



MADHYA PRADESH JESUIT Newsletter



LOYOLA NIKETAN, BILASPUR, C.G., INDIA

May & June, 2023

Year 44, No. 05

FR. GENERAL HAS APPOINTED

- Fr Peter Gallagher : Provincial of the Jesuits in Britain with effect from 1 September 2023

FR. POSA HAS APPOINTED

- Br Sandesh Gonsalves, SJ : Country Director, Afghan Mission

THREE CONSULTORS OF THE POSA

- Fr Ajit Xess, SJ : (Provincial of Ranchi)
- Fr Mathew Elanjipuram, SJ: (Provincial of Kerala)
- Fr Soosai Mani, SJ : (Provincial of Delhi)

PROVINCIAL'S PROGRAMME

MAY 2023

- 05 Ordination, Musgutri
- 15 Scholastics' Gathering, St. Xavier's Ambikapur
- 16-20 Province Assembly, Asha Deep, Pathalgaon
- 21-23 Asha Deep, Pathalgaon
- 29 XISA, Raipur

JUNE 2023

- 10 Loyola, Kunkuri
- 11 Sadhnalaya, Asha Deep, Pathalgaon
- 20-21 First Vows, Jamshedpur
- 23-25 Social Scientists' Meeting, XISA, Raipur
- 27 Province Consult (Zoom)
- 29 PDD meeting, St. Xavier's Ambikapur



PROVINCE ASSEMBLY 2023

APPOINTED BY FR. PROVINCIAL (List II) 2023

(w.e.f. or before 10th June, 2023)

| S. N. | NAME | FROM | TO | DESIGNATION |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Alfred Toppo* | St. Xavier Niwas, Baramkela | St. Xavier Niwas, Baramkela | Minister, Treasurer |
| 2 | Amardeep Ekka | DNC, Pune | St. Xavier's Ambikapur | Asst. Director Apostolic School, Teacher (St. Xavier's Hindi Med. School), I Year Regency |
| 3 | Bipin Kishore Kujur* | St. Xavier's Ambikapur | St. Xavier's Ambikapur | Minister |
| 4 | Dharam Kishore Lakra* | XIDAS, Jabalpur | XIDAS, Jabalpur | Hostel Prefect |
| 5 | Fulchandra Kujur* | XIDAS, Jabalpur | XIDAS, Jabalpur | Financial Controller in the College and Treasurer in the Community |
| 6 | Gyan Prakash Kujur | Nirmala Ashram, Jhingo | Jeewandhar Ashram, Mauhapali | PP (to be appointed by the Bishop of Raigarh), Teacher, Dalit Mission, Farm & Garden |
| 7 | Jerome Minj* | Loyola House Kunkuri | Loyola House Kunkuri | Manager, Loyola College |
| 8 | John Sona | St. Xavier's Ambikapur | Khrist Milan Ashram, Namna | Minister, Farm & Garden |
| 9 | Mukti Prakash Xess | Xavier Niketan, Manpur | Kabul, Afghanistan | JRS Education Consultant (Appointed by POSA) |
| 10 | Petrus Minj | Khrist Milan Ashram, Namna | Nirmala Ashram, Jhingo | Farm & Garden |
| 11 | Polycarp Tirkey | St. Xavier's Ambikapur | St. Ignatius Church, Namna | Confessor |
| 12 | Pratap Toppo | St. Xavier's Palizi (KHM) | Khrist Milan Ashram, Namna | Recuperation, Vice Superior (w.e.f. 1 st November) |
| 13 | Rajkumar Badne | St. Xavier's Ambikapur | St. Xavier Niwas, Baramkela | Vice Principal, Teacher, Farm & Garden |
| 14 | Vincent Tirkey* | St. Xavier's Ambikapur | St. Xavier's Ambikapur | Farm & Garden |

* Additional to the previous responsibilities.

DIACONATE MINISTRY

| S. No. | Name | Place of Ministry |
|--------|---------------------|--|
| 1 | Dn. Anuranjan Tigga | St. Ignatius Church, Namna, Ambikapur |
| 2 | Dn. Arvind Kujur | Xavier Niwas Baramkela (Teaching until Fr. Anmol Lakra returns from Tertianship) |
| 3 | Dn. Ravindra Bara | St. Francis Xavier Church, Bandiakhar, Pathalgoan |

FINAL VOWS IN JOYFUL CELEBRATION

Eleven Jesuits of Madhya Pradesh Province pronounced their final vows in the Society of Jesus on April 22, 2023, at Loyola School Kunkuri. Fathers Anil Panna, Theodore Kujur, Ignace Kindo and Prabhu Narayan Khalkho prepared themselves spiritually by participating in an eight-day retreat led by Father Alphonse Tirkey at Asha Deep Pathalgaon. Subsequently, Fathers Arvind Vinay Tirkey, Ashok Lakra, Sushil Tirkey, Bipin K. Kujur, Eligius Kandulna, Mukti Prakash Xess and Milyan Xaxa underwent a spiritual journey guided by Father Agapit Tirkey. The Jesuits of Loyola Kunkuri meticulously organized the entire celebration, which commenced with a



solemn Eucharistic service presided over by Bishop Emeritus Patras Minj, with the homily delivered by Archbishop Emeritus Paschal Topno. During the Mass, all eleven Fathers pronounced their Final Vows and Fr. Ranjit Tigga, the Provincial, received their vows with reverence and gratitude. The choir, led by Fr. Jerome and comprised of students from the Apostolic School, beautifully conducted the musical proceedings. Following the Mass, a brief felicitation programme took place, where the Provincial Fr. Ranjit honoured each Father by placing a PAGRI (Turban) on their heads. The presence of family members and friends during the programme added to the joyous atmosphere. The day concluded with everyone joining in a delightful and abundant dinner.

Fr. Arvind Vinay, S.J.

CAMP FOR CALLING

Madhya Pradesh Jesuit Province recently organized a Vocation Camp aimed at students who recently completed their 12th grade and expressed a desire to join the Jesuits. The camp, held from May 8th to 10th, 2023, at Ashadeep Pathalgaon, witnessed the participation of 31 enthusiastic young men. Later, an

additional 11 students got in touch with Father Alok Toppo, the Vocation Promoter, expressing their



interest.

During the three-day event, the participants experienced a series of engaging activities including orientation sessions and icebreakers. They were fortunate to receive motivational talks on various aspects of life from inspiring figures such as Father Dilip Soreng, PCF, as well as other dedicated Fathers and Brothers. The camp left a lasting impression on the attendees, instilling in them a sense of purpose and a deeper understanding of their vocations. As the students embark on their journey towards the pre-novitiate training, the entire MAP Jesuit Province extends its heartfelt wishes for their future endeavours. The province expresses its confidence in their abilities and looks forward to witnessing their growth and contribution within the Jesuit order.

Fr. Alok Toppo, S.J

SCHOLASTICS' GATHERING FOR UNIFYING MINDS AND EMPOWERING FUTURES

From May 12 to 15, 2023, 35 Scholastics from Madhya Pradesh Province gathered at the Apostolic



School Ambikapur for a Scholastics Gathering. The theme of the gathering, "De-listing and Self-Empowerment," fostered meaningful discussions on the current burning issue. Fr. Nirdosh Ekka delivered

an inspiring talk on various social justice and human rights issues and concerns, while Fr. Michael Tirkey, the PCE, shed light on the Province's contribution to education and tackled the emerging challenges brought by new education policies. His insights provided valuable perspectives on the evolving landscape of education within the province.

During the gathering, the Provincial, Fr. Ranjit Tigga, addressed the scholastics, providing information about the society and offering words of encouragement and best wishes for their priestly formation and training. Apart from the serious and important matters discussed, the scholastics also had enjoyable moments, including a trip to Gaghi dam near Ambikapur. The successful gathering owes its gratitude to Fr. Dilip Soreng, the PCF, for his guidance and support.

Sch. Pingal Lakra, S.J.

ORDAINED AS PRIEST: A JOYOUS CELEBRATION OF FAITH AND COMMITMENT

In a joyous ceremony, Rev. Amit Xalxo of the Madhya Pradesh Province was ordained as a priest on May 5, 2023. The ordination took place at



Musgutri Parish in the Jashpur Diocese, where Bishop Emmanuel Kerketta officiated the ceremony. The event was witnessed by a significant number of priests, religious and parishioners.

Rev. Amit Xalxo embraced the motto from Matthew 12:18, "Here is my servant, whom I have chosen," which will guide and inspire him to dedicate his entire priestly life to serving both the people and God. The ordination ceremony was adorned with beautiful liturgical dances and an enchanting choir.

Following the ordination, a short felicitation programme was held to congratulate Fr. Amit. Fr. Ranjit Tigga, the Provincial, on behalf of the Province, expressed gratitude to Amit's parents for offering their child to God and encouraged the



gathering to continue supporting and inspiring more young men to join the Jesuits and religious life.

The ordination of Rev. Amit Xalxo marks an important milestone in the spiritual journey of both the newly ordained priest and the community he will serve.

Fr. Arvind Vinay, S.J.

PROVINCE ASSEMBLY 2023: GATHERING FOR GROWTH

The Madhya Pradesh Jesuits recently gathered for their Annual Province Assembly, which took place from May 16 to 19, 2023, at Ashadeep Pathalgaon. The theme of the assembly was "Looking Inward and Way Forward," focusing on self-evaluation and planning for the future.

The inauguration ceremony commenced in the evening with the hoisting of the province flag by the Provincial. Dignitaries such as Archbishop emeritus Paschal Topno, Fr. Ranjit Tigga, Fr. Arun Kumar from the Karnataka Province, Fr. Henry Lakra, Socius, and others participated in the lighting of the lamp. The



assembly commenced with a splendid KODAKU Tribal dance of Dhanwar, showcasing the richness of tribal culture.

Throughout the assembly, the participants came together to share their joys, pray, think, and plan collectively. Spiritual conversation methods were employed to facilitate discussions. The first part of the assembly focused on pastoral concerns, with Fr. Arun Kumar delivering the keynote address. The



pastoral commission, led by Fr. Zacharias Lakra, coordinated this segment. The second part of the assembly delved into Province Apostolic Plans (PAP) and was coordinated by PAP Commission members



headed by Fr. Stany Tirkey. The Provincial, Fr. Ranjit Tigga, addressed the assembly, providing an update on the status of the Province, while Fr. Henry Lakra, Socius, shared important administrative information. The Province Treasurer, Fr. Emilius Ekka, presented the financial status of the Province. There were some more important reports and information presented to the assembly.

Each day of the assembly began with a morning meditation conducted by scholastics, followed by



the celebration of Holy Mass. Jubilarians, including Archbishop emeritus Paschal Topno (50 years of Final Vows), Fr. Leo Florent Tirkey (60 years in the Society), and Fr. Dharam Kishore Lakra (25 years of Priesthood), presided over the Mass on the first day. The second day saw newly ordained priests, Fr. Manoj Lakra, Fr. Basant Ekka, and Amit Xalxo, leading the Eucharistic celebration. On the third day,

the priests who pronounced their Final Vows on April 22 presided over the Mass. The scholastics conducted the choir.

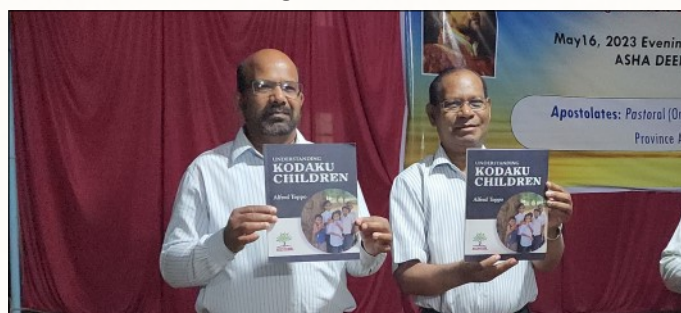


Amidst the serious discussions, there were also moments of fun with games and an evening cultural program presented by the scholastics. The assembly concluded with the Youth Commission being entrusted with the responsibility for the next year, symbolized by the handing over of the flag to Fr. Preetam Panna on behalf of the youth commission. The entire Province expressed gratitude to the Pastoral Commission for their meticulous planning and successful execution of the assembly. Profound appreciation was expressed to Provincial Fr. Ranjit Tigga for his invaluable guidance and exceptional leadership.

Fr. Arvind Vinay, S.J.

UNVEILING THE LATEST BOOK

Father Alfred Toppo, a renowned author and social advocate, was honoured for his newly published book "Understanding Kodaku Children" at the



Provincial Assembly in Pathalgaon on May 18, 2023. The book, published by IDSOL Informatics, focuses on the lives and challenges faced by children in rural communities.

Father Provincial Ranjit Tigga expressed his appreciation and awarded Father Toppo for his exceptional effort in shedding light on the struggles of Kodaku children. "Knowing Kodaku Children" has gained significant attention and is expected to have

a profound impact on readers, fostering a deeper understanding of rural children's lives.

"Understanding Kodaku Children" explores various aspects of the children's lives, including education, health, social dynamics, and the socio-economic conditions in their communities. Father Toppo aims to raise awareness and promote positive change for the betterment of these children's lives.

"Understanding Kodaku Children" is expected to continue gaining traction, leaving a lasting impact on readers and encouraging them to engage in conversations, initiatives, and policies that address the needs and aspirations of children in rural communities.

Fr. Arvind Vinay, S.J.

ST. XAVIER'S SCHOOL BAND SHINES WITH EXTRAORDINARY PERFORMANCE

On the evening of May 18, 2023, St. Xavier's School Band in Pathalgaon amazed Jesuit Fathers and Brothers with their spectacular performance in the



school campus. Despite being mostly new learners, the group of 86 school children showcased their talent and professionalism by playing patriotic and prayer songs. Provincial, Fr. Ranjit Tigga extended his heartfelt congratulations to all the students and staff for their remarkable display. He expressed gratitude towards Fr. Sunil, the Principal, as well as Fr. Silas and Fabianus Xalxo for their exceptional leadership in raising the school's standards. Fr. Sunil also took the opportunity to honour Mr. Akash Verma, the Band Trainer, for his invaluable contributions.

This extraordinary performance has brought



immense joy to parents, who are delighted to witness their children's growth in both talent and personality. To conclude the event, the St. Xavier's Jesuit Community graciously hosted a dinner for all the Fathers and Brothers who attended.

Fr. Sunil Xalxo, S.J.

FR. HERMAN TIRKEY HONOURED FOR HIS NEW BOOK PUBLICATION

Fr. Herman Tirkey received well-deserved recognition and congratulations from Provincial Ranjit Tigga during the province Assembly for his recently published book, "Church and Cultural Identity: Challenges of Mission Among the Uraons." This insightful book offers a comprehensive



exploration of the social, cultural, economic, and religious issues faced by the Uraon community, with a particular focus on their relationship with the Church. Fr. Herman's valuable contribution through this book is greatly appreciated, and he was thanked sincerely for his remarkable work.

Fr. Arvind Vinay, S.J.

ST. XAVIER'S, MANPUR

It was great joy and happiest moment in the history of St. Xavier's School, Manpur when the 10th class result was out on 25th May 2023. As soon as the result was declared online phone call came from the



Collectorate stating that Abhinav Gupta is the topper, the 3rd rank, in M. P. state Board High School Certificate Examination. Immediately, the manager, Fr. Theodore Toppo, led all the members who were in the school office, to the student's

house with a bag of sweets. We congratulated and extended our best wishes on behalf of the school to the student Abhinav Gupta and the family members who gave great name and fame to our school.

Mr. Abhinav Gupta secured 98.4 percent marks in M. P. state Board High School Certificate Examination. He was honoured with certificate of Appreciation by Collector of Umaria Krishnadev Tripathi and honourable Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Madhya Pradesh, on 27th May and 30th May 2023 respectively. The School will honour Abhinav Gupta in the presence of all the students, staff and parents on special occasion of the school Programme.

Fr. Mukti Prakash Xess left for the Afgan Mission on 25th May 2023. All the best wishes to Fr. Mukti for Afganistan Mission. Fr. Kamal Lakra, the new Manager of the school came on 2nd June 2023. He is getting acquainted with the new set of the school. Fr. Santosh Tigga, the Vice Principal is on the way back to the Province after completing his Tertianship to take up his new assignment.

Fr. Anil Panna, S.J.

JVM, PATHALGAON

Labour Day on May 1st was celebrated with fervour at JVM Ashadeep as building construction workers congregated in the JVM hall to mark the occasion. The event commenced with Hemant Lakra leading



the recitation of the constitution's preamble. The significance of Labour Day was elucidated, accompanied by discussions on prevailing labour conditions and proposed amendments to labour laws. Workers were advised to avail themselves of government schemes, maintain regular contact with their families, prioritize their well-being, and use the MAIN helpline in case of difficulties. A community supper was served, while contractor Amar Mahto generously provided sweets. This memorable Labour Day celebration, which included the workers being honoured with bouquets, fostered camaraderie among them, leading to new-found friendships.

In parallel, Fr. Yacub Kujur, SJ conducted a three-day retreat from May 4th to 6th for members of the Catholic Sabha in Dharamjaigarh parish. The retreat coincided with the celebration of May Day, known as Baba Diwas on May 7th. Fr. Yacub emphasized the virtues of St. Joseph the Worker and urged participants to emulate his righteousness, becoming exemplary leaders within their families, Church, and society. The retreat facilitated spiritual conversations to guide decision-making, and two notable action plans were developed: organizing a meeting within three months involving the Mahila Sangh, Youth, and Catholic Sabha for further planning, and arranging tuition or coaching classes for tribal students to enhance their employment prospects. Fr. Yacub stressed the significance of unity in addressing political challenges and highlighted Pope Francis' focus on climate change and environmental stewardship.



The Baba Diwas celebration on May 6th witnessed enthusiastic participation from parishioners who appreciated the integrated approach and preaching methods employed during the retreat.

The Labour Day festivities and inspiring retreat led by Fr. Yacub Kujur left a lasting impact, promoting unity, leadership and a sense of responsibility among the workers and members of the Catholic Sabha.

Fr. Yacub Kujur, S.J.

AICUF SUMMER CAMP: REVIVE & THRIVE

The AICUF (All India Catholic University Federation) organized a successful State Summer Camp in Pathalgaon at Ashadeep, bringing together around 200 students from different units in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. The camp featured informative talks by notable speakers, including Bishop Emeritus Rt. Rev. Bishop Patras Minj, S.J., who emphasized social responsibility, and Dr. Shailesh Bhai Rathwa, who addressed the challenges faced by AYCM (All India Catholic University Federation Youth Movement) students. Mrs. Smriti Ekka, an advocate, encouraged students to pursue law studies to combat social injustice. The camp also included

cultural activities, competitions, and recognition of



outstanding participants. B.Ed College Ambikapur, Baikunthpur and Holy Cross Ambikapur emerged as the top performers. The local animators played a significant role in ensuring the success of the camp, and special thanks were extended to Mr. Avin, a full-timer, as well as Mr. Deepak Kujur, Mr. Praveen, Rev. Fr. Robert, and his team for their generous support. The organizers urged all participants to maintain the same enthusiasm and extended best wishes to Fr. Preetam Panna, S.J. the newly appointed AICUF State-adviser for M.P and C.G. Fr. Alok Kujur, S.J. concluded the camp, expressing his gratitude and commitment to the AICUF community.

Fr. Alok Kujur, S.J.

CAMPION SCHOOL, BHOPAL

Campion School Bhopal, Arera Colony, commenced its new academic session, 2023-24, on April 1, 2023. The students returned to school with great enthusiasm after a short break, bringing a sense of excitement to the campus. A welcome program was organized by the management and staff to make the students feel special and valued. The school campus came alive once again, resonating with the voices of students. The program began with the lighting of the lamp by the Principal, Fr. Dr. Athnas Lakra S.J., the Vice Principal, Amritlal Toppo S.J., and students from different classes.

Furthermore, on April 26th and 27th, 2023, Campion School participated in the CBSE-organized "Children Sports Festival" as part of the "Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav." The students actively took part in various sports activities such as mini marathon, basketball, 100m flat race, and indigenous games within the school premises during school hours.

ST. EDMUND CAMPION CHURCH, BHOPAL:

On April 23, 2023, St. Edmund Campion Church bid farewell to the pre-novices and Sch. Sunil Kerketta S.J., the regent of the pre-novices, during the Holy Mass celebrated by Fr. Panka. The parishioners

expressed their gratitude and presented each pre-novice and Sch. Sunil Kerketta with a rose flower and a towel. Additionally, the church welcomed a newly married couple, Mr. James Ekka and Mrs. Angeli on the same occasion. The family of Mr. James Ekka hosted a breakfast for all the parishioners following the farewell and welcome program.

VIDYA SADAN, BHOPAL:

In April, Vidya Sadan, Bhopal, was busy with the preparation of the concluding day ceremony and the four-sheet examination for the pre-novices. The four-sheet examination took place on April 17 and 18, 2023, with Frs. Leander Xalxo, Pancratius Minj, Dilip Soreng, and Alok Toppo conducting the assessment. Out of the 11 pre-novices, 9 were selected for the Madhya Pradesh Province and 2 were sent to the Gujarat Province.

The pre-novices concluded their pre-novitiate session on April 16, 2023, with various performances and a celebration dance. The program was attended by the four-sheet examination team, Apostolic Carmel Sisters, Holy Cross Sisters, and novices. On April 23, 2023, the pre-novices showcased their programme for the parishioners, receiving high appreciation from the audience. Refreshments of tea and a simple snack were provided to the attendees.

On April 26, 2023, all the pre-novices and Sch. Sunil Kerketta returned to their homes accompanied by Fr. Kapil Xaxa.

Fr. Kalyan Panna, S.J.

LOYOLA NIKETAN, BILASPUR

Fr. Arvind Vinay Tirkey, Fr. Ashok Lakra, and Sushil Tirkey from the Loyola Community Bilaspur were among the 11 Fathers who recently pronounced their Final Vows in Kunkuri on April 22, 2023. Upon their return to the community, a brief celebration was held to commemorate this significant milestone. With the exception of Fr. Sushil and Fr. William, who stayed in the community for important duties, all the members of the community attended the Province assembly at Pathalgaon. Following the assembly, some of the members took advantage of the summer holidays to briefly visit their families.

Fr. Arvind Vinay, S.J.

Tana Bhagatism: People felt frightened at the possible approach of *Tana Bhagats*. Pagans were said to want to become Christians, in order to seek protection from the Mission against that terror. Surguja was the chief danger zone, and the *Bhagats* were trying to spread from there into the Khudia. Thence it spread or tended to spread all over the Uraon country of Chota Nagpur causing much trouble. The repressive measures employed in Surguja led to the killing of many. The chief aim of the movement was in the nature of the Birsa agitation of the Munda country some 20 years before: to re-establish the sovereignty of the Uraons. For this they wanted to get rid of all other people, Europeans, Hindus, Musalmans, as it was from their advent that dated the servitude of the Aborigines.

To reach their goal, they felt the need of many sacrifices, incantations, religious practices, many of them truly stupid. In their religious excitement they constantly repeated: "*Tan'a, Tan'a,*" pull-pull, (them out of the country) whence the name of *Tana-Bhagats*. *Bhagat* which means 'devotee' denotes among the pagan aborigines, one who has given up his Tribal religion and has adopted certain Hindu-practices. The measures taken against the *Bhagats* in Surguja were not only repressive but most cruel. The people still speak of thousands having been killed at Jamirpath close to Chechadi (4000 according to some) and many also on the Musgutri side.

The Maharaja had called for military or police help from Ranchi. Mr. Tonnerre, a Catholic, was in charge of the latter. On his return he told Fr. Van der Linden then at Mahudand, "I hope never in my life to see such horrors again." The Maharaja, it seems, ordered to set fire to the village of the rebels. As the people rushed away from burning houses, men, women and children were all mercilessly shot down. Now in 1950-51, that Father's tour for the first time in Surguja, they find a population suffering from real dread and slave-mentality due to the above horrors and other repressive measures.

Since Gholeng district does not touch Surguja or Udaipur, it is not surprising that little reference is made to the *Bhagats* by Fr. Bossaers. On 11 February 1916 we find the following entry in his Diary: "Some people of Deragdih are learning the new religion of the *Bhagats* who aim to establish an Uraon Raj." At his first meeting with the new *Dewan*, he found him determined not to allow them to enter the State. From Fr. Van den Driessche's Diary came the indications. We may add his reference to Udaipur, where he intended paying another visit on 5th March 1917: "The Father starts for a visit to the South and Sudungpani of Udaipur; but at Kharibahar he hears that there are no Christians left at Sudungpani. On account of the *Bhagats* and cholera they have all fled, to come and establish themselves in Jashpur. So much the better for them and for us."

The next time Fr. Van den Driessche speaks of *Bhagats* is in a letter to the Archbishop, dated 2nd September 1918, which gives him at the same time excellent news: "On Tuesday morning 27th, the Raja sent me a nice leg of *harin* (stag). I went to thank him in the afternoon and, at a certain moment, being quite alone with him, I told him: Raja *Saheb*, whenever I have passed in Nagar, You have granted me some favour; well, I have again a favour to ask, viz. to allow us to have chapels in the villages and among them one with a room attached to it somewhere in the Kakia (present Musgutri district) and another one of the same kind at Tapkara, so that we can go and stay there for some time, now and then." .. The Raja agreed to this at once and added. "You should have your chapel in the Kakia, somewhere near the frontier (of Surguja) so as to keep an eye on the *badmashes* (wicked) who are on the other side. (He was alluding to the *Tana Bhagats* of Maini and Surguja). Then he asked me whether we had any Christians in Surguja, and as I answered that there were none, "Who knows," he said, "when you have a "*Chhota Sabe*" in the Kakia, perhaps you may get Christians in the Surguja also:"

Such a reflection on his part, agreeing so perfectly with the plan which I exposed to Your Grace, shows I think that I have not been building castles in the air. I hope that with the help of our Lord, we shall gain over the Uraons of Surguja. We may thank Our Lord and St. Joseph for what has been granted so readily that I have no doubt it is an immediate answer to the prayers I had asked for this intention."

The granting of chapels was certainly an astounding favour, after 12 years of fruitless efforts. The gaining over of the Uraons of Surguja was not to become a reality for 30 and more years. Just now (1950) the Missionaries begin to succeed in quietly entering that country.

The gracious way, in which the Raja granted these favours, and the friendliness he evinced towards Fr. Van den Driessche, who himself was so affected that he betrays none of his wonted suspiciousness, would seem to confirm what the Central Provinces higher officials so often maintained that "the Raja is at heart a very kind man." If in his weakness, the Raja had only been able to rid himself of the bad influence of the satellites in his court, his ruling would likely have been far more benign and his relations with the Mission much more happy.

Father Bossaers, after hearing from Fr. Van den Driessche how he obtained permission for chapels in the villages, adds some details not mentioned in the above letter. When the Father asked that permission, the Raja moved, no doubt, by the rising of the *Tana Bhagats* in Surguja, in which a good number have been killed, hastened to grant more than we might have dared to ask. He permits to build, without paying for the wood, chapels in the villages of his State. "When the Father asked to erect two chapels with an adjoining room like at Gholeng, he proposed himself to

begin these immediately, chiefly in the Kakia as near as possible to the Surguja frontier. He invites us to go to the Khudia. We should go to Mangarpur (Surguja), to Udaipur. It is marvelous, especially when one remembers the difficulties that existed 3 years ago and before. Let us thank Holy Providence, in particular the Sacred Heart." Diary, 15 August 1918.

On 5 April 1919, Fr. Bossaers was called to the Palace for a confidential talk. There the Raja communicated a message from the Political Agent about the *Bhagats* who had been making themselves conspicuous about Ranchi, some having been arrested. Government warned that these people had not to be tolerated, but condemned and expelled. They preach: refusal to pay rent, expulsion of *zemindars*, victory of the Germans (it was War-time when the *Bhagats* began), expulsion of the *mahajans* that made prices go up. The Raja asked if there were any in his State. "Nothing in that sense" I replied, "but a whole movement in the Christians direction." "So much the better," he answered; "with you here, Fr. Demonceau over there (Konaraj), Fr. Van den Driessche at Ginabahar, there is nothing to be afraid of. We would know it at once, and if there were *Bhagats*, we would crush them like wheat!"

In the correspondence and diaries of 1918-19, this is the last reference to the *Bhagats*. The movement never penetrated Jashpur, so it appears. Holy Providence took occasion of this terror to grant the Mission the long-delayed permission for chapels in the villages and for the beginning of the two future stations of Musgutri and Tapkara.

Labour Corps. In May 1917, the Catholic Mission at Ranchi was asked by Government to help in recruiting one or more battalions of a Labour Corps. The aim was to train them and next dispatch them to France, where they would work behind the firing-line e.g. at clearing the devastated regions, opening new communications and the like. As most of the recruits were likely to be Christians, Government agreed to send with them 2 chaplains, with the rank of Captain. Fathers Floor and Ory were appointed. Later on new battalions were formed to go and work in the Punjab and Iraq.

On Father Molhant, the young and energetic Director of the Catholic Cooperative at Ranchi, fell the heavy burden of organizing the work of recruiting. Through him, the Catholic Bank offered to take charge of all financial transactions between the members and their families.

Government made also an appeal to the States of Jashpur and neighbours, in Central Provinces. The largest number of recruits from these, was in Jashpur. This was due to the very active cooperation of the Missionaries for which they, and their brethren in Ranchi District., were praised by their respective Governments. The start for action took place, on 31 August 1917 at Nagar. The Raja held a Conference with all the authorities and notables regarding the Appeal to the States as communicated by the Political Agent. Recruiting in his State had to be done. The Rajah expected much help from the Missionaries. Some *zemindars* were not afraid of uttering: "Since the people have become Christians we have nothing to say to them." Fr. Van den Driessche, who was present, said that he would consult Ranchi. Soon the *pracharaks* brought the news that the officials and *zemindars* did nothing serious to obtain recruits (Diary 12 Oct.) On 20th October Fr. Bossaers received a letter from the *Dewan* in which were the following favours promised by the Rajah to attract recruits: they would get: 1) "4 *bighas* of fields, free of rent or *begari*, so long as the man remains on duty. In case of death from any cause, the family will continue to hold the land on the same terms, as long as the widow survives, or till the minor sons enter into majority." 2) "In addition to this the State will also give a sum of Rs. 20/- as bonus, in addition to any sum which Government might give to the labourer." (Diary). This extraordinary liberality will soon lead to trouble!

On 19th November some 30 people came to Gholeng to be enrolled for the France Labour Corps. "The Rajah acts very kindly and wisely with the people wishing to go to Europe: *Bilait*, giving them money, lands at once, writing everything for them before they leave." (Diary) More and more turned up the following days, many of whom also soon gave up the idea of joining.

Fr. Bossaers took by far the largest part in Jashpur-recruiting. From December 1917, much of his time was devoted to this. Much trouble was caused by the exaggerated promises of the Rajah, or by the people having misunderstood them. Documents clearly showing what had been promised, are not forthcoming. In a letter dated: Majhatoli 14-3-18, Fr. Bossaers tells the Archbishop that he is just back from Gholeng with Fr. Molhant who had come in motor-car, the first that appeared in Jashpur. With much difficulty it could reach Jashpurnagar; if it did it was thanks to repairs of the road through Fr. Bossaers and his Christians. The Rajah received them very well; that visit evidently flattered him. "From what the *gomostas* say, the Rajah committed a grievous mistake by promising the recruits on behalf of their families, 4 *bighas* of land free of rent for the duration of the war. Now he retracts that promise, saying what he meant was as follows: whosoever has not 4 *bighas*, he will be given the amount needed to complete 4 *bighas*, the whole remaining free of rent. Those who already possess 4 *bighas*, will only receive remission of rent. "This change in the promise, will evidently lead to much murmuring and may produce serious difficulties. This may reflect on the Mission, due to the fact that many of the recruits are Christians."

Fr. Bossaers' expectations of complaints and difficulties were fully verified, as we see from the Diaries and letters. The Diary adds (13 March) that Fr. Molhant tried to go to Ginabahar with his motor-car, but 4 miles beyond Nagar had to give up the idea.

On 14 February 1918, he wrote to Fr. Molhant whom he had visited at Ranchi: "Please allow me to thank you

for all the kind treatment given by the Catholic Mission and yourself during my last visit to Ranchi. I am taking action with regard to certain complaints, made by some of the recruits when I saw them in your company on different works. I shall be very much obliged to you by your kindly taking similar interest in the non-Christian recruits so that they do not feel the separation of the homes. It was a pity to learn that the bonus of Rs. 20/- per head, given by the Raja Bahadur, should have been taken by the Depot Officials as an advance. You have remedied the misunderstanding in case of Christians. Will you very kindly do the same in case of non-Christians who are in the Depot and willing to go to the same place as their brother-Christians? The care of non-Christians like the Christians, here or while on duty overseas will certainly meet with a high appreciation of the Raja Bahadur. He is quite pleased with your cooperation in the recruitment and is ready to remedy anything you might think it necessary to do in case of the recruits." It is a pity that the discrimination between Christians and non-Christians was stressed in the case of Jashpur. But had it taken place?

On 5 April, Fr. Bossaers seems to imply in his letter to the Archbishop, a certain failure in the recruitment. "People are going home. Consequently the question of promises made by the Rajah - promises which afterwards he retracted - fails and saves us from many difficulties. This shows once more that one must not rely even on royal promises."

On 9 April, the *Dewan* sent a long letter 7 pages to Fr. Molhant, in answer to several letters of his. He tells him that he has communicated these letters to the Raja: "The Raja Bahadur was very pleased. The State is really thankful to the Mission for all the kind assistance that its different members are so enthusiastically rendering in the matter of recruits. Touching again the subject of land which seems to be rendering you anxious, certainly for the peace of the State and coolies, I think I have impressed the *Padri Sahebs* of Gholeng and Noadih that there was no breach of promise made by the State. There seems to have been some misunderstanding in the matter which can be easily cleared off." He then says that the wording used by the State in its notification for recruiting was the same as elsewhere in the Central Provinces. Nobody elsewhere could have imagined a construction of the kind surmised by some recruits in Jashpur. Supposing all the recruits had to be given 4 *bighas* of land, where would the Central Provinces Government have found so much available land? Ejectment of others from their land would have led to quarrels and violence and impeded all further recruiting. "

"Each case of new recruitment would only be tantamount to depriving the other tenants of their land and would naturally come in the way of any fresh recruitment." The accusations of breach of promise and *dagabazi* (deception) which he has received from some of the recruits seem to have originated among some Christians. "Others, non-Christians, were prudent enough to take the *parwanas* (certificates) of concessions, (rent and *begari*) before they left Jashpur. The families of the Hindu recruits are in possession of their *parwana*, the office-duplicates of which I showed to the *Padri-Sahebs* of Gholeng and Noadih."

"It is a pity that some of the Catholic recruits should put such construction which nobody would, and come forward with an open abusive language to their administration, which is against all principles of religion, and this spirit requires to be put down." The *Dewan* adds the following proposal which he made to the Raja Bahadur "to be merely indulgent:" "If these recruits, pressed on and put all wrong and selfish constructions, which no Hindu recruit (and I believe several Christians too) would put, I would be prepared to give them an opportunity of clearing up land out of the forest and bring it under the plough. It is for them to understand what profit they can make out of the land during the tenure of one or two years that the recruits are on service."

Excusing himself for all the trouble he expresses the hope that Fr. Molhant will be able to warn the dissatisfied ones. "Remissions of rent from their existing land is to their best interest and *parwanas* of the kind have been welcomed by those who have already received them. If the families of these recruits will come forward they will be immediately given similar *parwanas*. Of course they will be free of their entire *begar* during the period that they hold any portion of their land free of rent... Those whose land falls short of 4 *bighas* of *tand* or 4 *bighas* of *don* (low-land), they will certainly be given an additional land to make up that area. This will be managed anyhow. It will not be difficult as such cases will be very few.

To this, Fr. Molhant sent the reply: "My dear Mr. Krishna Sewak, "You will understand that your letter of the 9th has upset me altogether. I was not slow in making an enquiry, and I have been able so far to ascertain that the blunder - a huge blunder indeed - is the doing of 3 or 4 stupid coolies who understand nothing and did not even seem to realize their guilt. I am glad to see from your letter that you are yourself convinced of the fact that the generality of our men have no hand in this disconcerting affair. I shall see more closely still into the matter, and find out all about it. I may add that the leading men appreciate highly the liberal concessions granted by the Raja Bahadur."

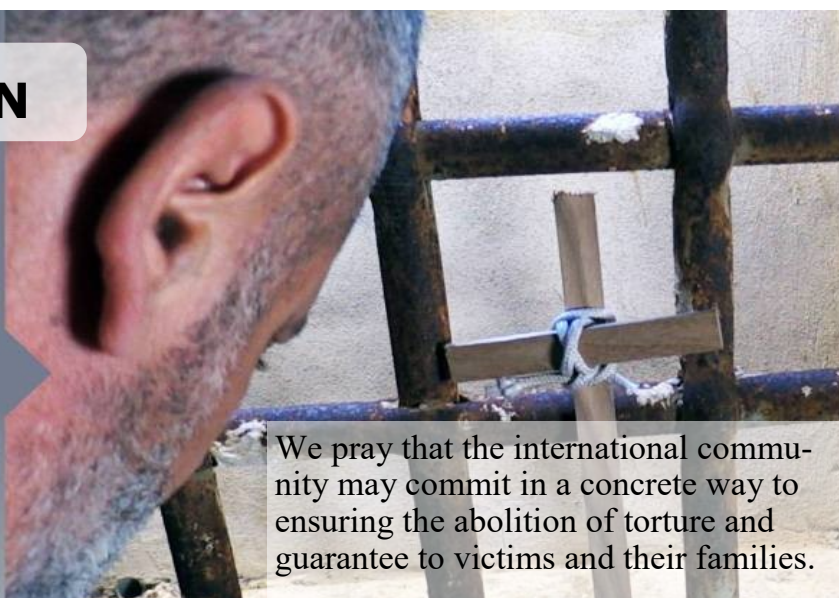
Fr. Bossaers fully believed that the Rajah had made that promise, and that "even royal promises could not be relied upon." Father Bossaers was still a young Missionary then at the beginning of his 4th year in the Mission. Who knows whether his belief in the "retraction" of the Raja, was not based on some false report, or some misconception of the concessions enumerated in the *Dewan's* letter of 20th October 1917 reported above.

Compiled and Edited By: Fr. Agapit Tirkey, S.J.

POPE'S INTENTION

For the abolition of torture

June 2023



We pray that the international community may commit in a concrete way to ensuring the abolition of torture and guarantee to victims and their families.

ABIDE WITH THE LORD

- + Fr. Alex Colaco, SJ (BOM), 83/64, passed away on 11May, in Mumbai
- + Fr. Vital Ekka, SJ (RAN), 81/57) passed away on 13 May at Constant Lievens Hospital, Mandar.
- + Fr. Joe Thadavanal, SJ (PAT), 80/60, passed away on 14 May in Patna
- + Fr. Braz Faleiro SJ (GOA), 87/69, passed away on 14 May at Porvorim, Goa.

REMEMBERING THOSE WHO HAVE LEFT US IN JUNE FOR ETERNAL REST

| S.N. | NAME | BIRTH | DEATH |
|------|------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| 01 | Fr. Joseph Surin | 20 Aug 1901 | 02 June 1987 |
| 02 | Br. Cyril Kerketta | 21 Jun 1929 | 15 June 2009 |
| 03 | Fr. Charles Timmermans | 12 Oct 1893 | 21 June 1980 |
| 04 | Fr. James Tirkey | 07 Dec 1934 | 25 June 2012 |
| 05 | Fr. Barnabas Bara | 20 Jun 1926 | 29 June 2012 |
| 06 | Fr. John Cardinaels | 17 Oct 1910 | 30 Jun 1995 |



Birthdays

| JUNE | | | | JULY | | | |
|------|-----------------------|----|------------------|------|----------------------|----|--------------------|
| 1 | Ekka Mahant G. | 12 | Khalkho Avinash | 7 | Toppo Niranjana | 20 | Palhe Akhilesh |
| 1 | Singh Peter Shilanand | 14 | Xalxo Leander | 8 | Lakra Alexius | 21 | *Kerketta Sunil |
| 4 | Ekka Alexander | 15 | Kandulna Eligius | 9 | Tigga Anuranjan | 21 | Kujur Shreyash |
| 4 | Ekka Praveen | 15 | TOPNO PASCAL | 10 | Xalxo Xaviers | 23 | Ekka Vinay Kumar |
| 7 | Ekka Theodoulus | 16 | Kujur Isaac | 13 | Kujur Arohit | 23 | Xalxo Rajesh (M) |
| 8 | Tirkey Deepchand | 19 | Kispotta Abhay | 13 | Kujur Ashok (L) | 24 | Toppo Amritlal (A) |
| 10 | Sautal Ramesh | 19 | Toppo Jaiprakash | 14 | Xaxa Milyan | 25 | Ekka Fulgence (B) |
| 10 | Toppo Vivek | 20 | Kindo Ignace | 15 | Bara Akhilsai Albert | 27 | Ekka Stephen M. |
| 12 | Lakra Vikas Kumar | 24 | Kujur Avlin | 15 | Minj Dilip Kumar | 29 | Tirkey Alphonse |
| 12 | Toppo Pratik | 27 | Toppo Alfred | 20 | Ekka Ajay Bernard | 31 | Bara Ignatius |

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