

CBCB Newsletter

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Editorial

Communion: Witness of the Church in Bangladesh

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB) arranged a four-day National Pastoral Workshop from August 28 to August 31, 2018 at the CBCB Centre, Mohammadpur, Dhaka. There were altogether 200 participants which included: All the Bishops (10) of Bangladesh, more than 50 priests, a good number of Religious men and women, Major Superiors of various Religious Congregations working in the country, Educationists, Professionals, NGO and Development workers, Government and Social Catholic Leaders, Representatives from all eight Dioceses, Lay people and Youth Representatives and Representatives from various Organizations. The general Aim and Objective was to see and reflect on the Past, analyze the Present Realities and Signs of the Times and to make an action-plan for the next ten years or so.



There have been 5 major Presentations by 5 Speakers and 15 Workshops in small groups on 15 different topics. These major presentations were very helpful to have a proper orientation of the National Pastoral Workshop, to have an over-all view of the past situations, realize our achievements, find out limitations and weaknesses, and to foresee the future action-planning based on the priorities found in the workshop. There were also group discussions at the levels of Dioceses,

Episcopal Commissions, Religious Congregations, Social Leader and Organizations and open forum to have a more active participation in future action-planning.

After presentations, analysis and discussions, there were some priorities discerned by the participants, to be implemented gradually to have communion starting from an individual level to families, Small Christian Communities, parish level, diocesan level and national levels at large. The participants realized in one way or the other that we, as local Church, have done many activities and our apostolate and ministries are service-oriented not only to the Christian community but to the greater community at large, to work for justice and peace, option and service to the poor and marginalized and thus bring about communion in the larger social milieu.

The local Church of Bangladesh had a renewal after the Vatican Council II and liberation war in 1971. Since independence in 1971, the local Church started her journey in a new way to be more local, in-culturated in every way possible and kept herself alive and vibrant with the help of foreign missionaries and local Priests, Religious and lay people as well. The local Church had four dioceses in 1971 and now she has 8 eight dioceses and the proclamation of the Gospel is going on with much enthusiasm and zeal at various levels. We hope and pray that by the abundant grace of God which the local Church has been realizing throughout and with the cooperation and active contribution and participation of many, the local Church will continue to give witness as communion to the greater society and sincerely accompany people to have maximum peace, unity, solidarity and brotherhood in the country irrespective of caste and creed.



Wishing all our readers, benefactors and well wishers a spirit of communion and brotherhood! May the Holy Trinity, God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Son and Holy Spirit, source of our communion, be with us all; and enlighten us to journey to deeper levels of the spirituality of communion that we, as children God, may live in communion as one family of God.

National Pastoral Workshop in Bangladesh – 2018

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh organized a four-day National Pastoral Workshop from August 28 to 31, 2018. There were 200 participants and all took time to discuss, analyze, reflect and discern some concerns and priorities for an action-plan at the national and diocesan levels for the next decade. A short summary of the presentations, group-workshops, group and open discussions are given below.

The first Presentation was on the **“Importance, Necessity, Vision, Objectives and Direction of the Workshop”** by Archbishop Moses Costa, Archbishop of Chattogram and Secretary General, CBCB. He shared that the Local Church is firstly, a ‘Communion of Communities’. She is in communion with the Universal Church through the communion between the Holy Father and the local Ordinary. So, the Church reflects on the signs of the time and prioritizes pastoral focuses on global, continental and national levels. Secondly, the Church is ‘Local, Unique and Independent’. Therefore, she plans for her own at the diocese level, considering the local history, tradition, background, situation, culture, etc. All the dioceses in Bangladesh gathered together in every 8-12 years in National Pastoral Workshop to reflect & evaluate the present situation, advancement & signs of the times and the local Church tried to discern focal concerns and priorities for the whole country. Each diocese uses its own strategy and methodology to implement the recommendations of the workshop.

Methodology of the workshop: The Vision of the workshop is ‘Review of the Church in Bangladesh in light of the past and present; undertaking thoughts and activities for the next decade’. Catholic action ‘See-Judge- Act’ is the methodology of the workshop. Firstly, it will have a highlight on the past national workshops and decisions. Secondly, the workshop will evaluate the achievements, weakness and limitations of the Church in Bangladesh in the last decade, reflect on the perspectives and focus of the Universal Church and Church in Asia. Thirdly, the recommendation for pastoral strategy and activity will be finalized. All bishops, representatives of the clergy, religious, lay adult, youth, secretaries of the Episcopal commissions, social development workers, leaders, professionals, teachers and formators are the participants of the workshop.

Direction for the workshop: Theme of the workshop is “Communion: Witness of the Church in Bangladesh”. ‘Communion of communities’ is the identity, pursuit and mission of the Church. The Holy Trinity is the source, ideal and fundamental inspiration for the Communion and Mission of the Church. Depicting the internal communion of the Church, in the scripture, it is often expressed with metaphors like ‘bride of Christ, family of God, royal priesthood, etc.’ The Catholic teachings identify the Church as Mother & Teacher, of Flock Sheep, olive tree, Vine and branches and mystical body of Christ. Specific activities and presentations of the workshop will ‘highlight of the past national workshops & decisions; panel discussion to realize the success & positive signs, shortcoming & limitations of the local Church in the last decade; thoughts and recommendations of the Universal Church and Church in Asia; reflections on present reality in perspectives as the Church and society; topic based group workshop to work out the response of the Church in light of the past traditions and present realities; diocese wise group workshop to discern and propose the future pastoral focuses for the Church in Bangladesh. It is expected that, by active participation, all will be able to contribute in family, village, society, parish, regions and diocese level to spread the Kingdom of God.

Conclusion: For cordial & overall active participation as the ‘communion of communities’ it is very important for us to discover, discern and be faithful to the fundamental call and mission of the Church. The Church is a mystery. We need to be open in prayer and thoughts to the Holy Spirit, our guide to the national workshop. May Mary, Mother of God, bless and keep us throughout the workshop.

The Second Presentation was on the **Pastoral Workshops in the Past, a Short Evaluation and Analysis** by Fr. Jyoti Francis Costa. He presented chronologically, the pastoral workshops in the Past held in the local Church of Bangladesh. The Independence of Bangladesh in 1971 and Second Vatican Council from 1962-1965, were two prime pillars for the revival and renewal of the Church in Bangladesh. Bangladesh had to start anew her journey after the devastating nine-month long war and Independence played a vital and important role to regain strength and hope to go ahead for development with unity and solidarity as a nation and it has succeeded to come up with its vigorous hard work and enthusiasm. After Vatican Council II, there had been a prevailing spirit of inculturation, localization and the local Church started owning faith and mission in the local context.

The establishment of the Major Seminary in 1973 in Dhaka, Bangladesh was a milestone for the growth of the local Church of Bangladesh. The number of local Priestly and Religious vocations increased and gradually other formation houses were built in the country. The pastoral thoughts and reflections initiated in the mind and heart of the local Church with one month-long renewal course in 1973 with the help of team from the Philippines. Some representatives in 1974 from Bangladesh were sent to the Philippines for training on BCC and after their return home; they started the Basic Christian Community Movement in Bangladesh.

The local Church starting from 1971, had on average every decade a National Pastoral Workshop. The Pastoral Concerns in the local Church were made more concise and clear in the light of the needs of the local Church and Signs of the Times. The local Bishops' Conference took enough time to search and research local sources and resources to create an over all atmosphere more contextual and local in its nature. The decade from 1971-1980 was a journey towards localization and inculturation. Fr. Amalavadas, an expert and prominent theologian of India of that time, was invited to help bringing a renewal in the local Church, in the spirit of Vatican Council II. He and a few from Bangladesh, conducted a Seminar that brought a tremendous change in thinking and doing level of local theology and inculturation. The Major Seminary periodical, *Prodipon*, published in 1978, the detailed discussion and outcome of that Seminar.

Then, from 1981-1990, there had been more concrete concentration on the local situations and the first Pastoral Plan of the Catholic Church in Bangladesh was written and published in 1985 which still has a very strong impact in the local Church. The local situations, signs of the times, weaknesses and limitations, strengths and hopeful signs and priorities were discussed, discerned and action-plans were made, in a very systematic way. There was another national pastoral workshop held in 1987 for the Episcopal Commissions and Organizations. There was another national pastoral workshop in 1989, on the new Awakening in Evangelization.

There had been six different inter-diocesan pastoral workshops on the proclamations of the Gospel: in personal life, family and parish life, in building communion, in the life of Priests and Religious and their Services, in interreligious dialogue, ecumenism and preaching of the Gospel, Proclamation in education and formation, in Charitable works and development, justice and peace. Then, the National Pastoral Workshop was held in 1996 in Barishal and some concrete statements were made in the light of the findings and outcome of these six preparatory workshops, to live out communion and witness Christ and the Gospel to the greater society. There had been very active preparation at the parish, diocesan and national levels for the great Jubilee 2000. The first three years, concentrations were on our Baptism in Christ, the second year was on Unity in the Holy Spirit and the third year was on our journey to the Heavenly Father. The Jubilee year 2000 was celebrated in spiritual, effective, significant and very meaningful manners.

The general theme for the decade 2001 – 2010, was Christian life and Journey to the Depth of Service on new-awakening of the new Millennium. The national workshop was held in 2001 in Mymensingh Diocese with the theme- Third Millennium: The Adventure of Evangelization in Bangladesh, in order to initiate, cultivate and nurture, a culture of communion at all levels. There was another national workshop for the Lay Faithful in 2007, at CBCB Centre. The theme was- Faith-Life of the People of God in Bangladesh in order to find out the tremendous works, God has done to us and to have more involvement and participation of the lay people in Church and Social Activities.

Then, finally starting from the year 2011, the local Church has been focusing on various topics given by the Universal Church and there have been on-going thoughts, reflections, considered in connection with the Churches in Asia. There had been a five years (2011-2014) plan, to create and reshape the new way of being Church, to reflect more on our faith and Bible sharing, small Christian Communities to create communion of communities, catechism and witnessing faith to the people in words, deeds and life, special emphasis on families and family apostolate, the year of mercy in 2016 had a very meaningful impact in living a merciful life, in accordance with God's Merciful love and the visit of Holy Father from November 30 to December 02, 2017 with the theme Harmony and Peace brought a new awakening in minds and hearts of, not only to the Christians but also to the people of the larger society. The local Church has arranged this national pastoral workshop 2018 for treasuring in hearts all these treasures of the past, concentrating on the present situations and signs of the Times, trying to analyze and understand the realities of life and discerning some priorities for the future planning to have *ad intra* and *ad extra* communion of communities, unity, solidarity and peace.

The Third presentation was on **“Building Communion: Vision and Directions of the Universal and Asian Church”** by His Eminence Cardinal Patrick D’ Rozario, CSC. He presented from a Global and Asian Church perspectives, based on the documents of the Church and documents of the FABC. The salient features were the following:

A. Second Vatican Council and Renewal of the Catholic Church onwards

- Communion and Community: In global Church prospective

B. Communion: The Vision and Direction of the Universal Church

- Usage of various Symbols to explain and understand the Catholic Church
- Four characteristics of the Church: The Church is One, Holy, Universal and Missionary
- Faithful/Christian believers and vocations: laity, consecrated life and priesthood
- Four pillars of Christian believers: life of faith, Sacramental life, Moral life and Prayer & Spirituality
- Catholic Church: Mystery
- Mission of the Catholic Church: Some important concerns of the present Universal Church. He shared based on the following documents, the minds and thoughts of the Church and how the Universal Church always expressing her concerns and serving the people of God in accordance with changing realities and signs of the times.
- Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*)
- Love and Service: *Deus Caritas Est: God is love*
- Proclamation of Good-news: “*Joy of Gospel*” (*Evangelii Gaudium*)
- Marriage and family: Joyful good-news (*Amoris Laetitia*) Joy of love
- Revival of the Proclamation of Good-news : Basic Christian Community
- Gifts of Holy Spirit: Many gifts of the Holy Spirit leads to union
- Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis : Rejoice and Be Glad (*Gaudete et Exsultate*): A call to Holiness in the Modern World
- Migration and Refugees
- Aim of Education and Formation (Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educating to Fraternal Humanism*)
- Rights and Protection of Children
- Taking Care of Our Common Home: Papal Encyclical on Nature and Environment : (*Laudato Si*) *Praise be to You.*
- Catholic Church in Asian Ways: Vision and Mission

C : Communion and Community: Vision, Process and Direction of the Asian Church

- Catholic Church in Asian Ways: Vision and Mission
- Mission Work of Asian Churches: Proclamation of the Good-news
- Pastoral Methods of the Churches in Asia

Present Realities and Signs of the Times

The fourth presentation was divided into two parts: a) In the first part, Bishop Gervas Rozario dealt with **“the Present Realities and Signs of the Times from the Perspectives of the Church”** and in the second part, Mr. Francis Atul Sarker shared his thoughts from Socio-political and cultural perspectives in Bangladesh.

Bishop Rozario mentioned in his presentation that Christianity came in this land 500 years ago in a very tiny scale. It sprouted gradually and started spreading all over, when four dioceses have been established in the last century. Foreign missionaries like Jesuits, Augustinian, Holy Cross, PIME and Xaverian priests contributed immensely to the establishment of the local Church in Bangladesh. Now we have two Archdioceses and six dioceses, run by local Bishops and mostly local Priests and Religious.

There are only 6 Lakh Christians (4 lakh catholic and 2 lakh other Christians) out of a 16 crore population in Bangladesh. The present reality shows that many Bengali Christians are migrating to other countries and reducing the number of Bengali Christian. Evangelization is going on under indigenous people and their numbers are increasing compared to Bengali Christians. Indigenous number is higher than Bengali Christian at present. The Bangladesh constitution has given the rights and religious freedom to practice own religion but at present, it is very difficult and risky to proclaim the Word of God among the Bengali people. Moreover, the contribution of Christian in formation of the country is not always reflected or valued.

Considering the present reality and signs of time, the points below are to be deeply analyzed and reflected: Situation and condition of Evangelization, faith and prayer life of the Laity, pastoral work and services, Human development and services, education and formation, moral formation, inter religious dialogue and harmony, culture and love of family, Lay formation and participation, Christian-faith and culture among the indigenous people, Fostering Priestly and Religious vocations, etc.

The Bangladesh Catholic Church is giving a great contribution in socio-economic development and education and has a good will to many people. We can create a new reality based on this positive image. For this, we need to work together (laity and clergy) with new hope, dream, new ways, approach and commitment.

Atul Francis Sarker presented on **'Present Situation and Future Trend of Catholic Church: Social Facet'**. He mentioned that in last 47 years there has been revolutionary progress in the society of Bangladesh. Some see this progress as a 'wonder' when the progress is compared within the South Asian countries. Starting from 1990s till the present, Bangladesh has moved tremendously forward in reducing the child mortality rate, compared to the other countries. The admission of girls and boys at Primary Education Level is almost equal, which is considered a milestone when it comes to implementing the universal rights to education for all. The emphasis on technical education has got significant attention, as our country requires 25% population with techno-skills, whereas we have only 12%. The country is relentlessly attempting to bring discipline to the higher education. The positive development sides of Bangladesh can be brought out from the analysis of social progress of the country as:

- Development of positive psychosocial and ethical thoughts of the common people of Bangladesh
- Women empowerment and participation of women in economic activities
- Attitude of investing in education of children and health among the country people
- Interest of youth and young adults towards good governance
- Capacity and skill to face disasters and reduce risks
- Improved infrastructure and connection between the rural and urban economy among others.

Workshops on 15 Various Relevant Topics

There were altogether 15 workshops in small groups with 14-15 members in each group. There was a facilitator in each group who spoke first for about 15 minutes and initiated the discussions in the group. The following topics were dealt during the workshops: 1) Family Life and Spirituality, 2) Education, Culture & Values, 3) Climate Change, 4) Media and Its Influence 5) Interreligious Dialogue, 6) Evangelization and Pastoral Service 7) Migration: Within and Outside the Country 8) Our Economy & Development, 9) Youth and Future Generation, 10) Political and Social Life 11) Justice and Peace, 12) Religious Vocation and Formation, 13) Health Care and Concerns 14) Christian Formation in Hostels and 15) Our Life of Prayer and Faith. The reporting after the discussions showed that there had been active participation of everyone in the group and there were in-depth analysis, discussion and discernment of the topics concerned in each group. These reporting helped all the participants to have over-all ideas, and at least some reflections about each topic and what needs to be done in our context.

Some Concerns and Priorities of the Local Church of Bangladesh for the next Decade

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh organized a four-day National Pastoral Workshop from August 28 to 31, 2018. The 200 participants took time to discuss, analyze, reflect and discerned the following concerns and priorities for action-plan at the national and diocesan levels for the next decade:

1. Living Spirituality of Communion at Individual, Family and Social levels;
2. Faith-formation, Proclamation of the Gospel and Pastoral Service;
3. Education and Values in Christian spirit;
4. Family as Domestic Church, regular faith-formation, prayers and family catechesis;
5. Option for the Poor, the Marginalized, Migrants, special attention and service to them;
6. Socio-economic Development and Self-reliance;
7. Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue of Life;
8. Fostering Priestly and Religious Vocations;
9. Protection of Nature and Environment in the light of *Laudato Si*;
10. Responsible Citizenship;
11. Proper Use of Information Technology and Mass Media for Evangelization;
12. Health Care and special attention to the Disabled, Drug-addicted and the abandoned people.

The participants hope and pray that by implementing these action-plans phase by phase, the local Catholic Church in Bangladesh will keep on witnessing Communion at various levels and become more concrete examples of 'salt and light' to the nation as vibrant 'little flock'.

National Seminar of EC – for Family Life

The Episcopal Commission for Family Life organized a national seminar at the Oriental Institute, Barishal from July 5 - 7, 2018. It was arranged for the Archdiocese of Chottogram and dioceses of Khulna and Barishal and the Family Commission of Barishal assisted in organizing the seminar. The theme of the seminar was "Teachings and Pastoral Concerns of the Church on Christian Marriage and Family". There were 68 participants from these three dioceses. This seminar was arranged for those involved and responsible for premarital preparation at the parish level, and those involved in diocesan and regional family ministries and activities.



The Topics of the program and Resource persons were: a) Situational Analysis of Families in the Dioceses by Bishop Subrato L. Howlader, CSC, b) Church's Teachings on Marriage and Family Life by Fr. Jyoti F. Costa, c) Misunderstanding in Family Life and Reconciliation and Peace by Mrs. Prova L. Rozario and Mr. Benedict Murmu, d) Pastoral Concern of the Church on Family by Bishop Ponon Pail Kubi, CSC, e) The Importance and Techniques of Family Counseling by Sr. Josephine, SSMI and f) Ways to serve families in the parishes in the midst of Complex Realities in Societies by Fr. Jyoti F. Costa. There was also a group discussion and an open forum for the participants. There was a drama on Family Life, and based on that drama, there was discussion and feedbacks, in order to learn how to watch movies and drama on TV for learning something good in our day to day lives. The participants expressed their satisfaction in the seminar and were inspired to love and serve families in their respective parishes and diocese.

National Education Convention and Declaration of BCEB 2018

A three-day National Education Convention of BCEB was held on September 5-7, 2018 at Christo-Jyoti Pastoral Center, Omarpur, Rajshahi-6000. In total 109 participants (heads of Church administered educational institutes, members of education commission and representatives from the dioceses) attended the program.

The main theme of the convention was "**Catholic Church's Education Services: Past, Present and future**". Other important topics discussed were a) Involvement of Bangladesh Church in Education and its Expansion, b) Papal Document on Education Policy: "Education towards Fraternal Humanism", Rendering Service and Formation, c) Early Childhood Education and Growth in the Parish and Community, d) Christian

Values and Culture, e) Papal Encyclical on Nature and Environment: Present Context and Initiatives to be taken, f) Prevention of Drug Addiction and Healthy Youth Development, g) Manpower Structure of Non-government institute and PMO Policy 2018, g) Bangladesh Church's role on Education in the next decade, and h) Teachers' Spirituality.

After deliberations, group and open discussions, prayers and Eucharistic services, the attendees analyzed the past, present and considering the prevailing situation and challenges, formulated different activities for the future. We, the participants commit ourselves to the following:

- In the past the missionaries founded educational institutes to serve this Bangladesh enriched with different races, religions and cultures and imparted quality education; motivated by their enthusiasm, passion and zeal, we shall work to create social and national leaders, to initiate dialogues for creation of harmonious environment, to develop communal bond, to serve the poor, and to establish social justice.
- Inspired by the Bangladesh local Church's tradition and culture of the last 400 years, education philosophy and methods, we will impart quality education to our future generations and take special steps to cater to the underprivileged students of *adivasi* communities.
- "Go and teach all nations"-- inspired by Christ's teachings we will further strengthen moral education in our institution. Being educated with humane qualities and harmonious fraternity, we will shape our students as true humans.
- In our educational institute we will lay emphasis on love of environment and take measures for environment-friendly activities.
- We shall make all concerned with educational institutes aware of life-destroying elements including drug-addiction and inculcate moral values in the hearts and minds of our students.
- Through conducting an evaluation on our past and present activities, we will develop a coordinated approach and carry out research under the guidance of the Catholic Education Board.
- We will establish a research cell and form a forum of trainers on an emergency basis.
- In order to get the govt. facilities allocated to non-government educational institutes, we will establish strong communication and linkages with local, regional and national government education agencies/departments/offices.
- We will extend and strengthen technical, vocational and informal education.
- Being spiritually enlightened, we will wholeheartedly try to acquire leadership qualities such as patience, respect for all, tolerance to others, open-mindedness etc.

We will take appropriate measures in regard to early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary education; we will visit families to strengthen relationships and arrange teacher-guardian gathering. With arrangement of dialogues we will take necessary steps for the development of students and their families in association with the parishes and people devoted to Christ.

Bishops' Institute for the Lay Apostolate BILA IV

In July (9-13) 2018, the 4th Bishops' Institute for the Lay Apostolate (BILA IV) on Youth was held in Pattaya, Thailand which was organized by the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC)- Office of the Laity and Family -Youth Desk on the theme: "Young People, faith and vocational discernment." 4th BILA was participated by sixteen countries with 1 Archbishop, 9 Bishops, 10 Priests, 3 religious Brothers and Sisters, and 41 lay people, including 6 youth delegates to the Pre-synodal Meeting held last March in Rome. One of the aims of the institute was to draft a message from the Asian Youth in preparation for the Synod of Bishops in October this year. Most Rev. Lawrence Subrato Howlader, CSS and Bro. Ujjal Placid Pereira, CSC joined this BILA IV represented Episcopal Commission for Youth, Bangladesh and gave a presentation on the contemporary state of Youth Commission in Bangladesh based on few questions which were given from the Youth Office of Vatican for an upcoming Bishops' Synod.



The 4th BILA had various types of programs. Such as- opening and welcoming program, Sessions and Workshops on Preparatory Document of the Synod of Bishops, COYA group presentation, AYD7

Presentation (Indonesia team), Evaluation and Country presentation, the Situation of the Youth in Thailand, Sharing and Presentation by the Regions contributions to be addressed to the Synod of Bishops, Preparation for upcoming AYD8 (Indian group) and daily Mass and Prayers and Cultural presentations.

Modular Course by EC- Laity

The Episcopal Commission for the Laity organized a four days Modular Course for the representatives of laity at CBCB Centre on July 18-21, 2018. This is for the seventh time that this Commission organized this course for them. Altogether 61 participated in the course from eight Dioceses of the country (Man- 24, woman-31, Priests- 02 and Sister- 04). His Eminence Cardinal Patrick D' Rozario, CSC gave a presentation on situations and signs of the times in the local Church of Bangladesh. He expressed his desire and the purpose that, building communion of communities is our goal, so that, the spirit of communion may prevail in the hearts of the people.

The purpose of the course was to know the Church, theological knowledge of the Bishops, Priests, religious and laity in the Church, dignity, Mission, participation and apostolate of the laity in the Church, to be more aware of the lay Organizations in the Church and to be effective leaders. Subject matters and resource person of the course were (a) Church in the light of the Bible (Fr. Shipon Peter Rebeiro); (b) Christian Leadership (Mr. Chayon H. Rebeiro); (c) Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church (Fr. Bulbul A. Rebeiro); (d) Theological analysis of the Church (Fr. James Shyamal Gomes, CSC) (e) Catholic Social Teachings of the Church (Fr. Luke Kakon Corraya); (f) Small Christian Communities (Fr. Stanislaus Gomes); (g) Directives of the Church in Bangladesh (H.E. Cardinal Patrick D' Rozario, CSC), Archdiocese of Dhaka; (h) The Mission Works of Laity in the Church (Fr. Albin M. Gomes); (i) Christian movements and organizations: nature, role and principles (Fr. Ajit Costa, OMI); (j) Formation and Spiritual life of the laity in the Church (Fr. Stanley C. Costa) and Socio-economic development of the Laity, participative in social security contributions, welfare-oriented and equality-based enterprises (Fr, Liton H. Gomes, CSC). There was also Panel discussion by the Lay Leaders on Mission and Apostolate of the Laity. Most Rev Bishop Gervas Rozario, Bishop of Rajshahi, was present for both the panel and closing Eucharistic Celebration and the distribution of the certificate among the participants. The course was organized and directed by Most Rev. Bishop Shorot F. Gomes, Chairman, Mr. Chayon H. Rebeiro, Secretary and Sister Mary Mitali, SMRA among others.

Asian Youth Academy AYA & Asian Theology Forum ATF

The 4th Asian Youth Academy (AYA)/ Asian Theology Forum (ATF) arranged by Asian Lay Leaders (ALL) Forum in Tagaytay, Philippines from 27 July to 6 August 2018 on the theme "Peace in Indigenous peoples' Lives Amid Limitless Development and Ecological Crisis in Asia". This AYA & ATF tried to focus on the issues of Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and the ecological crisis which has threatened the poor in Asia especially IPs. The program was to help open up their eyes on IPs for local religious institutions and the societies, as well as to the major topics of FABC's special pastoral areas like migrants, women/girl children, family, Indigenous Peoples, youth and ecology.

Mr. Shoshi Sylvester Peris and Ms. Jenny Elsa Dajel joined this program from Bangladesh. In their personal reflection, they shared that they have learned about the life-style of Asian Indigenous people, their challenges, different religious beliefs, women's role in the church, human (Indigenous Peoples) dignity & rights, how to love and take care of the mother earth, God's existence in nature and an important role to preserve their traditions.

Hostel Master/ Mistress/ Director/ Directress Seminar

On 3 August 2018 a half-day seminar was held for the Hostel Master/ Mistress/ Director/ Directress at CBCB Center, Mohammadpur, Dhaka on the theme: "Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment." Around 30 participants from 21 different hostels joined this seminar. The goal of this seminar was to enlighten the hostel in-charge on how to accompany the youth to discern their vocations in life and help them to be free from the slavery of consumerism, materialism, capitalism and build a new society of brotherhood through non-violent principles, as good number of youths live in different hostels. Another goal was to build up a good collaboration among the youth commission members and the hostel in-charge.



The half day seminar was designed with opening prayer, valuable presentation on “Our Children our Responsibility: Our collaboration with the Church for Youth Formation.” by Most Rev. Lawrence Subrato Howlader, CSC and “Accompaniment with Young People for Faith and Vocational discernment” by Bro. Ujjal Placid Pereira, CSC. Besides, there were group discussion, presentation and action plan.

World Meeting of Families – The Gospel of the Family: Joy for the World

The 9th World Meeting of Families (WMOF) took place in Dublin, August 21-26. His Holiness Pope Francis was present for the last two days of this 5-days’ event. The theme of the WMOF was on, “The Gospel of the Family: Joy for the World”. A 9-members’ team headed by Bishop Ponon Paul Kubi, CSC and Fr. Jyoti F. Costa from Bangladesh attended to this WMOF. The other members were: Father Prodiop Joseph Costa, Sister Celestina, SMRA, Ronjon Rozario, Shompa D’ Costa, Martin Gomes, Babra Gomes and Chompa Bormon.

The programs of the World Meeting of Families included: The inauguration, simultaneously across all 26 dioceses of Ireland on the evening of August 21, 2018, Pope Francis’ video message for this opening session, pastoral congresses in various groups from August 22-24 and Holy Eucharistic celebrations.

On August 25, 2018 Pope Francis attended in the “Festival of the Families” in Dublin’s Croke Park Stadium. Pope Francis gave emphasis on Family Prayers and Family Teachings. He encouraged all to teach the children prayers and catechism. There were some 70,000 people present there.

Three small words: “Sorry”. “Please”. “Thanks”: these are the three small words that Pope Francis often suggests as antidotes to the tensions that can arise within the family. “There is no such thing as a perfect family”, he reminded the audience. “Without the grace of forgiveness, families can grow sick and gradually collapse”. On the contrary, said the Pope, “small and simple acts of forgiveness, renewed each day, are the foundation upon which a solid Christian family life is built”.

The World Meeting of Families concluded with a Solemn Eucharistic Celebration. Pope Francis was the main celebrant for the final mass. Some half a million people, individuals and families from all around the world gathered in thanksgiving and communion for the final Mass.

Some information of CBCB Meeting

The second meeting of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB) of 2018 was held on May 9 - 10, 2018 at CBCB Centre. All the Bishops participated in the meeting. The meeting began at 3:30 p.m. on May 09 presided over by Most Rev. Patrick D’Rozario CSC, Archbishop of Dhaka & President of the CBCB.

The main discussion of the meeting were as follows: Programs during the Ad Limina Visit- 2018: Preparation of the necessary documentations; Auditing of the Diocesan Account as requested; Celebration of 3rd anniversary of *Laudato Si* – Rome; World Meeting of Families -2018, Dublin, Ireland (WMOF); National Workshop on Local Church in Bangladesh – 2018; Celebration of the 5th Centenary Jubilee of Propagation of Faith in Chittagong; Promotion of Beatification of Archbishop T. A. Ganguly; A brief Sharing on United Forum of Churches: All Christian Conference; All Christian Program on *Laudato Si*, FABC-OLF: Youth Desk, BILA IV on Youth; FABC- Office of Laity and Family and Office of the Clergy; The FABC-OCL and FABC-OEFF: Joint Conference on “Catholic Schools in Asia; Seminary Commission: (i) Staff of the National Seminaries/programs; (ii) Installation of the New Rector of HSMS; (iii) HSMS vacant land matters; National Delegates for World Youth Day in Panama- 2019; St. Vincent de Paul Society Matters; Visit of the delegates from Church in Need (ACN) in 2018; Pre-primary Church based School Project; and matters related to EC- Social Communication and Christian Communication Centre.

Board of Editors:

Fr. Jyoti F. Costa, Fr. Angelo Martyn, OMI, Mr. Sukumar Mullick

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

E mail: cbcbsec@gmail.com **Web site:** www.cbcbsec.org