray for all who are truthfully engaged in guiding and governing the affairs of our land.

Your Excellency,

With everyone we recognize that the religious, racial and cultural identities of every person in this land are truly very rich and cherished patrimony of all, and that they need to be fostered and given national protection, especially for those peoples who are minorities and marginalized. We are aware that our many poorer marginal and minority groups, among whom the indigenous peoples, live under added challenges and at times have great difficulties for survival and advancement, difficulties as regards ownership of land and opportunities in the national life. True democracy, to which you yourself have diligently and devotedly subscribed all your life, -- that democracy is truly achieved when all peoples, including minority and marginal and of whatever culture, race and religion, have the opportunity to participate adequately in all aspects of national life. We wish that your Government will be able to foster that true democracy in the political, social, cultural and religious aspects of life.

In this we are happy to note your concerns for the poorer peoples of the country, your efforts that the hungry can have enough to eat and to have at least minimum necessities of life. We express our thanks for your efforts before and renewed efforts now to preserve peace and prosperity among the indigenous peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, and wish that similar efforts will continue for all other such groups.

We the small Christian community of Bangladesh desire to live in continued peace and religious freedom in our land, as we desire the same for all other peoples here.

We are happy to be informed that your administration has decided to grant visas for missionaries for longer period at a time, for three to five years. We are grateful that this has started to be implemented. We are also appreciative of your personal interest and intervention for the permission for our new Teachers' Training College, which has just opened on July 1, 2009. And we express our satisfaction that you saw fit recently to name a Christian and a member of the indigenous community as State Minister in your Government.

Your Excellency,

Along with fostering religious life and values for our community and wishing for the same for others, the Church in this country over the past four hundred years has been very active and diligent in the field of education, health care and charitable and social services for all peoples, irrespective of race, culture or religion, and especially for the marginal, in a spirit of option for the poor.

We have provided health care services especially to the neglected peoples of the most remote areas, and we continue in that service. Our charitable and social developmental services have been and are being carried out very extensively, especially in times of disasters, by the Church and its organization Caritas. We desire to be able to continue in these very meaningful services and acts of charity and love for all distressed peoples, the sick, the disabled and similar others.

Very important for us is to continue our participation with the nation in the field of education. We already have an extensive program in this, well attended by our young peoples of all religions, races and cultures, not only for mere academic and intellectual formation, but also for moral and ethical formation. We surely wish to continue to be active and effective in this field. As the nation now prepares for fresher policies in education, we desire that these policies will ensure greater discipline and regularity in the administrative and academic areas of education. On our part we wish to be in effective contact with the highest authorities of the Ministry of Education to continue in the proper administration and functioning of our educational institutions so dear to us. We wish to have similar contacts with authorities of the Government on other matters as well.

We need always to prepare and form personnel of our community as Priests, Religious Brothers and Sisters and member of the faithful who will be dedicated to render dedicated services for others. With that in mind we are actively considering to establish a Christian College of Philosophy and Theology in Dhaka.

Honorable Prime Minister, in conclusion I express on behalf of my brother bishops sincere thanks for this opportunity to be with you today. We, the entire Christian community, joyfully remember in our prayer and worship everyone of this land, all our national dignitaries, your colleagues and co-workers, and for you yourself and members of your family.

Report of the Meeting of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB) with the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh

Present at the Meeting were:

Sheikh Hasina, Honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh
Archbishop Paulinus Costa, Archbishop of Dhaka, President of CBCB
Archbishop Joseph Marino, Papal Nuncio to Bangladesh
Bishop Patrick D'Rozario CSC, Bishop of Chittagong, Vice President of CBCB
Bishop Moses Costa CSC, Bishop of Dinajpur, Secretary General of CBCB
Bishop Theotonius Gomes CSC, Auxiliary of Dhaka
Bishop Subrato L. Howlader CSC, Auxiliary of Chittagong
Bishop Bejoy D'Cruze OMI, Bishop of Khulna
Bishop Ponen P. Kubi CSC, Bishop of Mymensingh
Bishop Gervas Rozario, Bishop of Rajshahi
Fr. Subroto B. Gomes, Asst. Secretary General, CBCB
Ambassador M. Ziauddin
Mr. M A Karim, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister
Mr. Abul Kalam Azad, Press Secretary
Mr. Mollah Waheduzzaman, PMO Secretary

In the beginning Archbishop Joseph Marino, Papal Nuncio expressed his gratitude to the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for some of the important decisions taken by her government. At the same time he mentioned that the assembly of the Catholic Bishops' Conference is named "CBCB". CBCB is the highest body of the Catholic Church in Bangladesh.

Archbishop Paulinus Costa introduced to the Prime Minister the members of the CBCB.

Then the Archbishop read prepared text (cf above).

The Honorable Prime Minister reiterated her belief and commitment for a non-communal and democratic Bangladesh. She gratefully recalled that like the people of other religions, the Christian community also made their supreme sacrifice to attain Independence in 1971. There are representatives of Buddhists, Hindus and Christians (Advocate Promode Mankhin, a Catholic from Mymensingh) along with Muslims in her government. Her desire is to make Bangladesh a 'Model of harmony and peaceful' co existence of peoples of all religions in South East Asia. She also mentioned about the existence of various indigenous groups in Bangladesh and her concern of their development. In her previous term she took steps to improve the quality of life including economic development of the people. Her government is committed to integral development of the people in Bangladesh, where people of all religions can live with their rights.

The Bishops expressed their gratitude to the Honorable Prime Minister for some of the important decisions taken by her government especially for extending visas to missionaries for three to five years, appreciative for the permission that she gave to open the Archbishop T. A Ganguly Teachers' Training College in Dhaka, expressed satisfaction for Advocate Promode Mankhin, a Catholic from Mymensingh diocese named as State Minister of Cultural Affairs.

The Honorable Prime Minister reiterated her belief and commitment for a non-communal and democratic Bangladesh. She gratefully recalled that like the people of other religions, the Christian community also made their supreme sacrifice to attain Independence in 1971. There are representatives of Buddhists, Hindus and Christians along with Muslims in her government. Her desire is to make Bangladesh a 'Model of harmony and peaceful' co existence of peoples of all religions in South East Asia.

The Bishops raised the concern of the Church regarding the new regulation for Managing Committee / Governing Body of school and colleges where chairman, principal / headmaster, and guardian and teacher representatives form the School Managing Committee. As a matter of fact it is not sufficient to have only the guardian and teacher representatives in the School Managing Committee but also some good persons interested in education. Moreover it is difficult to find guardians competent in education in the rural areas. Provision for recruitment of two more educationist / interested persons in education in the school managing committee would allow the missionary schools to do the education ministry more efficiently in Bangladesh. She gave a patient hearing and assured the Bishops to see to this matter. The Prime Minister appreciated the contribution of missionary schools, their regularity and discipline. She expected that schools and academic institutions will always uphold that level.

The Bishops briefed the Prime Minister on the initiatives for social and human development through Caritas Bangladesh as well as by dioceses recently especially for Sidr victims. She insisted that cyclone shelters should be used as multi purpose buildings. As Bangladesh is a natural calamity prone zone, more efforts should be made for the well being of the people especially for victims of calamities.

The Bishops also shared that they would like to have a regular liason with the Education Ministry to discuss education matters. The Prime Minister directed that for any kind of discussion regarding education matters and policies that the Church authorities may see the Education Minister.

The Prime Minister shared that she is quite aware of the land problem in Mymensingh and Chittagong Hill Tracts for want of land registration. The Land Ministry is trying to make sure regarding proprietorship of land in order to stop exploitation especially among the tribal peoples. At the same time she shared with regret on the deforestation in Modhupur and elsewhere and grabbing of land in the pretext of land leasing in Banderban.

The Bishops appreciated the Prime Minister for her vision and government policy regarding option for the poor which is similar to that of Christianity and hoped that it will continue in the years to come. She reiterated that her political position is for the poor.

Fulfilling the basic needs (food, education, shelter, health etc) of the people is her political position and not for personal interest or luxury.

The Bishops also apprised the Prime Minister that the Christians in Bangladesh remember her and the government in prayers. She was thankful for that and sought for continued prayers to carry out her responsibility effectively.

It may be mentioned that the Bishops as a Conference met the Father of the Nation, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1972.

The meeting ended at 5:50 P.M.

Catholic State Minister for Cultural Affairs

Advocate Promod Mankhin MP of Biroidakuni parish under Mymensingh diocese was inducted as State Minister for Cultural Affairs by the present government. It is for the first time in the history of Bangladesh that a Catholic has been promoted to the Cabinet. Different groups including a delegation on behalf of Archbishop Paulinus Costa congratulated the State Minister for his outstanding achievement.

Appointments of Inter diocesan Institutions 2009

The CBCB appointed Fr. Shorot F. Gomes as Rector and Fr. Paul Gomes as Vice Rector of the Holy Spirit Major Seminary, Banani, Dhaka for a period of three years. The CBCB also appointed Fr. Sebastian Tudu of Dinajpur diocese as professor and residential staff member of the Holy Spirit Major Seminary. These appointments are effective from July 1, 2009.

CBCB Meeting

The Second Meeting of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB) of this year was held on August 26 - 28, 2009 at the CBCB Centre, Dhaka. All the Bishops were present at the meeting. The main discussion of the meeting were as follows: Year for Priests, FABC Matters, Workshop for the secretaries of the Episcopal Commissions, Reshuffling of the Episcopal Commissions, Finalizing terms for evaluation of Caritas Bangladesh, On-going formation of priests, Relationship between dioceses and Episcopal Commissions, Marriage Tribunal, Liturgical Norms, Meeting with the Major Superiors of BCR, Meeting with the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and so on.

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 27 at the Nunciature. The retired Bishop Michael D'Rozario CSC and Bishop Linus Gomes SJ also joined the Bishops for dinner at the Nunciature.

Climate Change Summits

Bishop Theotonijs Gomes CSC, President of Caritas Bangladesh attended a summit on Climate Change in the United Nations Head Quarters in New York. Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina attended the same summit. The next conference on climate change

was held in Delhi on October 7 - 9, 2009. Bishop Theotonius Gomes CSC attended the conference. Another summit was held in Copenhagen, Denmark on Climate Change in December. Bishop Theotonius Gomes CSC attended that summit too. You are aware of the fact that Bangladesh has already been facing the impact of climate change such as frequent cyclones, erratic rain, drought and increased salinity. There is a prediction that Bangladesh would face a loss of 7.4 percent of rice production annually due to climate change. The experts suggested dredging rivers for preserving surface water for irrigation during dry season, increasing the heights of the homesteads in the coastal districts, large parts of which are likely to be inundated due to rise of sea level, and developing stress tolerant crops to face the calamities.

Fr. Timm honoured

Most Rev. Josph Marino, Papal Nuncio to Bangladesh handed over a medal and parchment to Fr. Richard Timm CSC at a simple ceremony at the Vatican Embassy on September 30, 2009. The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace gave the award to Fr. Richard Timm, a Holy Cross Priest in recognition of his distinguished work and contribution in the last 58 years for the people of Bangladesh in the fields of education, charity works, justice and peace.

Terming Fr. Timm as a teacher, author, eminent scientist and advocate for human rights, Vatican diplomat Archbishop Joseph Marino said that Fr. Timm made immense contribution to the growing of Caritas Bangladesh, a Catholic organization for social and human development. Other speakers recalled Fr. Timm's role in reporting to the US government in Washington regarding the atrocities, which took place during the Liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971. Fr. Timm in his sharing said that his purpose on earth was to serve the will of God by serving people, especially those neglected and in need. At the age of 84, he is still active in the field of human rights and teaching at the Holy Spirit Major Seminary, Banani, Dhaka.

Renewal Course at St. Anselm

Bishop Moses Costa CSC, Bishop of Dinajpur along with Fr. Proshanto T. Rebeiro, Fr. James Cruze CSC and Fr. Samson Marandy attended a seven week long (June 27 - August 14, 2009) renewal course at St. Anselm, England. Prior to that course Bishop Moses Costa CSC had been to USA and Canada to visit his friends, relatives and benefactors. Fr. Gabriel Corraya, the former Rector of the Holy Spirit Major Seminary, Banani, Dhaka left on September 28, 2009 for St. Anselm, England to attend a nine-month long renewal course

Marriage Encounter Weekend

The third weekend of the Marriage Encounter of this year was held at the CBCB Centre, Mohammadpur on September 10 – 12, 2009. Fourteen couples attended this weekend. Fr. Ignatius Gomes SJ and other board members of Marriage Encounter Bangladesh conducted the sessions.

Retreat in Taiwan by Cor Unum

Cor Unum organized a retreat for Asia in Taiwan on September 7 - 11, 2009 to form people who work for charity. It was meant for the president and directors of charitable agencies in the dioceses. Bishop Theotonijs Gomes CSC, President of Caritas Bangladesh, Dr. Benedict Alo D'Rozario, Executive Director of Caritas Bangladesh, regional directors, chaplains and a few others engaged in charitable activities (altogether 18 from Bangladesh) participated in that retreat.

New Secretary at the Nunciature

Monsignor Mark Kadima arrived in Dhaka to take up his duties as Secretary of the Apostolic Nunciature. After his ordination to the Priesthood in 1993, Msgr. was assigned as Vice Rector and later on Rector of St. Peter's Seminary in the Diocese of Kakamega in Kenya from 1993 to 1999. In 1999, he entered the Academy in Rome to begin his studies for the diplomatic services of the Holy See. Thereafter, he has served in the Apostolic Nunciatures of Colombia (2001 - 2002), Angola (2002 - 2005) and Ghana (2005 - 2009). We wish you all the best, Msgr. Mark Kadima.

Meanwhile Msgr. Kurian Mathew Vayalunka left Dhaka to take up his new duties in Hungary on August 18, 2009. Archbishop Joseph Marino, Papal Nuncio to Bangladesh arranged a party at the Nunciature to bid him farewell on August 17, 2009 where most of the Bishops, some priests and religious, laity and a few diplomats were present. Archbishop Paulinus Costa of Dhaka also arranged a thanksgiving ceremony for Msgr. Kurian Mathew at the Archbishop's House on the 7th August, 2009. Most of the priests of Dhaka city were present to express their sincere thanks and gratitude to Msgr. Kurian Mathew who served the Nunciature in Dhaka from March 2007 to August 2009. Msgr. Kurian travelled to all the dioceses of Bangladesh for various occasions. Congratulations Msgr! We wish you a successful mission in Hungary, Msgr. Kurian.

Bishop Ponen to Europe

Bishop Ponen Paul Kubi CSC of Mymensingh diocese left on 12 September for European countries which will include Italy, Germany, Czech Republic and Switzerland to visit friends and benefactors.

Archbishop to USA

Archbishop Paulinus Costa left for USA on September 30 to attend the silver jubilee celebration of the Bangladeshi American Organizations in New York and New Jersey in the United States of America. He returned on October 14, 2009.

Training Program of Inter-religious Dialogue

The Episcopal Commission for Christian Unity and Inter-religious arranged a training program on Inter Church denominations at the Pastoral Centre, Rajshahi on September 9 - 12, 2009. Fr. Patras Hasdak was the over all coordinator of the training program.. Bishop Bejoy D'Cruze OMI, Chairman of the Commission, Bishop Gervas Rozario of Rajshahi and 50 other participants were present in that training program. The purpose of the program was sharing of experiences, reflection and planning and teaching of the Church on Inter Church dialogue, building up greater awareness and making those working for Inter Church activities more efficient. The subject-matter of the training program were: Concept of Inter Church (Bp. Bejoy D'Cruze OMI), Documents of Second Vatican Council and its

post Theology (Fr. Patrick Gomes), Brief history of Ecumenical movement (Fr. Jacob S. Gomes), Eastern and Asian Churches (Mr. Robi Christopher D'Costa), Relationship with other Churches in the perspective of Bangladesh (Rev. Emmanuel Mollick), Liturgy and Sacraments (Fr. Sushil Louis Pereira), Teaching of the Catholic Church on Inter Church Marriage (Fr. William Murmu). Open discussion and evaluation of the training program was conducted by Mr. Robi Rozario, Mr. Tarsicius Soren, Fr. James Cruze CSC and Fr. Patras Hasdak. On the last day of the program an Inter Church prayer service was held which was led by Mr. Robi D'Costa and Fr. Patras Hasdak.

EC for Clergy and Religious

The Episcopal Commission for Clergy and Religious arranged a day long seminar for the Clergy and Religious of Bangladesh. The program began with the Eucharistic celebration presided over by Bishop Gervas Rozario of Rajshahi and Chairman of the Episcopal Commission for Clergy and Religious. Fr. Patrick S. Gomes shared on the Importance of Service in the life of the Priests and Religious. 66 priests and religious participated in that program. The program also included group discussion, reporting, experience sharing and planning for the future etc. Sr. Mary Dipti SMRA, secretary of the commission organized the seminar.

EC for Christian Education

The Episcopal Commission for Christian Education arranged a day long program for the Major Superiors, selected number of Headmaster/Headmistress, Commission Members and few others interested in education. Altogether 42 participated in the program. Bishop Theotinius Gomes CSC, Bishop Patrick D'Rozario CSC were among the participants. The main discussion was the new education policy, formation of managing committee and discussion on the Bangladesh Catholic Education Board. It may be mentioned that the CBCB has recently formed Bangladesh Catholic Education Board (formerly known as Episcopal Commission for Christian Education) in their last meeting held in November.

Seminar on Liturgical Guidelines

The Episcopal Commission for Liturgy and Prayer organized a seminar on Liturgical Guidelines of the Roman Missal on October 19 - 20, 2009 at the CBCB Centre. Bishop Ponen P. Kubi CSC, Chairman of the Commission inaugurated the seminar on October 19, 2009. Bishop Theotinius Gomes CSC conducted sessions on Rites and Rituals in the Roman Liturgy (some basic guidelines) and Fr. Patrick Gomes on Some General Instructions of the Roman Missal. The seminar also included group work on the guidelines, presentation of group sharing, film show on Roman Liturgy. Fr. Patrick Gomes, secretary of the commission was the organizer.

BDPF Retreats

Bangladesh Diocesan Priests' Fraternity (BDPF) organized two retreats for the diocesan priests and Bishops of Bangladesh at RRF Training Centre, Ramnagor, Jessore.. Altogether 146 attended the retreats. Some OMI priests also joined the retreat along with the diocesan priests. Retreats were conducted by Fr. Frank Quinlivan CSC and Fr. Francesco Rapacioli PIME. The theme of the retreat was "The Ministry of the Word of God and Commitment of the Diocesan Priests."

Catholic Doctors Workshop

Bangladesh Catholic doctors say that a recent workshop for them provided welcome encouragement as they try their best to follow Church teachings on life issues in the face of societal pressures. The annual gathering of the catholic doctors took place at CBCB Centre, Mohammadpur on October 16, 2009 organized by the Episcopal Commission for Health Care. Dr. Sebastian Halder, President of the Association of Bangladesh Catholic Doctors (ABCD) applauded the Church for organizing the event. He said, "Coming together helps strengthen our fraternity and commitment to the service." The Church health commission counts about 75 Catholic doctors in Bangladesh. Dr. Edward Pollob Rozario, a Church activist for HIV/AIDS awareness program pointed out that Catholic doctors face many challenges in Bangladesh. He said, "It is difficult for Christians to enter this profession because Catholic doctors sometimes face discrimination for refusal to perform abortion. Bishop Theotonius Gomes CSC, Chairman of the Episcopal Commission for Health Care encouraged the doctors in their opposition to abortion. Bishop said, "Human life is holy. No one has the right to take away lives." Bishop Theotonius Gomes also mentioned to them that although birth control is being promoted in the country, yet "you need to stand strong in practicing Christian values in your service to patients." (Source: Cath News)

ASIPA Program

A six member delegation (Bishop Subrato L. Howlader CSC, Fr. Albin Gomes, Sr. Mary Benedicta SMRA, Fr. Gopal John Biswas, Fr. Anthony Hasdak, Mr. Robi Dores) attended the 5th General Assembly of ASIPA arranged by the FABC Office of Laity and Family in Davao, Philippines. The theme of the celebration was 'Do this in memory of me' (Lk. 22:19 "Bread Broken and Word Shared in SCC. The group left Dhaka on October 15 for the Philippines and visited some important places in Manila before leaving for Davao. They returned to Dhaka on October 28, 2009.

Meeting with the Education Minister

A six member delegation of the Catholic Education Development Board met Nurul Islam Nahid, the Honorable Education Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. The members of the delegation were: Bishop Theotonius Gomes CSC, Bishop Patrick D'Rozario CSC, Fr. Benjamin Costa CSC, Bro. Benoy Stephen Gomes CSC, Sr. Mary Dipti SMRA, Mr. Jyoti F. Gomes and Brig (Retd.) John Gomes. Archbishop Joseph Marino, Papal Nuncio to Bangladesh also joined the delegation. The main points of discussion were: newly promulgated education policy, management committee of the academic institutions and transfer of the headmaster and teachers. The Education Minister gave a very patient hearing and gave an assurance to do whatever possible.

National Youth Day Celebration

The Episcopal Commission for Youth organized 24th National Youth Day celebration at Biroidakuni Catholic Church under Mymensingh diocese on November 5 - 9, 2009. 300 youth delegates and diocesan coordinators and youth representatives attended this grand annual celebration. The theme of the celebration was "We have our hope set on the living God" (1 Tim 4:10). Bishop Moses Costa CSC, Chairman of the Episcopal Commission for Youth and Bishop Ponon P. Kubi CSC, Bishop of Mymensingh diocese were present at the

inaugural session and celebrated the opening and closing masses. Advocate Promode Mankhin MP, State Minister for Cultural Affairs paid a visit and encouraged the youth to get involved more in the activities of the State and the Church.

The celebration also included a rally, talk on the theme by Fr. Ponkoj Pereira SJ, workshop conducted by Sr. Mary Lily SMRA, Fr. Stanley Costa and Mr. Robi Christopher D'Costa, group work, heritage corner, drama, band show etc. Fr. Patrick S. Gomes, national youth coordinator and his associates arranged the program (Reported by the Episcopal Commission for Youth)

FABC Office for Social Communication

The FABC Office for Social Communication organized a workshop for the representatives of Social Communications in Bali, Indonesia on November 16 - 21, 2009. The theme of the workshop was 'Social Communication: Moral Challenge'. The 39 participants of the workshop were the Chairman, secretary and members of Episcopal Commissions of 13 Asian countries. Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli, President of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications was present at that workshop. In his sharing Archbishop Celli highlighted the importance of local music, customs, art and literature for proclamation of the Word of God. Bishop Gervas Rozario and Fr. Kamal A. Corraya, Chairman and secretary respectively of the Episcopal Commission for Social Communication attended the workshop from Bangladesh.

FABC Central Committee

The FABC Central Committee meeting was held in FABC Central Secretariat, FABC Documentation Centre, South Sathorn, Bangkok on November 30 - December 2, 2009. All the Presidents of Episcopal Commissions are the members of the Central Committee. Archbishop Paulinus Costa attended the meeting in Bangkok.

FABC Office for Consecrated Life

The FABC Office for Consecrated Life arranged a symposium in Hua Hin, Thailand on November 16 - 21, 2009. The theme of the symposium was "The Impact of Today's Culture on Religious in the Church. There were 56 participants from various Asian countries. Fr. Emil Moraes OMI, Fr. Subroto B. Gomes, Sr. Gaetanina CIC, Sr. Probha Mary Karmokar RNDM, Bro. Marti Enrich Figueras FMS attended the symposium from Bangladesh. The keynote address was given by Archbishop Orlando Quevedo OMI, Archbishop of Cotabato and Secretary General of FABC. Other topics of the symposium were: The Impact of Today's Culture on the Church especially with Regard to Consecrated Life in Asia vis-a-vis Social Justice (Bro. Varghese Theckanath SG), The Impact of Today's Culture on the Church Especially with Regard to Consecrated Life in Asia vis-a-vis Moral Relativism (Fr. Vimal Tirimanna CSSR), Social Communication and the Impact of Today's Culture on the Church especially with Regard to Consecrated Life in Asia (Fr. Robert Astorino MM), The Impact of Today's Culture on the Spirituality of Consecrated Life in Asia (Sr. Judette A. Gallares RC), The Impact of Today's Culture on the Church Especially with Regard to Consecrated Life in Asia from a layman's point of view (Dr. Sherman Guek). The symposium also included workshops, an exposure program, informal gatherings, cultural entertainments, presentation of statements etc.

Chairmen and Secretaries of Episcopal Bodies

In the last meeting of the CBCB held on November 10 - 11, 2009 the Bishops changed the assignments of the Chairmen and Secretaries of the Episcopal Bodies. This assignment is effective from January 1, 2010.

EC - for Liturgy & Prayer

Chairman: Bishop Theotonius Gomes CSC

Secretary: Fr. Patrick Gomes

EC - for Catechetics and Biblical Apostolate

Chairman: Bishop Bejoy D'Cruze OMI

Secretary: Fr. Pio Mattevi SX

EC - for Family Life

Chairman: Bishop Ponon P. Kubi CSC

Secretary: Fr. David Gomes

Bangladesh Catholic Education Board

(formerly known as EC - for Christian Education)

Chairman: Bishop Patrick D'Rozario CSC

Secretary: Fr. Benjamin Costa CSC

EC - for Health Care

Chairman: Bishop Theotonius Gomes

Secretary: Fr. Francesco Rapacioli PIME

EC - for Justice and Peace

Chairman: Bishop Gervas Rozario

Secretary: Fr. Albert T. Rozario

EC - for Christian Unity & Inter-religious Dialogue

Chairman: Bishop Bejoy D'Cruze OMI

Secretary: Fr. James Cruze CSC

EC - for Social Communication

Chairman: Bishop Gervas Rozario

Secretary: Fr. Kamal A. Corraya

EC - for Youth

Chairman: Bishop Moses Costa CSC

Secretary: Fr. Patrick S. Gomes

EC - for Laity

Chairman: Bishop Patrick D'Rozario CSC

Secretary: Mr. Choyon H. Rebeiro

EC - for Seminary

Chairman: Bishop Moses Costa CSC

Secretary: Fr. Shorot F. Gomes

EC - for Clergy & Religious

Chairman: Bishop Subrato L. Howlader CSC

Secretary: Sr. Mary Dipti SMRA

EC - for Evangelization & PMS

Chairman: Archbishop Paulinus Costa

Secretary: Fr. Tapon D'Rozario

Caritas Bangladesh

President: Bishop Theotonius Gomes CSC

Executive Director: Dr. Benedict Alo D'Rozario

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