



EDITORIAL

Christmas time always evokes in us a good feeling; it heralds news of great joy; for Christ our Saviour is born. This year the Holy Father Pope Francis calls our attention on the meaning and importance of the nativity scene through his apostolic letter entitled, “*Admirabile Signum*” meaning enchanting image, which he signed on 1 December 2019. Through this letter, he emphasized that the nativity scene is like a living Gospel rising up from the pages of Sacred Scripture. While contemplating on the Christmas story, the Pontiff invites us to set out on a spiritual journey drawn by the humility of God who became man in order to encounter every man and woman. The Pope asks us to meet God and serve Him by showing mercy to those of our brothers and sisters in greatest need. This year as we prepare and showcase our Christmas crib, let it not only be an external sign of the season but an incentive for each one of us to live intensely the mystery of the incarnation with all its implications. FMA-INS.info wishes its readers a meaningful Christmas and may the Christ Child teach us humility in order to live every day of our life with love and service.

Twenty-nineteen is almost gone to eternity and we await for twenty-twenty. The pages of 2019 would have been filled with many colours and shades of life. Many major events like the animation programme from the Formation Team, Rome under the leadership of Sr. Maria Nieves Reboso, General Councillor for Formation, Canonical visit of Sr. Lucy Rose to the Province, the visit of the Rector Major Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime, the Provincial Chapter XII, the tragic death of Archbishop Dominic Jala SDB DD and some other events have marked the year that is at its ebb and have become memories for us to cherish forever. At this point of time, some could look back and give a sigh of satisfaction while some others might in some way or the other feel a sense of loss

or regret. Nevertheless, let us remember that there is a fresh start and likewise wish that 2020 be a new chapter in life waiting to be written with more hope, joy, service, enthusiasm and dedication.



The Rector Major Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime SDB, invites us to a fresh beginning through the Strenna 2020 proposed to us a familiar yet relevant phrase, “**Good Christians, Upright Citizens**” as a central thread for pastoral guidance in the new year. He noted that there’s a growing fragility, and sometimes inability, in being apostles and missionaries to the young. Let us this invitation to heart and deepen our identity as evangelisers and educators of faith in our daily circumstances of life.

Another context, in which we find ourselves in, is the three-year preparation for the centenary celebration of the arrival of the FMA missionaries to our motherland India. The theme suggested for the celebration is “*With Mary through the Course of the Century (1922-2022) and beyond ...*”. In the first year (2019–2020) of our preparation we are invited to live the following theme: *Give thanks: “Let us truly thank the Lord who gives us many graces” (L 37, 10) by Living our FMA Identity with Gratitude.*

Let us close this year with gratitude and fortitude as we march ahead undaunted in our determination to keep the flame of salesian identity alive in our hearts and in the mission we are called to. Once again the editorial board of FMA-INS.info wishes each one of you the blessings of Christmas and a New Year filled with new inspiration, new goals and new achievements.

Sr. Euginia Laloo

MESSAGES FOR THE WORLD COMMUNICATION DAY

Opportunity and Challenges faced by the Church Today ●



Sr. Rodalin Kamar

New Environment for the Announcement of the Good News

When we talk about the environment we mean everything that surrounds us and with which we enter into relationships. The media today no longer consider only instruments, but with the advent of communication on the internet, they are considered the real environments where not only can we communicate but we share, discuss, buy and sell, express feelings and emotions. Consequently, if these are the environments, the Church is called to enter into it to proclaim Christ to the believers of today.

The media are places, spaces of communication and expression of existence in which the person acts with creativity. He/she is the protagonist, growing more and more in authenticity, criticality and responsibility. In this way to communicate means becoming active, to participate in a dynamic process of learning and education, in a collaborative exchange with the members who interact in that same environment and in all the other spaces that are connected. Rather, it is an environment in which we learn to communicate in an experience of closeness, a setting where communication takes place, a “communicating community”.

It is then important that the announcement resonates in the Internet, which *is becoming ever more a forum for questions and answers*, to meet friends, family members, to communicate news

but also to proclaim the Gospel of Christ. St. John Paul II wondered: *From this galaxy of sight and sound, will the face of Christ emerge and the voice of Christ be heard? For it is only when his face is seen and his voice heard that the world will know the glad tidings of our redemption. This is the purpose of evangelization. And this is what will make the Internet a genuinely human space, for if there is no room for Christ, there is no room for man.* It is another way to be at the service of the Church’s mission. For this reason, St. John Paul II said that it is important to look at these new resources as gifts of God, to be present with responsibility and attention, with intelligence and creativity.

Here then it is possible to speak of “pastoral” even in the social spaces of the Internet, which, according to Benedict XVI are helping to bring out a new agora, where the presence of the Christian who bears witness to the Gospel cannot be lacking, because *unless the Good News is made known also in the digital world, it may be absent in the experience of many people for whom this existential space is important. The digital environment is not a parallel or purely virtual world, but is part of the daily experience of many people, especially the young.* Pope Francis is very attentive to all the levels that interest evangelization, in his message for the World Communications Day 2014, he underlines that he prefers a bruised church that goes out on the streets than a

Church suffering from self-absorption, and reflects that *“Those ‘streets’ are the world where people live and where they can be reached, both effectively and affectively. The digital highway is one of them, a street teeming with people who are often hurting, men and women looking for salvation or hope. By means of the internet, the Christian message can reach ‘to the ends of the earth’ (Acts 1:8). Keeping the doors of our churches open also means keeping them open in the digital environment so that people, whatever their situation in life, can enter, and so that the Gospel can go out to reach everyone. We are called to show that the Church is the home of all. Therefore, the Church cannot get away from this new call, because it is called to be in the midst of all there, where they are. If men, women and young and old also live today in the digital environment, it is the duty of the ecclesial community to be present in this new promising, challenging and fearless environment, as Jesus says to Paul: ‘Do not be afraid; keep talking and do not be silent, because I am with you and no one will try to hurt you: in this city I have a large people’ (Acts 18: 9). Hence, let us ask ourselves as communicators, educators and evangelizers are we capable of communicating the image of such a Church?”*

New Responsibility

In these fifty years since the Second Vatican Council, many changes have taken place in the field of social communication. This constitutes a great challenge for society and for the Church, before which a great personal and ecclesial responsibility is required, especially in pastoral workers, and also for professionals and professionals in communication. The Popes in their Messages for social communication have always emphasized and recalled this aspect.

St. Paul VI in his first message said: *One cannot ignore the danger and the damage*

which these means, however noble in themselves, can inflict upon individuals and society when they are not employed by man with a sense of responsibility, with an honest intent and in conformity with the objective moral order. And St. John Paul II reiterates: The professional who rates at its true value the impact and influence of the media productions he creates, will take particular care to make them of such high moral quality that their effect upon the formation of the culture of his generation, will be invariably a positive one. To be true to himself, to his craft, and to his faith, he must evidently resist the ever-present blandishments of easy profit, and firmly refuse to take part in any production which exploits human weakness, offends human conscience, or affronts human dignity.

Responsibility belongs to all Christians, especially to parents, educators and pastoral workers, who should help men and women, especially young people, to know and use critical tools, devices and channels with critical perception of communication.

St. John Paul II and Benedict XVI underline that through the means of social communication we all become promoters of peace: *The call for today's media is to be responsible - to be the protagonist of truth and promoter of the peace that ensues - carries with it a number of challenges. While the various instruments of social communication facilitate the exchange of information, ideas, and mutual understanding among groups, they are also tainted by ambiguity. As Pope Francis insists the great challenge facing us today is to learn once again how to talk to one another, not simply how to generate and consume information. This will help us to understand the meaning of communication as recognizing and creating closeness. When we lessen distances by growing closer and accepting one another, we will experience gratitude and joy.*



41st Annual Congress of the Salesian Co-operators

The 41st Annual Congress of the Salesian Cooperator of Shillong Province was held from 14-15 September 2019 at Auxilium, Agartala, attended by more than 400 cooperators from the different units of the Province. The programme commenced in the afternoon of



14 September with the registration followed by the photo session. At 2:00 pm began the inauguration programme, Mrs. Benita Marbaniang, Provincial coordinator welcomed everyone after which the flag was hoisted, this was followed by the anthem of the association and all proceeded to the school auditorium led by the flag bearers of the different centers. The prayer moment animated by Sr. Celine D'Cunha was followed by the lighting of the lamp and the felicitation. Among those who were present on this occasion was Sr. Elizabeth George our Provincial, Sr. Christina Kharkongor, Provincial Delegate, Fr. A.L. Jose SDB, Salesian Provincial delegate, Fr. Sunny Joseph SDB the Parish Priest of Don Bosco Nandan Nagar and many other Priests and Sisters. Everyone was presented with the "Risha" a traditional shawl of Tripura, and our girls sung the welcome song. Sr. Celine D'Cunha then presented the theme of the congress "**Do whatever he tells you**" [Jn.2:5]. After a short break the different centres presented their report. Later the students of the various Institutions as well as the cooperators of Tripura Unit performed a beautiful programme bringing on the stage the rich and colourful dances of the different tribes.

The second and the final day began with the Morning Prayer and a session taken by Fr. A. L. Jose SDB on how the origin of Association of the Salesian

cooperator came about. The two days programme concluded with the Holy Eucharistic celebration at 10:30 am. Fr. Paul Olphindro Lyngkot SDB, Salesian Provincial of Shillong Province was the main celebrant along with seven others who concelebrated in it. 30 members who willingly took their promise to day as Cooperators. Shri Mevar Kumar Jamatia, Minister of Forest and Tribal welfare was invited as the Chief Guest to grace this eventful occasion. Awards were given to many members who have given their time and energy for the growth of the association followed by the lowering of the flag. We thank Sr. Celine D'Cunha the Community of Nandan Nagar and the Salesian cooperators of Agartala Unit, and all the people behind the scene with the help of whom we were able to make this congress a memorable one.

Sr. Aquila Makri

2nd Asian Congress of FMA Past Pupils

The 2nd Asian Pacific Region Congress of the FMA Past Pupils with the theme "Open mind, attentive listening to create a hopeful future" was held at Banthan Phraphon Samphran, Thailand from 9-13 October 2019. 97 participants from 11 countries including FMA and lay past pupils took part in it. I was privilege to be one of the participants. Right from the day of our arrival, we were very impressed with the warm hospitality of the Sisters who made us feel at home and took so much care of us.

Sr. Maria Luisa Miranda, General Councillor for the Salesian Family, Sr. Gabriella Patino, World Delegate of Past Pupils and Maria Maghini,



Confederal President were present during the three days of the Congress. The sessions were both interactive and enriching. Sr. Maria Grazia Caputo FMA, from the International Office of Human Rights, Geneva, Switzerland, dealt with Education and Defense of Human Rights and Dr. P. R. Amutha Arokia Mary spoke on Defense of the family and Promotion of Women in Asia. Another enriching experience was the edifying and touching panel sharing by the Past Pupils from some of the federations on how they live the Salesian value and spirituality in the Multi-cultural and Multi-religious context. True to their motto "Hands in the world, roots in the heart" the FMA Past Pupils are committed to reach out to various sectors of human life especially towards the poor and weaker sections of the society in the spirit of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello. At the conclusion of the Congress, Commitments were taken to work for the defense of human family and to promote human dignity with love.

I thank Sr. Elizabeth George and her Council for the trust they have in me and for giving me the opportunity to take part in the Congress. Together with the Past Pupils of our Province we shall try to live out the commitment in whatever way we can.

Sr. Mary Lamare

Rector Major amidst the Salesian Sisters of Shillong Province

30 October 2019 marked the maiden visit of Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime, Rector Major of the Salesian Congregation, the 10th Successor of Don Bosco, to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Shillong Province. The event was celebrated joyously with the greatest possible grandeur. At 9:35 am the Rector Major arrived with other Salesians, escorted by the State Security Force. His arrival brought to life the magic of love and cheer to the sea of young people, the Students of Auxilium Higher Secondary School who were lined up from the entrance of the school to the doors of the Provincial house: some in their beautiful traditional dress and others in their school uniform. He was accompanied by Sr. Elizabeth George, the Provincial, Fr. Paul Olphindro Lyngkot, SDB Provincial of Shillong Province, Salesian priests, Sisters from near and far of our Province and two young students in their beautiful, colourful traditional Khasi dress. The Rector Major happily extended his love and greeting to the pupils.

The Rector Major and Fr. Horacio Lopez his secretary were felicitated warmly and joyfully with bouquets of flowers, traditional shawls (Jain Ryndia) and Khasi Necklaces (Paila). The other guests, Fr. Paul Olphindro Lyngkot, the Provincial, Fr. John Zosiama, Vice Provincial, Fr. James Thyrniang, Administrator, Fr. Daniel Cajee, Provincial Secretary and other councillors: Fr. Sunny Joseph, Br. Regy Joseph, Br. Alexius Condpan, were honoured with a scarf. The welcoming ceremony was hosted by Mrs. Amanda Jyrwa and Ms. Elena Kharkongor, assistant teachers of Auxilium Girls Nongthymmai.

Soon after, the Sisters and novices proceeded to the hall for a meeting with the Rector Major. The meeting was a homely one; a father in the midst of his children. The experience and feeling of joy was visible on the faces of every one. The Rector Major expressed his happiness to be in their midst and recalled the Mornesian way of life lived by the first Sisters. In his message he exhorted the Sisters and the Novices to spend their life totally for others and live their mission with hope and confidence. He highlighted three points: to be men and women of profound faith;



to spend one's life desiring to serve and to give and to live in fraternity which he said is a big challenge for the religious. The Rector Major encouraged the Sisters to overcome their personal diversity and learn to listen to the voice of the needy. He concluded his message by praying for God's blessings upon the province and invited everyone to give themselves to the poor and to do good to the sea of young people in their mission.

This was then followed by the Rector Major's song as he played on a guitar. Sr. Hilda Barragan, a veteran missionary from Mexico and Fr. Horacio Lopez joined him in this Mexican song which received a rapturous cheer from the audience.

To document the visit of the Rector Major to the Immaculate heart of Mary Shillong Province, a group photo was taken with him and another with Sr. Elizabeth George, the provincial, and her Council. Indeed, all felt the presence of Don Bosco in the person of the Rector Major!

Sr. Joplin Suchiang

10th Annual FMA Nurses' Meet

The 10th Annual FMA Nurses Meet of INS took place on 11 and 12 November 2019, at FMA- Outreach, Shillong. We were honoured and blessed to have with us our dear Sr. Elizabeth George FMA, Provincial at the inaugural function together with Sr. Rosa Pyngrope, Vice Provincial and Sr. Euginia Kyntiewlin Susngi, Provincial Secretary. The programme began at 9:00 am with the inaugural prayer moment and lamp lighting led by Sr. Dorathy Kharduit. Sr. Elizabeth Thannimoottil, the Province Health coordinator welcomed Mother Provincial and all of us. In her introductory message Mother Provincial spoke on the theme for this year: "Nursing



– **The Balance of Mind, Body and Spirit**". She expressed her appreciation for the commendable services rendered to the province and the society in various ways giving hope to many lives through our ministry. She said that the theme chosen is a very suitable topic that conveys a powerful message for us and others who are educators and spiritual healers. She further said that GC XXIV also invites us to be "**Sowers of Prophetic Hope**" and she wished that we may never bypass this opportunity to be carriers of hope and that of being generators of life for a more fruitful life for others.

The rest of the morning hours were dedicated for the presentation of the reports from the different centres, creatively presented by the Sisters concerned. In the afternoon we had the input sessions by some Sisters who have attended different courses and seminars at different parts of the year. Sr. Dorathy Kharduit presented on **Kangaroo Mother Care**, Sr. Maria Goretti Nongrum on **Critical Care**, and Sr. Celestina Syngkli on '**Palliative Care**' and Sr. Mary Concepta Pasi on **Family Cell Programme** respectively. Sr. Rosina Susngi FMA, the resource person for the 2nd day,



elaborately explained the meaning of the theme, emphasizing on the relationship between the **Mind, Body and Spirit** from the theological, psychological and social perspectives and all the participants felt very much enriched with new insights and deeper understanding of the theme. We were also privileged to have experienced the mercy of God through the Sacrament of Reconciliation administered by Fr. Gervasis SDB and the Holy Eucharist celebrated by Fr. Jose Chunkapura SDB who gave a beautiful reflection on the theme in his sermon. In her concluding message after supper, Mother Provincial expressed her gratitude for the noble services rendered for the sick by all the nurses of the province. We reciprocated our token of love and heartfelt thanks to our dear Mother Provincial for the sacrifice she made and the love and concern shown for the nurses.

Sr. Mary C. Pasi

Cardinal Charles Bo visits Auxilium Nongthymmai

11 November 2019 saw Auxilium Girls' Higher Secondary School campus colourfully decked to give a fitting welcome to Cardinal Charles Muang Bo, SDB, DD Archbishop of Yangon, Myanmar. The Cardinal is also the President of Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), member of pontifical Council for Culture and Consecrated life and a member of pontifical commission for communication. He was given a rousing welcome right from the main entrance to the school by the staff and students, who were lined on both sides of the enchanting campus, clapping and singing out loud a welcome song. His eminence was all smiles as he walked in the midst the enthusiastic young people, accompanied by Fr. George Plathottam SDB, Executive Secretary of



FABC Office of Social Communication Manila, Philippines, Sr. Elizabeth George, the Provincial of Immaculate Heart of Mary Province, Shillong and Sr. Euginia Kyntiewlin Susngi, Provincial Secretary.

A solemn welcome ceremony was held at the entrance to the house; during which His Eminence, Cardinal Charles Bo and Fr. George Plathottam SDB were joyfully felicitated with a shawl, (Ryndia Tlem) Necklace (Paila) and a bouquet of flowers and with another welcome song by the Higher Secondary Students of Classes XI and XII. This was followed by a message from His Eminence Cardinal Charles BO; who spoke on the need to have a vision in life, to know what one wants to become in the future and to work diligently to achieve the same. After this, the Cardinal along with the Sisters proceeded to the Chapel where a hymn of thanksgiving was sung for his presence in the community and he in turn gave the blessing of Mary Help of Christians. This was followed by a family meal.

Sr. Joplin Suchiang

Silver Jubilee Celebration

All the Sisters of the Province residing in Rome together with Sr. Gemima Pohrmen, Provincial Economer who was there for the new economers' course gathered on 3 December 2019 for the Silver Jubilee celebration of Religious Profession of Sr. Catherine Phawa at UPS (Universita Pontifica Salesiana) - Rome.



A thanksgiving Holy Eucharist was presided by Fr. Shaji Puykunnel SDB and concelebrated by Fr. Kenny Nongrum SDB. The homily and the whole celebration was focused on the privilege of being called, chosen, consecrated and the response to the great love of God. After the solemn renewal of her vows, she was donned with a *Ryndia Stem* (a traditional shawl) and a *paila* (a traditional necklace), an external sign of appreciation for her faithfulness.

Sr. Catherine, the lone Silver Jubilarian of 2019 is presently rendering her service in the community of Holy Spirit at Livorno in the Province of La Spezia, Italy. On behalf of the Province, the Sisters appreciated Sr. Catherine for the 25 years of fidelity and for making herself a gift to others through the healing ministry. The simple, homely but prayerful celebration concluded with a fraternal meal and moments of togetherness.

Sr. Maria Roibok Suchiang

New Economers' Course

The sector of administration under the leadership of Sr. Vilma Tallone, Ecomer General conducted a course for the 28 new economers from the different parts of the world at the Generalate of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians



in Rome from 4-23 November 2019. The theme that guided the encounter was "The person at the center of economy". Sr. Gemima Mary Pohrmen, Provincial Ecomer joined in the meeting and was hosted at Sacred Heart Community of St. John Bosco Province.

The first part of the meeting was dedicated solely for the formation of new economers and the second part from 19-23 November, was joined by 19 other Sisters and 2 lay collaborators for the collaborative platform. Some of the themes dealt with were: how to combine the life of poverty and the enterprising spirit; elements of Canon Law and Civil Law; Ecclesiastical Entities and other juridical forms of organization; rigor of the accounts and protection of the Patrimony; protection of minors and responsibility of Legal Representation; development work and path of solidarity. The logistics of the meeting and sessions taken were truly beneficial and enriching. The encounter with the economers from the various parts of the world have broadened the outlook and helped know the reality of the Institute in the different provinces of the world. Apart from the meeting, eleven Sisters made a pilgrimage to the holy places of the Institute which included Mornese, Valponasca, Nizza and Turin. Thank you to Sr. Elizabeth George, Provincial for this opportunity given to me.

Sr. Gemima Pohrmen

MISSION AD GENTES

Missionaries in Mission Land – Tunisia (Africa)

Sr. Magdaline Synnah FMA

Missionary in a mission land where the Christian's external presence is null is a unique experience. We the community of Menzel Bourguiba in Tunisia, Africa tried to live our life in a humble but solid way, the call of the mission as a response to the invitation of the Pope during the extraordinary missionary month (October). We are five Sisters from the 4 continents and of five nationalities: Srs. Florence from Congo, Africa; Alexandra from Haiti, America; Magdaline from India, Asia and Laura and Virginie from Italy and France, Europe.

During the month we decorated our chapel with the globe where all the continents and countries are written in Arabic language; the five colours that represent the five continents were displayed and at the end of each colour was placed a small candle. Each week we prayed for one continent, its people, its situations the missionaries and all people who need our prayers. All of you were in our prayers. The Rosary was prayed in our different languages of our nations and in Arabic the language of Tunisia. When we had Mass in our house we remembered



all the missionaries ad Gentes and the missionaries in their own place.

We took as the theme: living “the Joy of our Vocation” in our daily work. Being a country with hundred percent Muslims, we cannot preach by our words our Christians Faith, but by our expression of Joy we showed all those around us our Faith in action. It requires so much of patience, courage and self-emptiness, in order to give space to something different: culture, language and religion. One day I was asked by Leila: “how can you always be serene and joyful, in spite of many problems”? My only silent reply was that I



***Five ways to live our missionary call:
"Prayer, Meditation of the Word,
Charity, Sharing and Service to others"
(Diocese of Tunis, in Tunisia, Africa)***

have someone who lives in my interior for whom I live and work - Jesus. The only way to evangelize here is to show by our example of our hard work, service and honesty.

So the Missionary month was for us a sharing of unique experiences. Our life is concentrate in Knowing Him more and more through prayer and meditation of His word; through the love shared in community and through our testimony of a life, lived joyfully at the service of the people we are sent.

I thank each one of you for the prayers offered for all the missionaries, especially for me in Tunisia and we too from here pray for you. It's your prayer that sustains us! God is Great! Allah U Akbar!

South Asia Missionary Formation Course 2019

The Missionary Formation Course held at Mathias Institute, Mawlai, Shillong from 30 August to 30 September 2019 with 28 participants who came from INB, INC, IND, IDK, INH, INK INN, INT, LKC, INM, INS Provinces, with 18 priests, 1 Lay Brother, 8 FMA and 1 MSMHC.

The course was very much relevant with our mission as evangelizers in today's world. The brief hours of prayers and recollection with provoking reflections helped all to examine one's missionary life and to be rekindled in the missionary zest even to the degree of the desire to discern a call within a call – mission ad gentes. The

meeting with the Rector Major at Dimapur was a memorable moment. The long and tedious journey was not a problem considering the privilege of going there and experiencing the presence of Don Bosco himself, and of course to be enriched by the diversity of cultures over there.

The key moments of each day was the well planned session by chosen resource persons. The different topics dealt with were: DB's Ideal Mission; Initial Proclamation; A nuanced understanding of mission in the light of the New Testament; Intercultural Communication; Contemplative dimension of Gospel Proclamation; Missionary Approaches to Indigenous cultures; The Salesian Perspective of the Mission; Proclamation in Asian context and Churches' response to culture; Psychological aspects of personal Relationship and Evangelizer; Burnt out and Active Ministry; Current Moral Issues in the Mission; Evangelizing with the Young; Missionary Spirituality and Joy in the Gospel.

We were personally much enriched, rekindled, renewed and recharged in our Christian, religious vocation and pray that this fervour becomes more of inspiration than impression, and that we may become instruments to inspire others, to be more committed in our family and village visits with deeper missionary perspective; to rekindle in self and in the members of our communities the missionary zeal, to daily listening and discerning the missionary call within us. We are grateful to Sr. Elizabeth George, Provincial and our respective Communities for giving us this opportunity and to Fr. T. J. Francis of Dimapur Province for the wonderful way the Course was coordinated.

***Sr. Mildred Wahlang and
Sr. Celina Maslai***

HOLY LAND TRIP

Reflection and Realization

We consider it a special calling from Jesus to be able to participate in the pilgrimage to the Holy Land with 30 other Salesians. None of us ever dreamt to go and walk through the places of Jesus' birth, his childhood and early manhood, his mission, passion, death, resurrection and ascension. It was indeed a life changing spiritual journey. As we walked from place to place we reflected within ourselves how hard those days must have been – no shops, no houses around, no people, and a lonely very dry place. Jesus experienced hunger and thirst, hardships of every sort but he was able to complete his mission. After having been on the holy ground for a few days, our desire is to be more committed in the mission to walk with Jesus in the Gospels, with a deeper faith and to share this with his people.

After returning from the Holy Land, while reading the Holy Bible we are able to go deeper and recall the places visited and turn its pages into a vivid reality. This pilgrimage has made us become more aware of the movement of the Holy Spirit and to the love of God in our life; to spend more time in prayer and in reading the Word of God with love.

We could hardly believe that we were granted this privilege. While preparing for this trip, there was a tremendous excitement at the realization that we would soon be standing where Jesus the CHRIST stood. As we set foot in the Holy Land at Jordan, we saw vast desert-like places. One of us said, 'What! This place does not look holy at all'. The one sitting close by said: 'These places have holiness in this dryness – a silent witness of the Holy existence'. As we went around visiting places we saw olive trees



plantation and noticed that most of the buildings are of the same colour. They rear sheep and their main food is bread. At the Jordan River, our imagination flew back to the time when John the Baptist baptized Jesus. The re-enactment of the Baptism of Jesus at the Jordan River was an occasion to reaffirm our faith and we were glad to renew our Baptismal promises at the very river where Jesus himself was baptized. The highlights at Jordan were – a visit to the St. George Orthodox Church with ancient mosaic floor of the map of the Holy Land in the Madaba town; visit to the mount of Maccabar, Mount Nebo where the Prophet Moses was granted sight of the Promised Land.

We moved on to Israel after passing through a tight border security check at the immigration and at our destination. Some of the favourite places in our itinerary were;

- o Crossing of the Sea of Galilee in a boat to Capernaum
- o Touring around Jerusalem, walked along the Palm Sunday Road, prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane and then a visit to the Resurrection site. On another day we prayed the Way of the Cross on the very same route of Jesus. After having queued up for more than two hours, we were able to enter the tomb of Jesus.
- o Praying and touching the Wailing Wall or the Western Wall of Jerusalem, said to be the holiest place for the Jewish people, we prayed for all our dear ones.

- o Bethlehem and Jericho, this is under the Palestinian rule. We saw the sycamore tree which Zacchaeus climbed and to our wonder it was full of green leaves. We went to the mountain of the temptation of the Lord, visited the Dead Sea where very many of the group went into the water and rubbed their bodies with the black mud of the sea as they believed it to be medicinal.

From the Mediterranean Sea and by the side of the Red Sea we drove for nearly 800 Km along the Egyptian Desert. Egypt is a transcontinental State, spanning two continents Asia and Africa. Here our itinerary included:

- o The first stop at Mount Sinai where Moses received the 10 Commandments, then we walked into the Rock Villa Monastery of St. Catherine at the foot of Mount Horeb and at the site of the Burning Bush.
- o Finally, we reached the Pyramids. It is indeed one of the Seven Wonders of the World.
- o We visited the Egyptian Museum saw the Mummies etc....
- o Our pilgrimage ended with an entertaining River Cruise in the River Nile.

At the end of this pilgrimage we prayed for Peace in Jerusalem and in the whole world. We are now inspired and motivated to love and serve Jesus, our Lord and Master more dearly. I want to spread the good news of Jesus at all time and everywhere. We are grateful to Sr. Elizabeth George and our communities for making this pilgrimage a reality in our lives.

*Sr. Mildred Wahlang and
Sr. Bernadeth Sangriang*



Echoes from the Houses



Tri-Monthly Recollection

The three communities of Tripura Mandwi, Bishramganj and Nandan Nagar spent time together for the monthly recollection on 9 October at Auxilium, Nandan Nagar. All the Sisters from the three communities took part in it. The grace-filled day began at 8:00 am with the prayer for the happy death led by Sr. Celine D'Cunha. On this day we also spent time to study the working document of the Provincial Chapter in order to understand and know what is needed to be improved in our mission, what need to change and the various challenges of the mission. It was really an enriching experience of coming to know and understand the beauty and the challenges of our mission among the young. This was followed by the personal prayer in front of the Blessed Sacrament. As the hour of adoration was going on we had the joy of reconciling ourselves through the sacrament of reconciliation administered by Fr. Sunny Joseph SDB, the Parish Priest of Don Bosco Parish. We concluded this day with the Holy Eucharist at 1:00 pm.

Sr. Hunda Mary Marwein

CHAPAHATI

12th Dalu Zone Youth Convention

The 12th Dalu Zone Youth Convention in Chapahati Parish was held from September 6-8 September 2019. It was organized by Fr. Lyndoh T. Sangma, Diocesan Youth Secretary, along with the Core Team members. The Dalu Zone consisted of six parishes, and twenty delegates from each parish took part in this Zonal Convention. The programme began with the inauguration by Rt. Rev. Bishop Andrew R. Marak and the symbolic lighting of the lamp by the Bishop, Fr. Theodore T. Sangma, Parish Priest of Chapahati, together with different leaders from each parish. Soon after mass, Fr. Lyndoh the Youth director welcomed Bishop Andrew and all the participants and delivered the keynote address on the theme "Be it done unto me according to your word" (Lk1:38). He motivated the youth to have dedication and love for the service in the Church in their own parishes and to



become good Christians like Mother Mary who obeyed God promptly. The session was taken by different resource persons on different topics. During the session there was a group discussion on Media followed by a debate competition on early marriage besides other competitions. All the participants took part actively, willingly and seriously in the programmes. The Taize prayer was led by Fr. Lyndoh Sangma and the life of St. Dominic Savio was presented as a model for youth, Fr. Lyndoh insisted that the youth follow the virtues of St. Dominic Savio in their life to do much good while they are still young. The youth were happy and grateful to all the Fathers, Sisters and resource persons for organizing this programme creatively.

Sr. Beronica M. Sangma

GAROBADHA

Final Journey of Ambi Basa A. Sangma

87 year old **Ambi Basa A. Sangma** took her flight to the heavenly abode at 10:00 am on 23 September 2019 from the Convent, assisted by Sr. Albina Phangchopi and her grand-daughter Norimbe A. Sangma. Her relatives came to keep watch with us as soon as they heard of her passing away. The Salesian Co-operators under the leadership of the Local Co-ordinator, Mr. Gretarson N. Marak extended a helping hand in every way. As per the written agreement done with the headman of



the Ambari village and the then Animator Sr. Victoria Saioo, the mortal remains was laid to rest in the soil of Ambari village at 3:30 pm. Ambi Basa A. Sangma was a poor sickly widow who lived with her two orphaned grandchildren namely Norimbe A. Sangma and Chiblang A. Sangma. After her mother's death in 2004, Norimbe A. Sangma then only 4 years old, was brought to the convent by Sr. Theodora Lyngdoh the then animator of the convent so that she would be helped in her studies and be prepared for the future. In 2007 ambi Basa was seriously ill and since it was found that no one was taking care of her, Sr. Isidora Pasi the then animator brought her to the convent Dispensary so that she could be given proper medication. Her other grandchild Chiblang A. Sangma who was 6 years old was also brought in as their house was in a dilapidated condition. From then on ambi Basa A. Sangma remained in the convent along with her two grandchildren till her death. Food, Shelter, clothes and studies of the two children were tenderly provided for by the Sisters till date. At present Norimbe A. Sangma is doing B.A. teaching part-time in St. Dominic Hr. Sec. School, Garobadha. Chiblang is staying with his uncle in the village and is studying in class VIII at the Montfort School in Tura supported by the Sisters.

We continue to pray for ambi Basa A. Sangma's soul while we ask her to bless her two grandchildren and our community.

Sr. Celibon Maslai

My Two Little Words to the Sisters...

Two little words burst out from my heart "THANK YOU" to God the almighty and the Sisters of St. Mary Mazzarello Convent, Garobadha who have taken care of us from 2004 till now and lifted me up by sacrificing their quality time and seeing to the minutest needs of my grandmother, brother and mine. As of now, I am a part-time teacher in St. Dominic Savio Hr. Sec. School, Garobadha and also doing my B. A. (IGNOU). My brother Chiblang is reading in class VIII in Montfort School, Tura. I send my heartfelt gratitude to all the Sisters who have lived in this community from whom I experience love, care and support in every way ever since I was 4 years old till now. I count myself as the luckiest one in the Salesian family. May God bless them a hundred fold. Thank You Sisters.

Norimbe A. Sangma



53 First Communicants in St. Teresa Church, Wakantagre

From 6-8 September, 2019 Sr. Jomita D. Sangma and Sr. Aihunlyne Marwein went to Wakantagre village to catechize the 53 first communicants in preparation for the name feast of the village church which is dedicated to St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta. On 8 September 2019 at 10:00 am, the solemn Holy Eucharistic Celebration was solemnized by. Fr. Denis T. Sangma along with two priests as the concelebrants. Two missionary Sisters of charity and a good number of faithful were present for this occasion. The first communicants were over joyed to have received Jesus for the first time in their lives. Soon after the Holy Eucharistic celebration, there was a short cultural programme by the village people and ended with a beautiful talk by one of the Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity on the topic, "The family that prays together, stays together."

Sr. Aihunlyne Marwein



Holy Trinity School ITI Annual School Sports

The Holy Trinity School, I.T.I. Aizawl conducted a three-day Annual School Sports for both primary Middle and high school sections from 30 October -1 November 2019. For the primary section it was held at the school playground itself while for the Middle and high school sections it was held at Mualpui ground.



The school sports began at 9am and every day began with a prayer invoking God's protection on everyone. The March Past competition of the four houses, during which Sr. Lydia Paliar, the Headmistress took the salute signaled the start of the celebration. Various sports items were organized during the event which included relay race, sprint, football, volleyball, tug of war, etc. The enthusiasm, strong determination, and

excitement of each child who took part in the different games was well noted. We could see that each one gave their best. The gents teachers too had great fun playing the volleyball match with the high school students. The students were thrilled to see the sportsmanship of the teachers. The three days were moments of joy and excitement for the students. Everyone took part actively - cheering their teams and encouraging the participants. One of the most exciting games was “Insukhnawr” an indigenous games of the Mizo. It was played between two boys holding the bamboo at each end and pushing each other within the circle. Each one tried to remain within the circle. The school sports 2019 came to an end with the announcement of the best team of the year by Sr. Lydia.

Sr. Dalanglin Rynjah



Teachers' Day cum Silver Jubilee Celebration

“A good teacher is like a candle – it consumes itself to light the way for others”.

On 4 September 2019 St. Mary Mazzarello, Jowai celebrated Teachers' day cum silver jubilee of the three teachers – Mrs. Phulen Rymbui, Mrs. Skhemlang Rymbai and Mrs. Jacinta Pasi. The students expressed their love and gratitude to their teachers through various items which began at 10am and was chaired by Bhalang Sungoh, Class X and



Macrina Pala, Class VIII. At the very start, a short prayer was animated by Ibakordor Syih of Class X. This was followed by the address from Isakani Lato, the School Captain and presentation of gifts to all the teachers. The three Jubilarians of the year were then felicitated, they were honoured with silver crowns on their heads, sashes on their shoulders and golden rings on their fingers. Variety of items performed on the occasion highlighted the goodness of the teachers and their patient accompaniment all through. A Jubilee song was sung by the teachers, and Mrs. Phulen, one of the Jubilarians spoke on behalf of all three of them. Sr. Sylvestra Khonglah, the Secretary of the School then delivered a message to the teachers. In her speech Sr. Madona Lytep, the Principal exhorted the teachers on their role of being efficient teachers and appreciated the students for their splendid programme. She thanked the teachers especially the Jubilarians for their selfless service and their dedication in the growth of every child. The teachers were delighted with the programme of the students, performed with much love and reverence. After the programme, a delicious meal was served for all the Sisters and teachers. The teachers thanked the management and the students for making the day a memorable one.

Parent-Teachers' Meeting

Teachers-Parents' meeting was held at St. Mary Mazzarello, Jowai on 20 September 2019 in two groups: English and Khasi Sections and Secondary and Higher Secondary Sections at 10am and 1 pm respectively. The Chair Person for the first group was Smt. Felicita Nanghuloo and Smt. Ribha Sutnga as the Secretary. Shri Terence Sawian was the chair person and Smt. Biangmon Bareh the Secretary for group II. The meeting began with a prayer animated by Sr. Angeline Thongni and Sr. Teilanda Syngkon followed by the lighting of the candle by Sr. Sylvestra Khonglah, the Secretary of the School, Sr. Madona Lytep, the Principal, Smt. Susan Nellie Shullai, teachers' representative, Shri Remio Lyngdoh, a member of the Managing Committee and one of the parents. Then Sr. Madona gave words of welcome and Sr. Sylvestra gave a message exhorting the parents to try their level best to give their children not only book knowledge but genuine value of education to mould and shape them. After the message, Shri Ashwin Kumar Patel from Googolplex Academy, an Institute

of Abacus, Mumbai explained to the parents about ABACUS class which will be introduced in the school in the coming year. Sr. Madona gave brief information about the school activities and programme for the year 2020. There was an open session during which parents interacted with the teachers and the Sisters. They also gave some commendable suggestions for the betterment of the school and were very happy to get the opportunity to share their views and opinion. They expressed their readiness to collaborate in the new venture of the school. It was an enriching and a successful meeting which concluded with a vote of thanks from Smt. Hilda Pasi and Smt. Ribha Sutnga and a concluding prayer from one of the parents.

Awareness programme on the adverse effect of Vehicular Pollution

On 28 September 2019, St. Mary Mazzarello Girls' Higher Secondary School, Jowai organized an awareness programme for school students on 'the harmful effects of Vehicular pollution on human health and environment and the need to control the emission from vehicles'. Shri Terence Sawian, Asst. teacher, the resource person for the occasion spoke at length on the topic, he highlighted and stressed the need and importance of a clean and pure air for optimizing human health, as well as to maintain the clean and green environment. The impact of the uncontrolled number of vehicles at home and outside had been so adverse and ill-fated that instead of breathing in pure air and oxygen, we have to gulp in polluted air, not only carbon dioxide but other harmful gases leaving us vulnerable to





various risky diseases like lungs, heart and others. He urged the teachers, students and every one present to prefer walking as far as possible so that not only would they keep themselves fit and strong but help to curb the vehicular smoke and noise pollution.

The students were also informed about the hygienic and sanitary practices like washing of their hands with soap and water after coming from or using the washroom. The Principal informed all the students and teachers that the school will be "Plastic Free Zone" from that day itself. She exhorted each one in the school to have the same sense of cleanliness and responsibility towards our mother nature. She stated that the school would enforce the practice and care for the protection of environment (Protection) Act, 1986, within the school premises in particular and the surrounding in general. Being enlightened by this awareness programme, all the students were more convinced of the need to protect and save the environment. Together, they resolved to observe and practice the same wherever they are

7th Betty Alma Ryan Elocution

On 2 October 2019, St. Mary Mazzarello, Jowai conducted the "7th Betty Alma Ryan Elocution" in memory of our benefactor, Mrs. Betty Alma Ryan who had passed away on 15 February 2012. The programme started at 10:00 am with words of introduction by Sr. Sylvestra Khonglah, the Animator. The judges of the event were Mrs. Remisha Mukhim, Miss Theophila Mawniuh, Sr. Elfrida Khardewsaw and Sr. Mercilian Kshiar. There were 7 participants for Poetry and 8 for Prose sections. The 3 winners for the poetry section were: Megmerilist Dkhar, Helena Bhoi and Phyrnai Bhoi; and Emidaka Shylla, Ebanroi Dkhar and Macrina Pala for prose section in order of rank. We congratulate them and all the participants for their effort and courage to stand confidently in public. Prizes were distributed to the winners. The programme concluded with the talk of Sr. Sylvestra Khonglah who thanked everyone present for making the day special for everyone.

Josephine Sari (Class IX Boarder)



Commemorating 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi

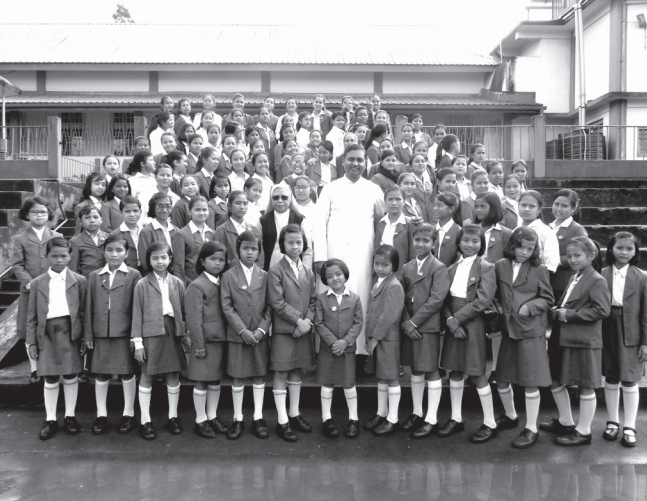
The Birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, Father of the Nation is commemorated in India as Gandhi Jayanti, a national holiday and worldwide as the International Day of Non-Violence. It is celebrated throughout the country to mark the birth of Mahatma Gandhi who was born on 2 October 1869. As per the directive of the District School Education Officer, Jowai and in unison with the whole country, St. Mary Mazzarello Girls' Higher Secondary School, Jowai commemorated the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi by organizing various competitions, such as drawing, storytelling, poem recitation competitions and a cleaning drive. The programme began with an introductory keynote from the Secretary of the School followed by a speech delivered by Smt. Emicia Sutnga, Asst. teacher who spoke in brief on the life story of Mahatma Gandhi right from the time of his birth up to the time he became the leader and freedom fighter of our country, India. She highlighted especially on the different



movements launched by Mahatma Gandhi like - Champaran Satyagraha Movement in 1917, The Khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movement in 1919 etc. against the British. The students took part wholeheartedly in the different competitions and in the cleaning drive. Prizes were distributed to the winners. It was a day of inspiration for our students and an occasion to inculcate a sense of love and responsibility to protect our Mother India, to stand for the truth, and learn to work together to make our school, district and country a clean and green India. The management congratulated all the teachers and students for their hard work and cooperation which made this day a memorable and successful one.

Feast of the Guardian Angels

The 2nd October is a special day for the members of the Angels group as they celebrate the feast of their patron on this day. The day began with the Morning Prayer at 6:30 am animated by Dakaruia-i Wahlang and Ladapmon Muksor, two members of the Angels group; this was followed by the meaningful Holy Eucharist celebrated by Fr. Ferdinand Dkhar, Administrator of the Jowai Diocese. The celebrant gave a beautiful reflection on the role of the Guardian Angels in our life. 'Angel' means 'God sent'. *Therefore, all of us are sent by God to do good things.* We spent the day in the company of the Angels fulfilling our daily duties. After supper, a stage programme was put up in honour of the Angels. All the members of the Angels group took part in the meaningful evening programme. Besides dances, songs and other items, a short skit



on the real presence of the unseen Angels in our daily life was also presented. The programme concluded with the talk from Sr. Sylvestra Khonglah, our Animator. This memorable day will always leave an indelible mark in our hearts to treasure and cherish in the years to come. The angelic choir of our community added solemnity to the celebration.

Stability Phawa (Class V Boarder)

Boarders' Retreat

A two-day Annual Retreat for the boarders of St. Mary Mazzarello, Jowai was organized from 7-8 October 2019. We were privileged to have Fr. Maria Arul Anthuvan SDB as our preacher. The first day began at 6:30 am with the introductory talk on the meaning of retreat and prayer - a personal talk to God. On this day, we also had the chance to meet Fr. Maria personally to ask questions and clarify doubts. In the evening we had a beautiful prayer moment in front of the Blessed Sacrament. We did feel the presence of God throughout the day as the preacher guided us to feel loved by God. On the second day, a day of reconciliation and conclusion; he spoke to us about God, the Merciful Father and convinced us that sin is self-punishment and destruction. After

the talk, we encountered God through the Sacrament of reconciliation followed by the concluding Holy Eucharist. The retreat was indeed a moment of real encounter with God. We thank Fr. Anthuvan for his availability to preach our retreat. We are grateful to the Sisters for availing such chance every year. May God bless and reward all those who have made our God experience a unique and memorable one.

Aidakyrpad Phawa (Class X Boarder)

Children's Day celebration

"Children are the rainbow of our lives, full of promises for a better tomorrow".

St. Mary Mazzarello Girls' Higher Secondary School, Jowai anticipated the children's Day celebration on 13 November 2019. The celebration began at 1:30 pm with a short prayer service animated by Sr. Marbel Pasi and Sr. Marvelous Syiem imploring God's graces and blessings on all our students followed by a cultural programme of the Sisters and teachers. In the evening, the Sisters put up a stage programme to express their love for the boarders. The celebration continued till the following day with a solemn Morning Prayer animated by Sr. Madona Lytep and the



Holy Eucharist celebrated by Fr. Manbha Pakem. During his sermon, Fr. Manbha quoted from the Gospel of St. Luke 2: 40 “Let our children grow and become strong, filled with wisdom and with the grace of God upon them”. After the Holy Mass, father and the Sisters gathered outside the church and wished the children through their festal song and sweets were distributed to everyone.

Sr. Marbel Pasi



Awareness Programme about Child Development

On 20 September 2019 Office of the district sports officer, East Jaintia Hills District in collaboration with Khliehriat ICDS office celebrated POSHAN MAAH in Sacred Heart Higher Secondary School, Lamyrsiang for students of classes V-XI in the school hall. Five officers from the sport department came to conduct the programme on the theme “POSHAN MAAH”. The students were excited and sensitized about the importance of physical exercises, sports and how to be healthy with their balanced diet. They were asked to share their routine of their daily physical activities and encouraged them to opt for exercise as it helps them stay fit and healthy. One of the experienced officers, Mr. Coming Tlang General Secretary of the East Jaintia Football Association, spoke beautifully on the importance of exercise and personal hygiene and urged the students to share



with their peer group of their age on the benefit of exercises. They also conducted a few warm up exercise as a demo and tips for students to practice daily. The students learned a lot about sports and exercise and their impact on one's life. Thus, the programme concluded with a vote of thanks from one of the teaching staff, Mrs. Deimon Shullai thanking everyone especially the resource person.

Bonnie Chettri (Class XI)

150th Birthday of Mahatma Gandhi

On 1st October 2019 the staff and students of Sacred Heart Hr. Sec. School, Lamyrsiang celebrated the 150th



Birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of our nation. We remember with nostalgic feelings this great Indian fighter who fought with non-violence to free India from the British rule. The staff and management marked this memorable day with various competitions for the students of classes IV-XI. These consisted of drawing/painting, essay writing, extempore speech, debate and quiz competition. Besides these, a group of students performed a dance beautiful on our freedom fighter which enthralled all and made us to introspect on what is happening in India during the last 72 years of Independence. A movie on the life story of Mahatma Gandhi was shown to all the students in the hall with the sole aim to make them understand about the hardships and trials of those years. Another initiative of the students of classes IX-XI was to clean up the surroundings and the school campus as a tribute to Gandhi's motive of cleanliness and also the mission of Swachh Bharat. The students were divided into different groups and were given their own respective charges. Each group was accompanied by teachers to guide them with their work. They also cleaned outside the school campus to spread awareness about cleanliness and its importance.

Ms. Biangmon Suja

Parent's Day celebration

The much-awaited Parents Day of Sacred Heart Higher Secondary school was held on 30 October 2019. The students were all thrilled with great excitement. The Chief Guest was Mr. Edwin Pala and the Guest of honour Mr. Stephen Bamon. The teachers gave a warm welcome to all the invitees while the students welcomed their own parents with the posy. Sr.



Matilda Kharjana, the Animator, gave the Welcome speech and this was followed by the programme of the students expressing their love, gratitude and reverence to their parents. Each item was conducted beautifully to perfection and in a creative way. Sr. Jubil Dkhar, the Principal, gave a report of the school, highlighting the talents and hard work of the students throughout the year. There was also some interaction from the parents, and two of them were given the chance of giving talk. The Chief Guest congratulated and appreciated everyone for the fabulous performance. The vote of thanks was proposed by Mrs. Nidahun Shadap. The event concluded with the snacks served by the School for all the parents. We owe everything to God for His goodness towards us and who granted us success in our programme. A deep sense of gratitude and joy pervaded the entire day.

Sr. Wankyrkhu Biam

Students' Day Out

On 8 November 2019, Sr. Jubil Mary Dkhar, Principal, Ms. Mandakini Biam along with the students of Class XI had a wonderful and joyful experience. It was a memorable day for everyone as they visited the historical places in Jaintia Hills District. The students left the school at 6:00 am and spent the whole day visiting



Syntu Ksiar, Ialong Park, Thadlaskein and Khlieh Tyrshi. The students who from the small classes have read of them only in the book were satisfied to witness with their own eyes. They returned to the school and narrated with great joy and satisfaction all that they have seen and experienced to their friends and teachers.

Ms. Mandakini Biam

Children's Day in the School

Everyone eagerly waited for this day with much excitement. Our students from Nursery to XI came to school on 14 November in their best dresses and with smiles on their faces. As soon as they reached the school campus the Sisters and teachers greeted them on the occasion of their Day. At 10:00 am all gathered in the school hall for the programme. The hall echoed with their cheerful voices as they witnessed the Sisters and teachers on the stage, dancing, singing and performing a short skit. Sr. Matilda Kharjana, the Animator was the Chief Guest of the day. In her message, she told the children that the Sisters and teachers have done their best to help them come up in life and to make them important and great persons in the future. She encouraged them to do their part and co-operate whole heartedly in their studies. Bonnie

Chettri of Class XI spoke on behalf of all the students thanking the Sisters and teachers who made them very happy and treated them like the VIPs of the day. After the programme, the students were given a delicious meal prepared by the Sisters and teachers.

Sr. Wankyrkhu Biam



Bible Day Celebration

*"The word of God is alive and active,
sharper than any double-edged sword...."*
Heb. 4:12

The Diocese of Jowai exhorted all the institutions and parishes to organize Bible week in each centre. The community of St. Francis Convent kept the Bible Day on 31 August 2019 with well animated programme for the boarders as an occasion to thank God for the gift of His Word through the Bible skits. All the five groups including the trainees took part in the programme. At the start, Sr. Maria Goretti Nongrum, the Animator lit the candle in front of the Word of God followed by a short prayer. Each group took pride to showcase their talents in staging the Bible stories from the Old Testament enriching everyone on the knowledge of the Word of God. At the end of the programme, Sr. Maria gave a message based on the skits and encouraged everyone to love the Word of God and to put it into practice in our daily life.

Teachers' Day Celebration

On 5 September 2019, the students of St. Francis Mawkyndeng expressed their love and gratitude towards their teachers on the occasion of Teachers' Day. The day started with a prayer moment animated by Sr. Mary Lamare, the Headmistress, after which the teachers lit the candles representing Christ the Light of the world. It was such a wonderful day to see the children performing on the stage with much creativity to show their affection to their teachers. At the end of the programme the teachers too expressed their gratitude to the students with a group dance that brought much joy to the students. The day ended with lots of fun and amusement. There was photo session and family meal for the teachers in the Convent after the programme was over.



thanked specially Sr. Aitihun for training their children to partake in the Holy Eucharist with great devotion. We do hope this beautiful experience will linger on throughout their life.

School Week 2019

Annual school week forms an integral part of our school activities. It is an occasion of celebration, felicitation and festivity when students present not only their wonderful performances but also receive honour for their achievements. The 5th Annual School Week was celebrated with great joy and excitement from 28-30 October 2019. The day started with the inaugural programme at 10:00 am with Shri Robinus Syngkon MDC (Member of District Council) of Raliang Constituency as the Chief Guest of the day and Mrs. Nashadong Tyngkan as the Guest of Honour. The theme of the celebration was Learn...Lead...Serve...Succeed. This was the motivational force that has guided us all throughout the days of the school week. At the inaugural programme there was the hoisting of the school flag followed by the ceremonial lighting of the lamp to invoke God's blessings. Few colourful items were performed by the students to felicitate the guests of the day. In his message, the MDC Shri Robinus spoke on the importance of education, and the extra-curricular activities which helps one to grow integrally. He encouraged everyone to take part wholeheartedly in all the activities of the event. Soon after

First Holy Communion

Sr. Aitihun Lawai along with the Sunday Class teachers prepared thirty-three children to receive First Holy Communion in the Parish Church on 8 September 2019. This day was something very special with beautiful decorations, lovely choir by Sr. Mary Lamare and the whole ambient was festive. The first Communicants dressed in white marched solemnly in procession towards the altar along with Fr. Sylvester Synrem SDB. Both the First and the Second Readings were proclaimed by the communicants. For the reception of Holy Communion, the children were accompanied by their parents. After communion, one of them made a thanksgiving prayer and all of them sang a thanksgiving hymn in action. Photo session then followed after the Holy Mass. The parents of the communicants

the programme lunch was served for the Chief Guest and the other invitees. The other competitions like Fancy Dress, Singing, Dancing, Extempore Speech, Poster Display, Painting and Drawing, Spelling Bee, etc. were conducted systematically by the teachers. The most exciting and interesting of all was the competition for the Prince and Princess of the year in three rounds namely; the casual, traditional and the formal round. Some outdoor games like football and handball were also organized. The celebration of the school week concluded on the third day wherein, prizes were distributed to the winners. Sr. Maria Goretti Nongrum, the Animator was the Chief Guest for the concluding ceremony. The last item was the announcement of the Prince and Princess of the year. To the joy of all, Embhah Chyrmang and Darishisha Biam were awarded the prince and princess of the year 2019. To close this week-long festivity, Sr. Maria Goretti then lowered the school flag followed by the singing of the School anthem. We thank God for the successful celebration of the school week and special thanks to all the Sisters and teachers for their hard work and for making the school week a learning experience for all the children.

***“I may not know
what God has planned,
but I know his plans
never fails”***



Parents' Day Celebration

The long awaited day dawned on 31 October 2019 which marked the celebration of the Parents' Day in our school. It was celebrated with great pomp and show. A lot of preparation preceded the function. The main purpose of this function is to thank and appreciate the parents and the guardians of children, who help the school authorities in the process of education. At 10:30 am the Chief Guest, Mrs. Rossetta Mary Kurbah, Deputy Commissioner of Ribhoi District, the Guest of Honour Fr. Saji Stephen SDB the Rector of Don Bosco Aspirantate of Nonglakhiat and the other invitees were welcomed officially. Shri Ibanjop Rynghang in his welcome address welcomed everyone especially the parents of our students. The children performed various colourful items of songs and dances, it was very interesting to see the talents of the children displayed in the various items. In her message, the Chief Guest appreciated and thanked the Sisters for their hard work and for the efforts



made by them to give good education to the children. She also exhorted the parents to take great care of the children and in a special way, to see that they complete their studies successfully. At the end of the programme, Sr. Hunbih Mary Dkhar, the Headmistress proposed the vote of thanks to everyone especially the guests for sparing their valuable time to add more joy to the celebration. She also thanked all the Sisters and teachers for their valid contribution to the successful celebration of the parents' day. Before they disperse, lunch was served for the chief guest and the invitees and snacks were given to all the parents. We thanked God for giving us this beautiful day and we implore His blessings on all those who have come to share our joy on this day.



Teachers' Day cum Silver Jubilee

On 5 September 2019, the Sacred Heart Girls' Higher Secondary School Mawlai celebrated the Teachers' Day. The day began with the short Prayer Service animated by a group of boarders and Pre-Aspirants asking God's blessings upon all our dear teachers. A melodious welcome song was presented by Class XI along with the other items from the different sections. The celebration added more joy to the whole school as our two teachers Mr. Lambert Warlarpih and Mrs. Jenita Kharnaioir celebrated the Silver Jubilee of their dedicated service rendered to the



school. The school felicitated them with gifts and Congratulation song from the School Choir. The teachers were grateful to all the Captains and the students for their performance done with love and gratitude. The message that students got was that they should be always grateful to their teachers for the time, energy and sacrifices made in order to shape and mould the lives of all the students and not only wish and thank the teachers only on such occasion. One of our Jubilarians, Mrs. Jenita Kharnaioir gave a beautiful message in which she thanked the Sisters, teachers and students and gave encouragement to all the students to work hard and to perform well in their studies. After the programme, Sr. Lydia Pala, the Principal gave the vote of thanks followed by lunch for all the teachers in the Convent hall.

Melody Nongbri (Class X Boarder)

Rotary Club awards Mr. Richmond

Teachers' Day, the 5th September 2019 was a special one for our school as Mr. Richmond Kharlukhi received the "Nation Builder Award 2019" from the Rotary Club, Shillong for being an outstanding teacher, he was also felicitated on the following day at the Rotary Corner, Shillong Club.



It was indeed a proud moment for the School Management, staff and students. We wish him all the very best as he continues to serve our school in the years to come working hard for the upliftment of the school and towards the all-round development of the students.

Andrew Lyngkhai (Teacher)

Cardijn Food Fest - YCS Programme

On 15 September, the YCS/YSM members had a *Cardijn Food Fest* and competition based on the Gospel theme “You go, youth and Gospel” at



Sacred Heart Theological College, Mawlai. Different schools from the Archdiocese of Shillong participated in it. The program started at 9:00 am with the Social Media Session animated by Deacon V. M. Jerry SDB. In his session, he explained about the advantages and disadvantages of the Social Media. To make the students understand more clearly on what he had explained, he gave a magic show. At 10:30 am the Holy Mass was celebrated by Fr. John Sohshang SDB. In his homily, he inspired all present to keep on growing and to have confidence in oneself as YCS/YSM members. In the afternoon, the Cardijn Food Fest was opened and the competitions began. The students learned something new for their lives as they strive to lead others in the right path.

Baiahun Sympli (Class X Boarder)

Awareness Programme on Substance Abuse

On 20 September 2019, the Students of Classes IX, X and XI had a one-day Awareness Programme on Substance Abuse with Dr. Shibolet Khonglah as the resource person along with her team from Mawlai Dispensary. In the course of her talk, she clearly explained to the students with the help of the Power Point Presentation on the dangers of substance abuse which include the use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, etc. that can lead to different body organs’ failure and cancer leading to death. The students actively participated in the programme. They were grateful to the School for organizing such programme which inspired them to say **No** to substance abuse and to **Yes** to what is good and helpful.

Yolinda Shadap (Class IX Boarder)



Orientation Programme

On 21 September, the boarders of Class X & XII, Sacred Heart Convent, Mawlai attended the Orientation Programme animated by Deacon V. M. Jerry SDB on how to make use of the time and how to study. Deacon Jerry along with a group of Sisters from the community gave us a clear idea and concept on the three steps to achieve good marks in different examinations, to make use of the time that is given and to study hard. After the session, there were some practical sessions on how to create our own ideas and concepts in order to recall what we have learned and studied. Dn. Jerry said that such systematic steps in our studies will make our minds fresh and that we will be able to face the different questions. Everyone was appreciative of his well-prepared animation and are grateful to the Sisters for the opportunity offered to us.

Jenisha Nonglang (Class XII Boarder)

Annual Retreat

The Boarders and Pre-Aspirants of Sacred Heart Convent, Mawlai had a two-day Annual Retreat on 25-26 October 2019 animated by Jesus' Youth Movement. The Retreat began with the introductory talk from Sr. Teresa Kamsuan, the Animator followed by the Adoration which was animated by Jesus' Youth Movement.

Then Ms. Daphira Pyngrope spoke on the theme of "Love" helping all to understand more on the love of God and love of neighbour.

On the following day, the programme began with the Morning Prayer animated by Sr. Nelia Shullai and Sr. Ribhalin Khyiem. At 9:00 am there was the talk on "How to make a good Confession" given by Ms. Lasngewhun Tham. The next session by Ms Virgil Nongsiej was on "Prayer". She spoke on the importance of prayer and of our need for God's help in our day-to-day lives.

In the evening Fr. Saji Stephen SDB, Rector of Don Bosco Nonglakhiat, celebrated the Holy Eucharist celebration. In the homily, he highlighted on the importance of the Sacraments. He also reminded that as students we need to make use of the time given to us. He also encouraged us to aim at becoming a Saint. Fr. Saji. Though the retreat was very short yet we all have learned a lot. It was really a beautiful experience to be in the company of Jesus. We are grateful to the community for organizing this retreat for us through which we have come to know and love God and neighbour a little more.

Magrisha Kharbani (Class X Boarder)

Seminar on Personality Development

On 7 November 2019, the boarders of Sacred Heart Convent, Mawlai from Classes VIII to X had a half day Seminar on Personality Development with special focus on 'Teenagers' Problems and Sexuality' by Miss Anita Susan Binge, member of Jesus' Youth Movement from Bangalore. In her session, Miss Anita gave much information on the topic, explained the differences between men and women and relationship between a man and a woman. Directives were given on how young girls ought to go about in order to make their lives free from problems. She also explained sexuality as God's gift to every man and woman. The girls were asked to write and express themselves in which way they would like themselves to be and what they want to do be happy and free before their death. She showed a video clip based on Corinthians Chapter 13 and reminded them to accept selves as they are and be always grateful to God for all the gifts received. The programme ended at 12:30 pm, the girls are grateful to her for the enlightening programme and to the community for organizing the same.

Madonna Dhar (Class X Boarder)

Support Staff Recollection cum Outing

6 December 2019 was a special day for the support staff of the three communities of Shillong: Bellefonte, FMA Outreach and Sacred Heart Convent, Mawlai. 33 young men and women set out for a half day Recollection cum Outing at 8:30 am accompanied by Sr. Christina Kharkongor,



Sr. Happyline Shadap, Sr. Teresa Kamsuan, Animators of the mentioned communities respectively and Sr. Maria Wanpyntngen Sariang, the nurse. On reaching Siloam, a meaningful prayer moment was animated by Sr. Happyline, taking the participants to a Mount Tabor experience followed by the talk from Sr. Christina. In her reflection, Sr. Christina spoke on the mission of every Christian based on the story of Jonah, the Prophet. She exhorted them all to be missionaries wherever they are and in whatever they do. While the talk was in progress, the Sacrament of Reconciliation was being administered by Fr. Roibok Biam CMF from Umsning. The morning session concluded with the Holy Mass celebrated by Fr. Roibok and the family meal shared in fellowship. Everyone was amazed at the scenic beauty of Siloam and felt inspired. The rest of the day was spent in Don Bosco Nonglakhiat where Fr. Saji Stephen, the Rector gave a guided tour in and around the house. They then proceeded to Khapmara for tea and departed for Shillong.

Sr. Teresa Kamsuan

***"If you have choices,
choose the best.
If you have no choice,
do your best"***



Boarders' day

The 22nd of September 2019 will always remain a memorable day for the boarders of Auxilium Mawroh, when the community celebrated boarders' day. From the very dawn of the day the Sisters animated prayer service for them and greeted them in a very special way. The boarders enjoyed and spent the day in the best way possible. Their joy was doubled with the evening program performed by the Sisters along with teachers and our helpers. At the end of the program one of the boarders expressed words of gratitude for all the Sisters who dedicate their lives for them and for all that they have been doing for them especially on this their feast day. They were reminded by Sr. Cecilia Ksoo, animator that they are to follow the example of Laura Vicuña to be courageous in overcoming evil and temptation.

Children's Day cum Advance Birthday Celebration

This year the Sisters and teachers celebrated the Children's Day, 14 November in a solemn manner. The day began with the prayer guided by Sr. Nildalin Kharkongor followed by the different stage programme from the teachers. A short message was given by Sr. Cecilia Ksoo, the Head Mistress and Animator during which she exhorted and encouraged the



students to be good and to spend more time in studies as they are preparing for their final Examinations. Snacks, and delicious food at lunch was served to all the children prepared by the teachers which made the children happy and delighted.

Auxilians Got Talents

On 31 October and 1 November 2019, Auxilium Lum Jing Shai School, Mawroh organized the different competitions for the students based on the theme "Holiness for you too" to celebrate the Strenna 2019 in a different way and to make known to the young people of Salesian Holiness. On the first day of the event, competitions on Drawing, Hand writing, Poem and Essay Writing, Singing of the Sub-Junior and Inter-House Football match for the boys were conducted and all the students took part whole heartedly with much love and joy. On the second day the students completed the different competitions - Quiz, Fancy Dress, Singing for the Junior and Senior category and the Final Football Match Red House vs Blue House. Interestingly the winner of the Fancy Dress was Hamarbamut, a boy of Class VII who dressed like young Don Bosco. Cries of Evviva Don Bosco and Madre Mazzarello resounded throughout the campus. Through the Competitions, the students have explored their talents and they learned more about Salesian Sanctity in the Garden of Don Bosco



and Mother Mazzarello. Sr. Cecilia Ksoo, the Animator and Head Mistress gave the concluding message reminding the students that in the school of Don Bosco, all of us are called to Holiness.



Annual Eucharistic Procession

The 11th Annual Eucharistic Procession of Agartala Diocese was held on 10 November 2019 with the theme "Rejoice and be glad with gratitude- Mt 5:12". The venue chosen was Auxilium girls' ground and it was organized by the Catholic Laity of Agartala Unit. Though it involved hard work, the community is happy to host such a big function where thousands of them participated. The Holy Eucharist was presided by Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC the bishop of Agartala and a good number of priests con-celebrated in it. The inclement weather and the torrential rain could not put off the fire of faith deep down in the hearts of the people. Many

young volunteers our teachers, girls and laity rolled up their sleeves and together prepared everything in time. With faith strong and high as mountain and rooted in God about 3000 faithful turned for the Sunday celebration including religious and seminarians from the different parts of Tripura. We witness the unshakable faith of the people who stood still in the cold weather and the heavy showers as the Holy Eucharist celebration was going on. We had been praying for the good weather but God answered our prayers in His own way. Since it was not possible to walk for the procession, a short benediction was organized soon after the Holy Eucharist. It was a beautiful experience like in the time of Jesus where people throng towards the altar to have the glimpse of Jesus in the midst of the rain. Though it looks like failure but with the eyes of faith, we thank God for the success of the day. Lunch was served for all the priests and religious in our community and at Don Bosco School for the faithful.

Sr. Ibansara Kharkongor

Auxi - Ignite 2019

The creativity week has its culmination in the Celebration of the Auxi-Ignite



which took place on the 27 September 2019. Many of the beautiful things made and created by the students were exhibited for the admiration of all. The annual exhibition of the school was attended by many invitees, parents, guardians, nearby Institutions and schools. It was a mega event where every student together with their parents contributed for the success of its day. This year exhibition was dedicated in a very particular way to the Father of our Nation Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi on the 150th anniversary of his birth. The day began with a prayer moment and the lighting of the lamps followed by a short programme in the school auditorium. The school was blessed with the presence of Smt. Saraswati R. IPS as the chief Guest of the day. Being a girls' school we are proud to have such simple, unassuming but great personality which is indeed a source of inspiration to our students. Sr. Albrida Pyngrope the Principal of the school gave the words of welcome at the commencement of the programme followed by felicitation to the invited guests among them were the parents of our students. In her short message, Sr. Celine D'Cunha gave a brief history of this memorable event. The melodious song sung by the school choir "**we can achieve**", set the tone for the celebration as the school believes that every child has the power to achieve something in life and today's event is one such achievements. In her short but profound message, Smt. Saraswati expressed her thanks for inviting her to be the Chief Guest of the day. She was so much taken up by the lively students and the standard by which they are being raised. She exhorted them to learn many things in life and not to depend on others. For this she insisted that reading is very important. "If we are not reading then there is no difference between those who



are illiterate and those who don't read" she said. She also spoke clearly on the need to be united. Aware of what is going on in our country, she exhorted the students not to allow anyone to divide them on the basis of caste, culture, language and religion. After a short programme the student gathered in the assembly ground for the cutting of the ribbon and the exhibition was declared opened. It was very inspiring to see the Chief Guest going from one stall to the other spending time to listen to all the explanation. Parents along with their children visited different stalls admiring the works of their children and it was a moment of pride and joy for them to be part of this achievement. The exhibition continued throughout the day till 4:00 pm after which all gathered for the assembly and the students left home. We thank all our teaching, transporting, office and supporting staffs and all those who made a mighty contribution for the success of the day.

Debasmita Das (Class VIII A)

Creativity Week

Pablo Picasso, a Spanish painter and sculptor who was considered one of the greatest and most influential artists of the twentieth century once said "Everything you can imagine is real". In a world where monotony sometime takes the upper hand, "imagination", and "creativity", is more and more emphasized by society. Although creativity is defined in



term of new and useful product, Auxilium believes that doing the old things in a new way will make every child a winner. To do this, it is very essential to stimulate the individual's creativity and generate more ideas. School is one of the best grounds to train individual person. Creativity week is celebrated every year to recognize the value, talents and merits of every child. Auxilium School, Agartala dedicated three days, 24-26 September for the students of our school in order to provide every child an opportunity to discover their talents and gifts and to think out of the box in order to create something useful. It consisted in a series of competitions and contests where all the students participated and showed their talents in various fields. Different competitions were allotted for the different days where all the students took part with enthusiasm and the desire to innovate. Some of the competitions are drawing, painting, doll making, flower arrangements, salad arrangement, face painting, debate and extempore speech. Beautiful things came out from this and it was really a week of enrichment and of new experience. Our Sisters and teachers believe that every child is a winner and through the creativity week we were being groomed and put forward our creativity. An hour time was given for each competition. After finishing one competition we move on to the next and thus enjoy and achieved every moment.

Literary Fest- 'Literati'

Auxilium Girls' school started its two day LITERATI with great enthusiasm and excitement from 30 September-1 October 2019 in the school premises. From organizing the programme to coordinating it, the students were fruitfully engaged in the fest. Students from different schools along with teachers and parents participated with great joy. The Literary fest provided the students with opportunity to stimulate their creativity and intellectual facets. The musicians of Auxilium gave a red carpet welcome to everyone with their melodious song. The fest commenced with a prayer moment and lighting of the ceremonial lamp by the dignitaries, Our Director Sr. Celine D'Cunha, Principal Sr. Albrida Pyngrope, a teacher representative; Miss Tatum Ghosh and a student representative. The host for the programme; Nilashma Chaudhury and Aditi Ghosh (class XII students) did full justice and stole the limelight. On the occasion, Dr. Baburam Swami, HOD, MBB College and Madam Nandita Majumder, Asst. Professor B. Ed College were the judges for Extempore and Recitation. Dr. Baburam Swami, Madam Tapashi Saha, Asst. Professor Holy Cross College, Shri Biswendu Bhattacharya, Journalist, The Times of Tripura & Rise Press and Shri Santanu Chakraborty, Guest Lecturer Ramthakum College were the judges for the Debate competition. The Programme was divided into two phases; on the first day of the fest, Extempore and Recitation were conducted and concluded with the extempore speech on the final day, followed by prize distribution ceremony.

Participants for all the events were exceptionally talented. Presence of mind, confidence and thoughts were well

judged in the extempore competition. The participants in the recitation competition used vivid expressions, intonation and pitch explicitly well. Debate competition prepares the students to use their interpersonal skills and to show their talent and the students from all the participating schools were very confident and well-prepared. It was a neck to neck competition and the judges had a tough time deciding the winners.

The fest concluded with the prize distribution ceremony. All the judges applauded our Director, Principal, the supporting staff and coordinating committee for conducting such a grandeur event. Dr. Baburam Swami, HOD, MBB College was spellbound and astonished with the beauty of Auxilium School. Trophies and certificates were given to all the winners of the different events. Participating certificates were also given to participants from all the school and later refreshments were served to all the participants, cheer leaders and the accompanying teachers from various schools. The literary fest was grand and flurry in every way. It brought the students closer to literature and made them more confident to face the world with valour and pride.

Miss Ankita Sengupta (Teacher)

SOCIAL MEDIA- "A VIRAL MEDIA"

"Social Media is not a place to get viral or expose yourself, but a place to expose something dedicated to the wellbeing of the society."

Nowadays, social media is spreading like virus which has no antivirus, especially among 'we' the teenagers. We fall into social traps made by some

unknown persons who are popularly known as followers. We trust them without knowing that whether they are fake or real.

Keeping this in view, our school organized a programme based on Social Media on 27 August 2019 just to enlighten us about the positive and negative impacts of it. The programme began at 8:30 am and we the students of Class IX were selected to attend the program. Some special figures were invited to guide us and to make us understand what actually social media is. They were from one NGO named Aarambh India, Mumbai. Their theme was 'Supporting communities to safeguard children'. They introduced themselves, became very friendly, tried to understand our mentality and then started the programme. The first question asked was "what is Internet?" after hearing our answers we were told that "Internet is a place of risks and opportunities -there might be some risks but along with that opportunities are also there". The resource person then asked some situation based questions and showed us some slideshows about online safety, online Disinhibition effects, trolling, sexual abuses, which is common in today's so called modern generation.

"What you won't do offline, don't do online"- said Miss Uma. And that line is absolutely right. We people act so fake in this real world and on the other hand we are too busy in acting real in that fake world of social media. Some opens fake accounts, some posts pictures which are just beyond our imagination, some makes online fake friends and come in relationships without knowing whether the person is real or fake. The time period of the programme was about 1hr 30 minutes. Within that Miss Uma and her team made us understand the positive

and negative impacts of social media. And as we are girls she talked about some sites like Menstropidia, Tarshi and their web page-from where we can access help anytime if we are trap in the cage of social evil. Each and every student enjoyed the programme and refreshment was served to all. Our biggest thanks to our beloved Director Sr. Celine D'Cunha, our Principal Sr. Albrida Pyngrope, Sisters and teachers who conducted and invited them to guide the entire programme. We the students of class 9 were highly privileged to be a part of that meaningful programme.

Barsha Deb (Class IX C)

Visit to Twimairang

On the morning of 12 October 2019, the community set out for a short visit to Twimairang village. Together with the Sisters was Mr. Presanjit Sinha the legal adviser, his wife Mrs. Sangeeta Devi our teacher and their little son as well as some Salesian Co-operators. The purpose of going there was firstly to meet the students of the school adopted by our community secondly to celebrate the birthday of Savio, son of Mr. Prasenjit, to teach the little one of the need to share by celebrating with the less privilege children of the village. The whole group was warmly welcomed by the village people. There was a short programme where the Sisters were welcomed with songs and dances. We were so much taken up by the simplicity of life, poor but very generous and the affectionate ways of the people to us. The people expressed their joy at our presence and acknowledged the help extended to them so far. Sr. Celine D'Cunha our animator spoke on behalf of the community expressing our joy at

having met them and promised that we will continue to extend our helping hands in the future. While giving a short talk Mr. Prasenjit thanked the village people for the warm welcome, expressed his happiness to belong to Auxilium family and promised that he will be there to help them in any time of need. After spending some time with the peoples, we were invited for lunch in the house of Miss Sandhya Hwrankhawl one of our teachers. We are grateful to her and her family for arranging everything which contributed to the success of the day.



Free Medical Camp cum Awareness Programme

Auxilium Care and Support Centre, Pyndengrei Nongstoin organized a Free Medical Camp cum Awareness Programme in collaboration with Nongstoin Social Service Society (NSSS) on 30 August 2019 in Nongkhlaw village, West Khasi Hills. The awareness was on: The Evils of drugs, Adolescent health/early marriage and Childline Services. The villages covered were Nongkhlaw and four other surrounding villages. About 465 people benefitted from the camp. 4 doctors, 5 nurses, 3 pharmacists, 6 ASHAs and some teachers of Nongkhlaw village school came to help us. Fr. George Jarain Director NSSS said a prayer of blessing before the programme and also spoke on EarlyMarriage. Other resource persons were Mrs. Phidalin Nongbri (adolescent

counsellor), Mrs. N. Dkhar (Psychiatric nurse) and Mr. Adventure Nongrum (Childline staff). Thanks to the office of DMHO Nongstoin who provided us with manpower and some medicines; to the Sardars of the five villages for their full support and cooperation; to Fr. George Jarain for the willingness to collaborate with us and for the means of transport provided to and fro. A million thanks to Fr. James Thyrniang SDB, Economist of INS Province for his brotherly concern and financial support. May the good Lord bless them all abundantly.



***One year of dedicated
service - Thank You
Lord for the showers of
blessing...***

Seminar at Thadwang, Pyndengrei Nongstoin

On 13 October 2019, Thadwang locality had a one-day annual seminar. Bro. Quirinus Warkhyllaw SDB and Sr. Mary Concepta Pasi were the resource persons. The topics dealt with were the 'Holy Eucharist' and 'Substance Abuse'. There were 125 participants both young and old. The seminar concluded with the Holy Mass at 3:30 pm celebrated by Fr. Richard Rapphap SDB, Assistant Parish Priest who also administered the Sacrament of Reconciliation while the sessions were going on. The Catholic faithful of Thadwang were much enriched from the seminar and expressed their heartfelt thanks to the resource persons for making themselves available and for the valuable teaching imparted to them.

We raise our voices of praise and thanksgiving to the Almighty God for the countless graces and blessings the Province has received during this past one year through our dear Sr. Elizabeth George and the Provincial Councilors. A thanksgiving day was kept by the community of the Provincial House on 6 October 2019 with a solemn Thanksgiving Morning Prayer. The Holy Eucharist was celebrated by Fr. Edmund Gomes SDB, Rector of Don Bosco Technical School. In his homily, he encouraged us to continually thank God for the wonders God has done to our Province. After the Holy Eucharist we greeted Sr. Elizabeth George, our Provincial and the Provincial Councilors and congratulated them for their hard work and dedication. The day ended with a thanksgiving adoration followed by a short stage programme performed by the Sisters and pre-aspirants. The day was solemnized with the presence of the Sisters from the communities of Shillong region. We are grateful to God for the selfless and hardworking leaders gifted to our Province.

Sr. Ibaniewkor Warjri

SAIDEN

Ri Bhoi Region Tri-Monthly Recollection

The three communities of Saiden, Mawkyrdep and Mawtnum gathered together at Saiden community on 7 September 2019 for the Tri-monthly Recollection. At 9:00 am, there was an opening prayer guided by Sr. Mukhim Deihok followed by the Adoration to the Blessed Sacrament. The Sacrament of Reconciliation was made available too. We were happy to have Fr. Gabriel Marak as the preacher of the day. In his talk, Fr. Gabriel highlighted on the beauty of religious life and explained the special gift of the vows. The Eucharistic celebration was celebrated in the afternoon and was followed by one hour of adoration guided by the Aspirants. We are immensely grateful to father for having spent his valuable time with us and thank the community of Saiden who hosted this one day programme which has helped us to experience God in a very unique way.



Bible Day

29 September 2019 was a special day for all the Oratorians of the six Centres of Iewmawlong, Mawdiangum, Makoibari, Umjarasi, Nongthymmai and Pahamrinai as they had the joy of celebrating the 'Bible Day'. This programme was conducted at two places namely Iewmawlong and Umjarasi. It is also one of the preparations for the Provincial Community Day on the theme: *Communities that generate life in the contemporary world.*



The three Centres which are under the guidance of Sr. Iahunlang Kyrlian gathered at Umjarasi whereas, the others under the responsibility of Sr. Deihok Mukhim assembled at Savio Oratory Iewmawlong. The Aspirants and Postulants creatively prepared the children to celebrate this day with meaningful programme, which included Songs, Dances, Skits and Quiz Competition related to the theme: **"Do whatever He tells you" Jn. 2:5.**

The children took part with enthusiasm and joy in the different programmes. Cheerful eyes could be seen sparkling in the face of each Oratorian, for through it, they had increased their knowledge

about God. The full participation and co-operation from the elders and the parents, had helped the Sisters and the Candidates made this day, exquisite and beautiful. It was an interesting and beautiful experience to be with the children and the young, and the candidates resolved to give their best in this important mission in the spirit of our father, Don Bosco and our Mother Mazzarello.

Iarikmen Rynjah (Postulant)



Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord...

The 9 November 2019, marked another milestone for the community of Auxilium Saiden with the visit of His Eminence Cardinal Charles Bo of Myanmar. His visit brought joy and inspiration to the community; everyone was edified by his simplicity, availability and friendly sharing. The Sisters and Candidates gathered in the verandah to accord him a warm welcome and Fr. George Plathotham SDB, who accompanied him, introduced the

Cardinal to the community. Sr. Phyllis Bamon, the animator said few words of welcome to the Cardinal and to the other Priests who accompanied him on behalf of the community. The Candidates sang their song with much of joy and enthusiasm him. The Cardinal then addressed the Candidates and inspired everyone with his example, he also urged to say one 'Hail Holy Queen' besides other prayers for the holy perseverance. The cherished message was taken home by everyone. He concluded his motivated message with the blessing of Mary Help of Christians.

Soon after, the Cardinal and other Priests who came along proceeded for lunch and before they could depart for Shillong, the Candidates gathered at the portico, wishing him "ALL THE BEST" for the success of the Eucharistic Procession and safe journey. May God bless our Cardinal.

Bansara Kharsyiemiiong (Postulant)

Education to life and love

On 29 October 2019, Sr. Grace Mary Jyrwa organized a half day programme for the Postulants and



Aspirants at Auxilium - Saiden, on the theme: **“Education to Life and Love”**. Sr. Grace stressed on early marriage, making the Candidates aware of the current situation. The session broadened their ideas on how to help young people with whom they come into contact with in their mission. They were enriched with ideas and knowledge, on how to deal with the YOUTH of today’s world especially those who play with LIFE and LOVE at the early age of fourteen or fifteen years. Adolescent stage is a very crucial age and time where young boys and girls want to experience and desire to try something new, like sexual fulfillment, drugs, parties, etc., to gain fleeting satisfaction. Misusing of Social media and poverty are also the main reasons for many young people to fall into the trap of early marriage. Through this programme, the candidates grasped the opportunity, to learn and gather information, in order to teach others on the evils of child marriage. The candidates were very grateful to Sr. Grace for enlightening and making them aware of the difficulties of an early marriage.

Banrijuban Songbird (Aspirant)

Reception to Postulancy

“Every breath we draw is a gift of His love, and every moment of existence is a grace.”

7 October 2019 was another manifestation of God’s grace for the community of Auxilium Training Centre, Saiden when the 18 Aspirants embraced the warmth and the love of God on receiving the Postulants’ Medal. The august gathering was solemnized with the Prayer Service during which Sr. Lucy Rose, General Visiting Councillor, received the Candidates into the Postulancy handing



them the postulants’ medal. The presence of Sr. Elizabeth George, our Provincial, Sr. Veronica Kamei, the Secretary of Sr. Lucy Rose, Provincial Councillors, Animators and Sisters of the different communities of our Province added grandeur to the celebration. The celebration began with the welcome speech of Sr. Phyllis Bamon, the Animator followed by the presentation of a skit on the theme **“Do Whatever He tells you” John 2:5**. An awe-inspiring discourse of Sr. Lucy Rose on: “Hard Work and Piety, Studying and Learning, and Compassion and Forgiveness” enlivened our soul.

Prior to this grand celebration, was a one-month preparation with reflection on the theme along with its concrete spiritual practice which had increased love for our own vocation. Soon after the service, a short felicitation programme was staged by the Aspirants appreciating and congratulating the new Postulants for their first courageous “yes’ to the Lord and with a thanksgiving programme followed by lunch.

Don Bosco with us

“Each person is a star; their soul is as bright as anything the heavens have to show” this was the feeling of the community of Auxilium Saiden on 28 October 2019. Truly, the arrival of a bright

soul, Rev. Fr. Angel Fernandez Arttime SDB, Rector Major, the 10th successor of Don Bosco, had woven enthusiasm and fire into the fabric of the Salesian Family in Nongpoh. The Sisters and the Candidates were delighted to welcome him at Nongpoh Parish together with the Mawtnum Sisters, the Parish community and the representatives of the Salesian family. The boarding boys and girls sang a welcome song, which was followed by the presentation of the bouquet of flowers, shawl and a 'Khasi Paila', the candidates too, expressed their joy with a melodiously blessing song.

Rector Major addressed the gathering emphasizing on the true essentials of spiritual life when he said: *"We must always carry Jesus in our hearts, and as Priests and Religious we are for the young"*. These words of Rector Major were deeply engraved in many people who long for an encouraging word, and was reciprocated with beautiful commentaries, one of which was *"He is truly a Salesian"*.

The day ended with a light refreshment and the Rector Major left for Shillong. His short message left an indelible mark in everyone's heart and everyone returned home carrying loads of fond memories of his Christ-like personality.

Felinicia Syiemlieh (Postulant)

A Day with the Lord

The 20th September was an impressive and blessed day for the 18 Aspirants, who had a day of Prayer Experience at the Holy Redeemer Retreat Centre in preparation for their entry into the Postulancy. The day began with the departure for Umroi at 8:00 am. It was a soul-stirring experience, with Fr. Regi

MSFS as the animator. He spoke on the importance of knowing the purpose of life; he added saying that this is a temporary world and so our priorities must be spirituality and not religiosity. He further said that our formation is primarily meant for holiness; therefore, we must strive for sanctity because our purpose in life is to reach heaven. Besides the talk, there was the joy of personal encounter with the Lord and it was really a beautiful inner experience, one could feel the power of God coming into their soul. The sacrament of reconciliation was made available and each expressed their inner joy and peace. The climax of the significant day was the Holy Eucharist celebrated specially for them. During his homily, Fr. Regi gave a deep reflection on the challenges of following Christ in a radical manner.

*Poilang Pyngrope & Riphilda
Kharsahnoh (Postulants)*

Awareness Programme on Youth and the Drugs

On 3 November 2019, Sr. Grace Mary Jyrwa conducted an Awareness Programme for the three Oratory Centres of Iewmawlong, Mawdiangum and Mokoibari at Mawdiangum Village Hall, on the theme **"Youth and the Drugs"**. The programme began with a short prayer guided by Sr. Grace, thanking God for the gift of all the participants and invoking His blessings upon all of them, and for the success of the session. Sr. Deihok Mukhim who is in-charge of the three Oratory Centres, delivered a welcome speech to welcome Sr. Grace. The Resource person stressed on how DRUGS attract young people today and thus they indulge in bad habits and become addicted. To

make the youth understand better, she cited some concrete examples. We felt privileged that our Oratorians of Classes V-XII, were enlightened and enriched through this awareness programme. Sr. Grace ended the session by asking them some questions and clearing their doubts and fears. The discussion was concluded with a prayer by Sr. Deihok followed by the distribution of sweets. One of the Oratorians delivered the vote of thanks to Sr. Grace for availing her valuable time in coming and sharing about the danger of drugs. The programme was concluded with a photo session.

Risilyn Kharkongor

Annual Spiritual Retreat

The Annual Retreat of the Aspirants and the Pre-Aspirants 2019 was held in Auxilium Saiden Training Centre from 30 September to 5 October 2019 with Fr. Henrie Warbah SDB as the preacher. The Candidates had been enriched by the talks and reflection on the different topics which articulated on: *“The Call of Love, The Call of Discipleship, The Cost of Discipleship, The Eucharist in us, Our Experience of Prayer, Fighting against Temptation and Trust in God Trust in Me”*. They also had sufficient time to reflect, meditate and locate God in the raw experiences of their lives through the help and guidance of the preacher and the Sisters of the community. The retreatants felt the spiritual growth during these days of personal encounter with the Lord and this experience helped them to recognize the importance of living a genuine and authentic religious life, by being in constant relationship with Him. The day before the conclusion of the Spiritual Retreat, they had the opportunity to



prepare themselves well for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, where they rolled away the stone letting the fresh air to flow in, allowing something new to happen.

Our deepest thanks to Sr. Phyllis Bamon, the Animator and Sisters for arranging the Retreat and for creating a conducive atmosphere of prayer and recollection.

Innocencia Marwein &
Ridasuk Pyngrope (Aspirants)



Bible Week Competitions

As the Diocese of Jowai dedicated this year 2019 as the year of the Bible, to honour and deepen on the Word of God, we conducted the different Bible Competitions in the school as well as in the Convent for our boarders on 11 October 2019.

The skits were presented by the four houses on the different topics from the Bible. The students acted very well using lots of creativity in the modern style mesmerizing the audience. The participants of the Bible Quiz learnt more than 200 questions and answers from the Gospels of St. Mathew and St. John. The students did very well and were able to answer the questions.

We were delighted and satisfied that all the students took part with great seriousness and interest. The students were glad to get the opportunity to explore their gifts and talents. They were grateful to all the organizers who took the trouble to prepare them learn and know more about the Bible. At the end of the programme, Sr. Victoria Saioo expressed her sincere thanks and gratitude to the teachers who took keen interest to prepare the children and appreciated the participants who willingly took part in the various competitions. She encouraged them to do better in the future and congratulated the winners.

Sr. Ephrilda Mawsor



Educational Tour

15 November 2019 was a memorable day for the eighteen outgoing Class X students of Auxilium Secondary School, Saphai. The Sisters and teachers organized a day of educational outing leaving the school campus as early as 5:00 am. The group reached Mary, Our Help Training Centre, Bellefonte at 8:45 am where the Sisters and novices warmly welcomed them. The next visit was to North Eastern Hill University (NEHU) campus where they spent some good amount of time at the Science Centre. The students were enriched with the explanations given by the mentors of the centre on the Digital Planetarium of the Solar System, the 3D show, the laboratory and the other

scientific matters. The next beautiful place visited was Don Bosco Centre for Indigenous Cultures (DBCIC) at Mawlai. For most of them being the first time to the centre, they were impressed by what they see from everything that was displayed in the various galleries. From there the group proceeded to Kyrdemkhla, a place of natural beauty, surrounded with evergreen pines and a clear brook. There the students had lunch and enjoyed different games together. All returned home at 9:00 pm, grateful to God for his blessings and presence during the whole day trip; to the Sisters and teachers for the unforgettable event, more importantly for the chance of being together as a batch before leaving the school. Long live, Auxilium Secondary School, Saphai!

Carrie Lamare (Class X)

Parents' Day Celebration

On 5 November 2019 Auxilium Secondary School Saphai celebrated its Annual Parents' Day since we believe that '*Our parents are our first benefactors*'. Mr. Dominic Pala from Lamysrang was the Chief Guest, besides the parents of our students and other invited guests, present were also the Sisters from Auxilium Convent, Nongthymmai, St. Mary Mazzarello Convent, Jowai and St. Francis Convent, Mawkyndeng. Sr. Stella Mary Pasi, the Headmistress of



the school welcomed the guests while Sr. Anita Dhar introduced and felicitated the Chief Guest and other invitees. There was a brief moment of prayer, lighting of lamps and reading the Bible passage and a prayer dance. The students opened the programme with their melodious welcome song followed by other colourful dances, skit and songs to mark the occasion. The audience participated with rapt attention and were under spellbound by the performances of the children. In his talk, the Chief Guest admired the discipline of the children, appreciated the good work done by the Sisters and urged the parents and students to collaborate with the School management in every endeavour. He spoke with all his heart and said that he felt indebted towards the Sisters for the commendable work they do. He also advised the children to obey and respect their parents and teachers in order to have a bright future. The day ended with a solemn vote of thanks by Sr. Rufina Suting. Lunch was served for the Chief Guest and other dignitaries while the parents and students were given refreshment sponsored by the teachers. The parents were grateful and happy for such experience in which they were able to witness the talents of their children. We are appreciative of all those who had contributed so generously in terms of time and money for the development of the school. May God bless everyone!

Sr. Anita Dhar



Extraordinary Month of Mission October 2019

Auxilium Umswai had its unique share in celebrating the Extraordinary Year of Mission 2019:

- The Sisters went out every day to different villages and in the school to prepare the children, youth and adult for the Sacraments of First Communion and Confirmation. *(4 Boarders: 1 & 3 received the first Communion and Confirmation respectively)*
- Bible quiz and Prayer Recitation Competition were organized for both big and small girls respectively. The winners were given chance to go for the Eucharistic procession.
- The boarders were motivated to contribute something for the mission as a result each of them detached something for the mission.
- During the month, the community Sisters together with young people



made a special visit to 7 sick and elderly persons and a poor family in one of the villages of our parish, spending time with them and prayed with them and for them.

Sr. Celina Maslai

Boarders' Day Out

On 31 October, three Sisters - Sr. Celina Maslai, Sr. Monica Sangma and Sr. Matilda Kleiñ accompanied the boarders and the co-workers to Ulukhunji for witnessing the Tiwa Langkhon Festival cum outing. They enjoyed to the full to see a goodnumber of cultural dances performed on the spot and further the small picnic together to the riverside.



Children's Day Celebration

On 14 November, the community honoured the boarders in our home. Right from the Morning Prayer, they were made to feel special as each was called out by name to place a flower in front of the altar before the Mass. After the Mass, all boarding boys and girls were greeted with a festal song. All the Sisters wished our boarding girls also in the Convent making them feel special. The celebration

continued in the school as well during the day. We served them with tea and snacks after their games. In the evening, the Sisters and the co-workers entertained them with an evening programme to make them happy. The whole community had a solemn dinner prepared especially in honour our children in the boarding.

Sr. Matilda Kleiñ



Most Rev. Dominic Jala SDB, DD
Archbishop of Shillong
Born: 12 July 1951 (Mawlai - Shillong)
Died: 10 October 2019 (California, USA)

***Thank You
for your Life
of Dedication***

MEDIA matters...

SMARTPHONE



7 Factors to Consider while Buying a Smartphone

India is the second largest smartphone market in the world, and it is still growing at almost 30% annually. Today, you can get smartphones at price ranging from Rs. 5,000 all the way up to Rs. 90,000. The sheer number of choices can often leave you confused. To help you with your decision-making, here are a few handy tips on factors you should consider:

Memory Phones have two kinds of memory – Random Access Memory (RAM) and Read Only Memory (ROM). RAM, along with the processor of your phone, determines the speed of the phone and its ease of operation. ROM is what most people refer to as storage. This is the memory that is used to store the OS, apps and all the videos, photos and songs that you want to store on the phone.

Therefore, it stands to reason that phones with higher RAM will be faster and those with higher ROM will have more storage. An average user should be happy with a 2 GB RAM and 16 GB ROM. But if you are a heavy user, go for a phone with at least 3-4 GB RAM and 64GB ROM. To extend your ROM you can also use a micro SD memory card, but remember, apps that are stored and run from memory cards tend to be slower.

Camera : There is a lot of hype surrounding in-built cameras on phones with brands trying to outdo each other by offering more megapixels. Don't let this fool you. By itself, a camera with more megapixels doesn't result in better images. Apart from megapixels,

good quality photos are a function of factors like ISO levels, aperture as well as the speed of autofocus. If you are likely to take a lot of pictures, then go for a phone with a 12 or 16 MP camera that has an aperture of f/2.0 or lower, for good results even in low light. If your use of the camera is not likely to be heavy, a phone with an 8-12 MP camera and aperture of f/2.2 should be fine for you.

Processor : Much like smartphone cameras, there is a lot of hype about processors with jargons like quad core, octa core, Snapdragon, Media Tek and so on. Here is a simple thumb rule. Look at the processing speed that is expressed in terms of Giga Hertz (GHz). The higher the speed, the faster the processor. If you are going to do a lot of photo/video editing or play online games and stream videos, opt for a faster processor.

Display : A phone with a 5.5 – 6-inch HD or QHD display is usually an ideal option. This will allow you to enjoy a rich media experience while being easy to carry in your pocket or purse.

Battery : If you are the kind of user who is likely to have multiple apps open simultaneously, a heavy consumer of video-streaming apps or playing games, if you belong to this category of users, then it is better to go for a phone with a long-lasting battery. Online usage also tends to drain batteries faster.

Operating System : There are only two Operating Systems (OS) to choose from – Android or iOS. If you opt for iOS, then you are by default opting for an Apple iPhone. All other smartphone makers function on the Android OS. But this also comes in a confusing array of names and versions. Often the Android OS is tweaked by manufacturers to add features which could also result in bloatware, thereby slowing down the phone. So, try the phone out before making the decision.

Cost : As mentioned earlier, smartphones come at price points that vary greatly. Obviously, prices tend to go up as you go higher up the value chain in terms of processor speeds, memory, camera and display.

Compiled by Sr. Jenney ĩawphniaw



Auxilium Provincial House, Nongthymmai – Shillong

Dearest Sisters and friends,

16.12.2019

Greetings of Love, Peace, Joy and Hope of the new born Saviour to each and every one of you! The threshold to the solemn days of the Christmas Novena reminds us that redemption is close at hand with the incarnation of the Son of God. I take this opportunity to extend my warmest and affectionate greetings of a Happy and Blessed Christmas to each of you dear Sisters, Novices, Candidates, young people, the educating community, our collaborators, friends, benefactors and to everyone who shares our educative mission.

The holy scene of Christmas reminds us of the blessedness of that night when the Word came down from Heaven as a Light to illumine the night that enveloped the history of humanity. It is undoubtedly incredible that God comes to earth and also accepts to be born in a stable; but what is even more implausible is that he presents himself as a child, the weakest of all creatures. Who could have thought of that? Yet Christmas is all here: a God who becomes a fragile child, a King born poor for our sake. The simple manger calls to our minds the humility with which God lowers Himself to make Himself one with us- to be one with our human fragility and vulnerability. The poor and simple scene of the Holy child in the manger symbolizes a new life that comes to us, a change that offers us the opportunity to "go back to being born" in God's love and wisdom. It is a matter of making our heart aware that God will come back to be born in us and we in him, giving us once more the opportunity to demonstrate our love in return and to forget the grudges, bitterness, misunderstandings that drive us away from love.

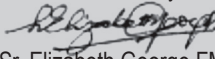
Pope Francis has also urged the whole Church to recognize the greatness and majesty of the simple scene of the crib in his letter, 'Admirabile Signum' on 1 December 2019. The letter contains the details of the story behind St. Francis' first nativity scene at Greccio. The Pope said in his letter "The enchanting image of the Christmas crèche, so dear to the Christian people, never ceases to arouse amazement and wonder. The depiction of Jesus' birth is itself a simple and joyful proclamation of the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God [...] In front of the crib we discover how important it is for our life, so often frenetic, to find moments of silence and prayer- The silence to behold the beauty of the face of Baby Jesus, the Son of God, born in a lowly stable"

The Pope called the Nativity scene 'A wonderful sign'. Indeed, the holy scene of the crib is a magnificent sign and symbol of our Christian faith, where Love is revealed, Mercy is made tangible and the Promise of salvation is fulfilled. God the Father has generated His love to the world and to humanity through His most wonderful sign- His only begotten Son, Jesus. Today, it is good to ask ourselves: How can we regenerate this Father's Love on our part? How can we make His sign of Love visible in our contemporary world? As we celebrate the great solemnity of Christmas, let us rediscover the Father's unconditional Love for us and for the whole humanity who seeks to encounter us in our daily and ordinary situations. May His birth as God and Man infuse our hearts and lives with greater Faith, Hope and Love. Let us turn our gaze to the Babe lying in the manger who asks for our love. May the Holy infant Jesus bless us that we may give back to God Love in return, that we may learn to live with him and to practice with him that humility of renunciation that belongs to the very essence of Love.

Once again I wish each and every one of you a Blessed and Joyous Christmas filled with every grace of the new born Saviour and His Blessed Mother and many greetings for a Christ filled New Year 2020.

"By contemplating God, who became a child, radiating light from the humility of the Crib, we can also become witnesses to humility, tenderness and goodness" - Pope Francis

*Happy Christmas and
Christ-filled New Year 2020*

Affectionately,

Sr. Elizabeth George FMA
Provincial

Santa Claus

THE REAL MAN BEHIND THE MYTH
BY HEATHER WHIPPS

It wasn't until 1809 that Santa Clause got fat, and by the late 1800s he was wearing the full red suit with the fur trim and leather boots. Like America itself, the jolly figure we call Santa Claus is a melting pot of cultures, blending elements of folklore with the fantastical. Santa Claus the man is actually loosely rooted in fact, though he hasn't always looked the way he does today, having evolved from a gift-giving Catholic saint who lived during the third century. The Protestant Reformation and the emigration of European traditions to America morphed that pious figure into the red-suited character that is now one of the most famous images in the world, complete with his iconic army of elves and a magical transportation system

ST. NICHOLAS THE GENEROUS:

Old St. Nick wasn't always the rotund, bearded fellow you see gracing Christmas cards. The historical St. Nicholas was the revered Bishop of Myra, a Roman town in what is now Turkey. Born around the year 270 A.D., historians believe, Nicholas became bishop as a young man. Nicholas was dedicated to helping the poor throughout his life, famously (and anonymously) paying for the dowries of impoverished girls. His reputation as a secret gift-giver around town grew with time, and he became known especially for depositing coins or treats in the shoes of children who would place them out for that very purpose, sometimes in exchange for carrots or hay left for his horses. Nicholas is traditionally depicted wearing a red bishop's cloak, and was often helped by a small orphan boy, according to some legends. Canonized after his death, St. Nicholas was named as the patron saint of children, sailors and all of Greece, among others. He remained a popular figure of worship through the Middle Ages, with elaborate feasts held each year on the date of his death – Dec. 6 – and small gifts given to children, usually in their shoes, in his honor.



DUTCH REVIVAL: The Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, when the veneration of Catholic saints was suppressed in many regions of Europe, saw a drop in the popularity of St. Nicholas. Only in The Netherlands was the celebration of St. Nicholas kept alive in the form of Sinterklaas, a kindly figure who traveled from house to house on the evening of Dec. 5, leaving treats or presents in children's shoes in exchange for a snack for his horses, according to folklore. In the Dutch tradition, Sinterklaas wore red bishop's robes, had elfin assistants, and rode his horses over rooftops before slipping down the chimney to deliver the gifts.

COMING TO AMERICA: Sinterklaas came to America with the Dutch in the 17th and 18th centuries, and it was in the new colonies that he really evolved. The anglicizing of the name – from Sinterklaas to Santa Claus – happened by 1773, when the latter was referenced for the first time, in a New York City newspaper. Santa's waistline expanded in 1809 with the publication of author Washington Irving's book "A History of New York," in which the big man is described as portly and smoking a pipe instead of as a lanky bishop. In an 1822 poem entitled "A Visit from Saint Nicholas" – more commonly called "It was the Night Before Christmas" – by Clement Moore, Santa is further imagined with a magic sleigh powered by reindeer, a sack full of toys, and a round stomach, "like a bowl full of jelly." By the late 1800s, most depictions of Santa Claus followed this imagery, but the final cog in the Claus legend was provided by Coca-Cola and illustrator Haddon Sundblom, whose 1930s red-suited Santa, complete with white-fur trim and leather boots, became the iconic standard recognizable today.