



BUXAR DIOCESAN NEWSLETTER

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SHEPHERD'S VOICE

CHRISTMAS 2019: BE THE STAR

The spectacle of stars adorning homes, churches, shops etc. tells us: "Hai, it's Christmas again"! What does a star at Christmas signify? Certainly we will say that it is a pointer to the birth of the Lord,

recalling the experience of the Magi, led by a star to Bethlehem. It obviously symbolizes the way forward and the light for the path towards the Saviour. The wise men had a long and tiring journey until they 'saw the child' and 'bowed and worshiped him' (Mt. 2/10-11). Today the star can be considered as a process one follows till his/her life's fulfillment is met. After having met the Saviour of the world, interestingly, the wise men took a different route altogether in their life (Mt. 2/12), indicating a new way of living.

The season of Christmas proclaims: "You are to be the star for others". If the star has to shine in the dark, attracting the eyes of all, it has to have light within, which renders meaning to its existence. If that is the case, when I look into my inner self, what do I see? light or darkness? If I live like the child of God, I cannot but shine. If darkness has not engulfed me, the onlookers will certainly notice the light of freedom and joy radiating through me. Hence, let us be firm about one thing this year: 'This little light of mine, I am going to let it shine'. We need to make conscious efforts that the light in us, though weak, fragile and flickering, stay alive amid strong winds of confusion, propelled by forces of evil all around us. We have the good news to be confident about our efforts; 'God is faithful' (I Cor. 10/13) and the 'battle belongs to Him' (II Chro. 20/15). Then our experience will be: "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it" (Jn.1/5).

As a child of light I have the responsibility to permeate this light around, may be at times by punching 'intentional holes' onto me that would help all to see the 'real light' that shines through me. What are these possible 'holes'?

1. **Follow the spirit of the precursor of Jesus.** "He must become more important, while I become less important" (Jn. 3/30). Deplete the 'EGO'.
2. Spend quiet moments early in the morning in the presence of the Lord and make minute planning of the day and have a great day in his companionship.
3. Being away from hectic activities, mobiles etc. experience tangibly the wonder of nature around. Just feel the thrill of being connected to the creation and its Creator.
4. Look at the people around, reflections of God's beauty and agents of divine fragrance. God's gifts to me!

5. Be a **yogi**, being fully present, applying heart and soul - the source of energy - in every action.
6. Be freed from the rotten habit of comparing yourself with others; but be happy with yourself.
7. To be an achiever, do what you are at with passion.
8. Don't entertain the gossipers, who contaminate and fill you with negativities.
9. Be serious and wise enough. Evade unnecessary talking. In a conversation wait for the right moment to state your point, that too clearly.
10. Spend some quality time in useful and serious reading; note down the key points.
11. Develop the habit of being a gracious giver, despite the possible ingratitude.
12. Be freed of negativities: blame game, murmurings, gossips etc.
13. Be mindful of the way truth is presented. Unconscious arrogance and aggressiveness—repugnant coating - will put the other in the defensive pre-empting the intended result. Being gentle in expression will pay dividends.
14. Faced with doubts, be humble and generous in seeking help. Go forward with clear mind. Doubt is the basis of knowledge, said Descartes.
15. Finally, care for your body. Let it be as beautiful and strong in and out. Cleanliness, health, exercise, timely food, sufficient rest, entertainment are all what God wants us to enjoy to maintain this divine gift. Only you can do it.

Besides all these, dive deep into the unfathomable mercy of God, being soaked in the precious Body and Blood of the Lord to live in the Light, Truth and the Way - "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2/20).

"Dear Jesus, help me to spread your fragrance wherever I go. Flood my soul with your Spirit and Life.....Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly, that my life may only be a radiance of Yours. Shine through me, and be so in me that every soul I come in contact with may feel your presence in my soul. Let them look up and see no longer me, but only you". "Lead kindly light amidst the encircling gloom ..." (Cardinal Newman). **BE THE STAR.**

Merry Christmas! Happy New Year to YOU!

+Sebastian Kallupura

Apostolic Administrator, Diocese of Buxar

WEAVING

The glittering star at the first Christmas faithfully guided the three kings to the cradle of the King of kings. The angels appeared singing the “Good News” to the shepherds in slumber. All of them set out to meet the Saviour. Today am I open to be guided by the current events, signs and people sent by God to us that we may know the Truth and the way to the Truth? Do I listen to the messengers, who may inconvenience us and so shoot them for the “bad news”? In that case I may not care a bit, as holy innocents are being executed all around me, as it happened at the nativity.

The diocesan Education Council took stock of the appalling current social situation and has committed itself to use every means at its disposal to be an agent of change and be a messenger of peace, promoting life.

Whereas Bhojpur deanery had two events – retreat at Piro and Christ the King procession at Koath, Rohtas had the annual Eucharistic procession at Kudra. All the events not only strengthened the participants' faith but also proclaiming the faith they announced the joy of belonging to the community of believers. EMM

programmes in the parishes must have been an added 'share holder' in the process.

The schools that had cultural or sports' event conducted were able to garner the talents of the students and exhibit the same, earning the appreciation of those present, especially the parents. The principals now will have a hard time to handle the rush for admissions!

The carol singing, celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation, recollections etc. paved the way during the Advent for the sheep as well as the shepherds for a meaningful Christmas celebration. The thousands that flocked to the mission campus for a divine experience on Christmas day might not have returned without manifold blessings. The annual Christmas gathering of priests and religious capped the season to launch the new year.

The new feature of “Heart Throbs of SG” has found place in this issue too. It helps us to be connected with events and people around.

A Saviour is born for us and a new year too, gifting us with tidings of joy.

JA

STOP THE PRESS:

New Treasurer and assistant Treasurer for Buxar Diocese:

Fr. Leo Rex IMS is appointed as the new Treasurer of the Diocese of Buxar and Fr. Eddie Mendonza SJ will continue to serve as the Assistant Treasurer of the Diocese. Fr. Leo Rex has an MBA in Finance and had been once the Treasurer of the IMS Province of Varanasi. The Diocese sincerely thanks Fr. Leo Rex and the Varanasi Province of the IMS for their willingness to render the services of Fr. Leo Rex. Also, the Diocese is sincerely grateful to Fr. Eddie Mendonza SJ as well as the Patna Province of the Society of Jesus for reaching out to Buxar diocese whenever it is in dire need.

A Word of Thanks to Fr. Amalan: The Diocese of Buxar is grateful to Fr. Dominic Amalan, the outgoing Treasurer, for his services to the diocese for the last 7 years. As he moves out to Ara to help out the Jesuit Community there to establish a new English Medium school, the Diocese wishes him all the very best and God's blessings for his new ministry in the diocese.

1. EVENTS/MEETINGS

Centenary Celebration of Patna Diocese:



On 29th of November this year Patna Diocese had its concluding celebration of its Centenary Year. The Diocese of Patna was created by Pope Benedict 15th on 10th of September 1919 by bifurcating the Diocese of Allahabad and Rev. Louis Vahock S.J was appointed as its 1st Bishop in 19121. Though Patna Archdiocese had yearlong celebrations at various levels, a meaningful concluding celebration was organized on 29th of November this year at St. Michael's High School campus. Besides the 30 plus bishops and archbishops present for the program in which Cardinal Oswald Gracious of Bombay was the Main Celebrant for the Mass, all the sufragan dioceses were well represented by many faithful, religious and priests. Buxar Diocese had been a part of Patna Diocese from its beginning till it was created a new diocese in 2006. The original Patna diocese has plenty to thank the Lord for all his blessings on us for the last 100 years. Also, the Diocese of Buxar is extremely grateful to all the missionaries, priests and religious as well as the catechists, who spread the message of Jesus in this part of our country. We, very specially remember the martyrs who sacrificed their life for the spread of faith in our region.

Diocesan Education Council: The annual general boy meeting of the Buxar Diocesan Education Council was held at SD on 4/12. Bishop Sebastian and Fr. James Amakatt attended the same along with thirty members. At the very outset Fr. Norbert Menezes, the Diocesan Director of Education revisited the DPP on Education, setting the right tone to the meeting.

Focusing on the formation of students the following salient points emerged: Awareness for Creation & Motherland * Staff & students to be exposed to villages/schools * Develop sharing and caring spirit * Develop positive self esteem * Career guidance. Five main points emerged from the discussion on developing quality and value education. They were: Ongoing formation of teachers * sex education* orientation sessions for parents * Inter-school activities * Rapport with officials, local schools and leaders.

The theme proposed for the academic Year 2020-2021 is: CARE FOR LIFE AND ENVIRONMENT. All are to focus on the theme in the school activities.

The other pertinent points were:

- High Schools under Bihar Board to have common annual exam. Question papers. Fr. Charlie is to co-ordinate the same.
- The Management Committee will see to it that the school will manage its activities within the approved budget.
- The Director will visit the schools along with the diocesan treasurer to assist with proper preparation of the annual budget.
- English Medium Schools will have to get the teachers trained in English language.

Durgawati: During the Eucharistic Celebration offered by **Bp. Sebastian** on 01/12 in Durgawati church, 34 children received Sacrament of Confirmation and another 25 received 1st



Communion. When you go next time to the mission, you cannot miss a special grotto of O. L. of Lourdes constructed by special artists from the South and situated in between the church and the presbytery. Its beauty is enhanced by the fact that it is constructed with the contribution from the parishioners, especially by one family of Robert Master, who donated two lakhs of rupees.

2. CELEBRATIONS !

The Annual School Day at Jagdishpur

The Annual School Day celebration of St. Xavier's school, Jagdishpur on 30/11 was marked by many cultural items based on the theme ' Humanity', presented by our talented students in various forms such as street play, miming, skit, dances, Kawali etc. Sr. Pushpika the principal of the school presenting the annual report made the audience, great in number, aware of the school's achievements. Awards were given to the toppers and other students who had brought glory to the school in various competitions, as reported in the past issue of SG. The whole event reflected the discipline, hard work and collaboration of the students, staff and the management as well. Shree Sanjay Kumar DSO, Bhojpur was the Chief Guest and Rev Fr. Jacob SJ the principal of Catholic School, Ara was the Guest of Honour.

Sr. Pushpika Anthony

Sports Day, Itarhi



St. Joseph's School Itarhi: The school had the Sports Day held on 13/11. The students were excited in performing in front of their parents and elite from Itarhi and outside, not to mention the pride with which the toppers walked away with prizes.

Carmel School, Churamanpur, Buxar



The 4th Annual Day of Carmel School was celebrated on 14/12. Shri Kumar Upadhyay was the Chief Guest, while Bp. Sebastian was the Guest of Honour. The students staged programmes that powerfully conveyed values the school stands for. Every presentation brought home to all present that the school is not about just the academic performance but character excellence forming good leaders who can shape the society. The Nativity Scene very aptly presented the Christmas message for the modern world. The overall theme was "Excellence through Education". Prizes were given away to excelled in different fields.

Sanjo Samaritan Special School, Buxar had its



Annual Day Celebration on 17/12, Bp. Sebastian being the C. Guest. The differently abled children kept the guests spell bound with their extraordinary abilities exhibited through different items. Congratulations to Sr. Tessa and her team for making it possible and thereby glorifying God.

Christmas at Kochas



Students Reach Out: The residents of Harnathpur village, Kochas had a pleasant surprise when students of St. Joseph Catholic School presented 50 families with two blankets each with the money

the students had themselves collected by 'Food Mela' on 03/12. The school encourages its students to gift note books on their birth day and the books thus collected are once a year distributed among the poor students in the neighboring schools. Some donate clothes too.

Despite biting cold, students gathered in the school campus to celebrate Christmas on 21/12. They enacted nativity scene and spread Christmas message of sharing and peace through dance, skit, songs etc. Fr. Leo Rex IMS delivered the Christmas message.

Sr. Florice ICM

'Shobha Yatra': The annual procession through the streets of Buxar took place on 22/12, conveying Christmas message through hymns, SS readings, slogans etc.



Shobha Yatra, Buxar

Despite the small number of active participants, it had a quality motivating the public in thousands to visit the mission campus for personal prayers and blessings.

Christmas in Buxar Jail

The powerful spirit of Christmas penetrated the walls of the Central Prison, Buxar on 21/12 when Bp. Sebastian along with a team led by Fr. A. Gotluri



and Pastor Paul in collaboration with the jail Superintendent spent about two hours celebrating the message of Christmas. Children and adults sang and danced, while dignitaries delivered message of freedom Jesus came to give. 1450 prisoners were given snack packets, 20 of them were given blankets, while thirty of them received monkey caps. Kudos to Fr. Gotluri and Pastor Paul.

Chenari Christmas

Chenari School Day: Since it was the last School Day celebration for Fr. Ranjan, everybody saw to it that this year it should be a memorable one and it was,



thanks to the dedicated staff and students, not to mention the ever active principal Sr. Prasan SND. The Chief Guest was Dr. Ray Pradeep (B.E.O., Chenari). Another feather to Holy Family School that has increased in its strength in the recent past with rays of hope for the future.

Christmas Gathering of Priests and Religious

After the solemn Eucharist officiated by Bp. Sebastian at 10:15 AM in the Cathedral Church on 27/12 and prayer at the graves of Frs. Jose Mada and Jose Perumalil, about 80 priests and religious gathered in SD for sharing and celebrating. Representatives from each parish shared the unique and exciting experience they had in Christmas 2019. The salient points were:

- The non-Christian children came up to the priest to say that they really experience the love of Jesus visiting the crib.
- The gate of the mission was kept open for late comers, who made it a point to pray at the crib by lighting candles with much devotion.

- Lighting candles and seeking blessings in the church and at the crib seems to be the common expression of the devotion of the people who come on 25/12. Some remarked that their prayers offered last Christmas have been granted. Word spreads and every year the crowd seems to swell. Photography is not the only thing!
- One lady searched in vain to find a Christian Centre and finally at the end of the day she was directed to *Chilibili* and she was happy to meet the community of believers.
- In certain villages the non-Christian families urged the carol team to visit their homes too.
- In one place Santaclause on cycle was an attraction.
- The cooperation of the people in general, especially the youth, to make Christams a GRAND ONE is becoming better and better as years pass by.

Thereafter, different groups sang Christmas hymns and there was housie-housie, dance etc. All those present walked away with Christmas gift from Bp. Sebastian.



Glimps of the Christmas Gathering

Catechists' Gathering: On 19/12 catechists had recollection and sharing. Since in the last meeting it came to light that a sizable number of catholic children are not studying in our schools each catechist was expected to take pertinent action especially for catechism for such students. Parishes like *Itarhi* do it through Sunday catechism; and summer catechetical camps were arranged at parish level. It was also a part of EMM. *Bhojpur* deanery had it at *Piro* to cater to such a need. It was observed that more had to be done to give boost to SCC in the parishes.

3. VARIA

VALIENT FAITH

Osamu Giovanni Micico, a Japanese painter had never read the Bible, when his experience studying the sacred art in Italy brought him to the Catholic faith. In his own words: "When I came to Italy, painting was the only street for me as far as my profession goes. Thank God, that is also where God gave me my spiritual rebirth. Catholicism transformed my life. The way I relate to others, the way I view the world. And the direction I'm taking in my life. The meaning of suffering. It all changed. **My conversion gave life to death.**"

The 37 year old artist moved to Florence in 2008 to study the paintings of the old masters like Leonardo da Vinci. When copying the great masterpieces, he was with his Catholic friend whom he asked who the fishermen in the painting were. Those days he encountered the Gospel in the same way as the illiterate people of Middle Ages, through symbols of art. Again in his own words, "I was 'reading' those paintings before I knew the Gospel. I didn't know what stories they represented. I think like music, **those paintings spoke to me with harmony and it animated my soul.** It was not just technique – that they made realistic painting – but there was something else that was very holy there."

Another personal encounter was influential in Micico's conversion: his friendship with the Irish religious Catholic artist, Dany MacManus in Florence. While Micico still knew nothing about the Bible, MacManus invited him to a lecture he was giving on St. John Paul II's 'Theology of the Body'. "That left an impression," Micico said. MacManu became Micico's godfather at his baptism in 2010.

"Art was the entrance. I think that even without words, like with the music of Bach, one can intuit the beauty of a creator", he said. Micico now creates sacred art himself. (Light of Truth; X/23/Dec. 1-15, 2019) HEART THROBS OF SG:

HEART THROBS OF SG:

- ⇒ **Pleads** for the protection of children facing myriads of violence. Parents, individuals and institutions to be inspiration to consider this as the topmost priority, our educational institutions showing the way.
- ⇒ **Nods** to the Synod of the Amazon termed as a fresco of our 'Common Home', qualifying the Church in terms of “discernment”, “synodality”, “inculturation”, “sacraments”, and “ministries”.
- ⇒ **Proposes** to the Church leaders, “perform or perish”, as of late the electorate in our democratic system seems to convey.
- ⇒ **“Amen”** to UN Secretary General, inviting all to “stand up together for journalism 'for truth and justice' and put an end to impunity for crimes against journalists.
- ⇒ **Congratulates** Sr. Gerald Fernandez (81), Singapore on being in the list of 'BBC's Most Influential Woman' for four decades of counseling prisoners in the death row. A particular call to such ministry caused her to found in 1977 the R.C. Prison Ministry.
- ⇒ **Is concerned** about the depleting number of vocations to priesthood and religious life. Are we addressing the issue sufficiently and effectively?
- ⇒ **Suggests** that on 02.11.2020 a list of the diseased in the parish be prepared and exhibited on the b. board and also mentioned for prayer at Mass.
- ⇒ **Looks forward** to the beatification of Archbishop F. J. Sheen on 21 December 2019 at the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception in Peoria, where he was ordained 100 yrs. ago and also entombed.
- ⇒ **Can't but agree** with Pope Francis, who, addressing 18 Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu and Sikh leaders in Thailand, said that religious freedom is a moral imperative.
- ⇒ **Endorses** the proposal to introduce “ecological sin” to the compendium of Church teaching. (The Prayer Book – Prarthana Pustika – of the diocese already has it on p. 18.)

- ⇒ **Prays** that the plan of Pope Francis and the Anglican Arcishop of Caterbury to travel together to S. Sudan may be materialized.
- ⇒ **Appreciates** Pope Francis' choice to visit Asian countries where Catholic community is a minority – Myanmar, Bangladesh, Japan and Thailand.
- ⇒ **Sends warm felicitations** to the diocese of Varanasi, celebrating its Golden Jubilee Year (1970-2020). Acknowledges with gratitude sharing of Bible Diaries and Calenders published on the occasion.
- ⇒ **Upholds** the question posed by Stan Lobo, a Counsellor: Have our educational institutions failed to deliver on creating a society with human values? Is it true that we have no time and space to impart character formation, as our time goes in covering portion for the best result in examination? Should we not search for alternative methods to reach our sacred goal? How different are we from other educational institutions with excellent results? (IC: XXXI/45)

Newsmakers:

Dn. Susai Raj will receive sacerdotal ordination from Bp. A. Neethinathan of Chingleput on 03/01/'20. Our prayers accompany Dn. Susai.

Congratulations to **Srs. Mary Saroj CJ and Prathiba SSH**, celebrating their Silver Jubilee. They are the daughters of late **Michael Master** of Nadaon, Buxar. On 30/12 Bp. Sebastian celebrated jubilee Eucharist in Nadaon village.

Mr. Virender Kumar, Chilibili/Buxar has been appointed Asst. Professor in Gov. College. CONGRATULATIONS!

Visitors to our diocese:

- Sr. Jacinta SSH, Provincial of the SSH Ranchi Province on 3rd of December.
- Sr. Jovita SSH, Assit. Provincial SSH Ranchi Province on 3rd of December.
- Sr. Rose Mary, Provincial (Samaritans), Ranchi Province on 17th of December.
- Sr. Kiran CJ, Provincial of CJ Sisters, Patna Province, on 23rd of December.

Grotto at Sasaram: It was the ever cherished dream of the parishioners of Sasaram that they also should



have a grotto near their church. This long due dream came to be realized on 08/12. In a simple ceremony Bp. Sebastian offered the Eucharist and blessed the beautiful grotto of Our Lady in the presence of the parishioners. Joy was visible on their faces. Needless to say that the presence of a **Grotto of our Lady** will bring lots of blessings in the campus and for anybody seeking her mediation.

Congratulations to the Parish Priest, parishioners and all those who labored for it.

Prayer for the deceased:

- ❖ Fr. J. Chrisostom SJ (81) who died on 28/11 was the Director of Prabhat Prakashan for many years.
- ❖ Fr. Mathew Orathel (56), PP of Latonah parish and former VG of Muzaffarpur diocese met with a fatal motorcycle accident on 14/12.
- ❖ Fr. Edwin Sumit Menezes SJ (72) breathed his last due to cardiac arrest in Bodh Gaya and his burial took place on.
- ❖ Fr. Sunil Kerketta (40) of Josepur diocese, nephew of Sr. Lucy SSH died of road accident.
- ❖ Mr. Ashish (30), nephew of Fr. Prashant Pius SJ, succumbed to injuries 03/12 due to road accident.

Happy B'Day

January

05 Fr. Binoy

Ordination Anniversary

January

16 Fr. Jogesh
17 Fr. Anil Bennet
22 Fr. Milagres
28 Fr. Prathap

Bishop's Programme

January 2020:

- 01 Mass at the Cathedral, Buxar.
- 04 Mass at RNDM sisters' Convent, Patna.
- 09 Holy Family Feast, Patna Holy Family Hospital. Meeting with the Superior General of Medical Mission Sisters.
- 22-23 Patna Education Commission Meeting, Patna.
- 24 Flag Hoisting and Novena at Mokama- Shrine.

February 2020:

- 02 Mokama Feast.
- 12- 20 CBCI Meeting, Bangalore.
- 22 Golden Jubilee of Sr. Janet CJ, Chirag, Buxar.
- 24 Patna Budget.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS

Nintendo Switch

Nintendo Switch Kneeling in front of the fireplace, a boy exclaimed: "Dear Santa, I WANT A NINTENDO SWITCH!" After a slight silence: "Dear Santa, I WANT A NINTENDO SWITCH!" And again: "Dear Santa, I WANT A NINTENDO SWITCH!" At this moment, his father intervened: "It's not worth shouting like this: Santa Claus is not deaf!" And the kid replied: "Santa is perhaps not deaf ... but grandmother is!"

