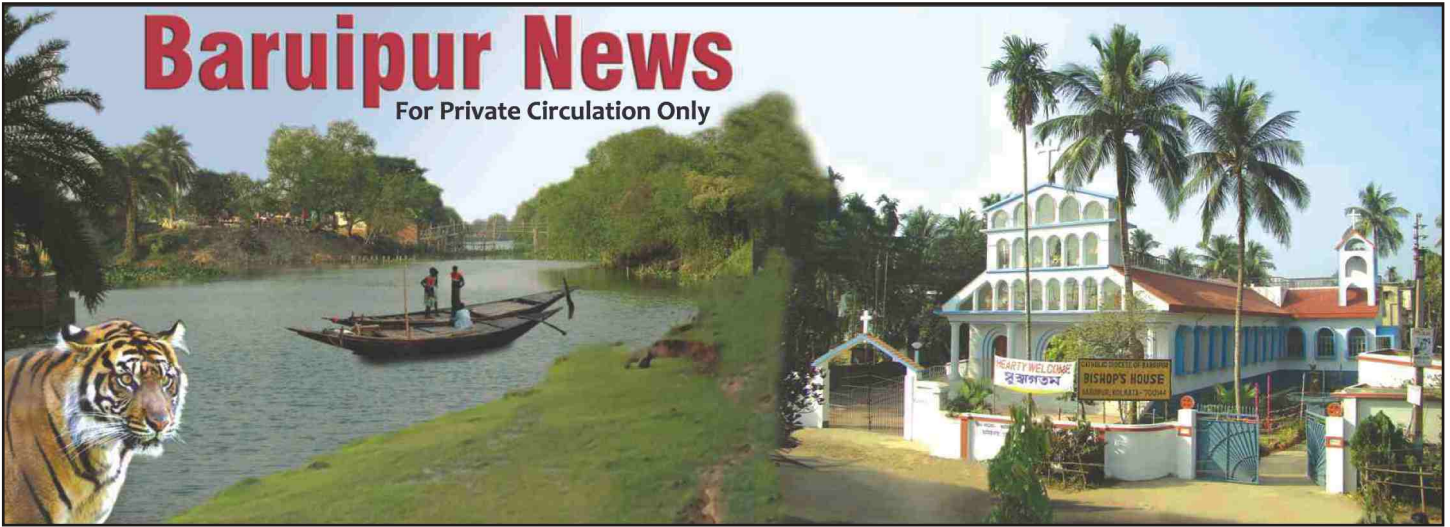


Baruipur News

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July 2023

"My Lord and My God" : Thomas the Apostle

Very Little is recorded of St. Thomas the Apostle. Thomas was probably born in Galilee to a humble family, but there is no indication that he was a fisherman. He was a Jew, but there is no account of how he became an Apostle to Christ. His personality is depicted to us in the Gospel of John where he plays a particularly distinctive part. Thomas is often remembered for his doubt in faith, but he was equally courageous, willing to stand by Jesus in times of danger. He also relentlessly sought the Truth. Like an inquisitive child, he constantly asked questions. And, his deepest and highest profession, "My Lord and My God," is the clearest declaration of Jesus' divinity in Holy Scripture.

He is the Patron Saint of the blind, Craftsmen, Geometricians and Theologians. To this day, Saint Thomas is venerated as the Apostle of India. In fact, there exists a population of Christians along the Malabar Coast, on the western coast of India, who lay claim to be converted by St. Thomas. Their tradition holds that he built seven Churches, was martyred during prayer by spearing on the "Big Hill" near Madras, and was buried in Mylapore, on the east coast of India. Ultimately, St. Thomas' remains were transported to Ortona, Italy, where they reside today.

Jesus identified Thomas as one of the twelve Apostles to spread the religion of Christianity all over the world. Although analytical and courageous, he was generally suspicious in nature. Having appeared only in front of the 11 Apostles, Thomas doubted the resurrection of Jesus. Therefore, he wanted to see Jesus in person and feel the wounds inflicted. Eight days later, Jesus made an appearance under closed doors before Thomas and the rest of the Apostles. After seeing and feeling the wounds inflicted by the nails; Thomas believed and fell on his knees crying 'My Lord and My God'.

In the year 2018, Pope Francis said during a mass, "Thomas, after seeing the Lord's wounds, cried out: 'My Lord and my God!' (Jn 20: 28). I

would like to reflect on the adjective that Thomas repeats: "my". It is a possessive adjective. When we think about it, it might seem inappropriate to use it for God. How can God be mine? How can I make the Almighty mine? The truth is, by saying 'my', we do not profane God, but honour his mercy, because God wished to "become ours". As in a love story, we tell him: 'You became man for me, you died and rose for me and thus you are not only God; you are my God, you are my life. In you I have found the love that I was looking for, and much more than I could ever have imagined.' God takes no offence at being 'ours,' because love demands confidence, mercy demands trust."

In the case of St. Thomas, we find an effective way of dealing with our doubts. Doubts in our spiritual life can lead us to a strong assertion and consolidation of faith. What is needed is to clearly understand and spell out what we feel in the presence of Jesus our Lord. The Lord hears and sanctifies our doubts to increase our faith and trust in Him. Therefore, we need not be afraid of our doubts, thinking that God will be displeased if we reveal it to Him. Rather with the deposit of faith stored in our hearts, we start travelling a journey which leads us from faith to rock-solid faith.

Let us now focus on another aspect of how the valuable assertion of St. Thomas came to occur. The expression, "My Lord and My God.", came after the deep experience of the wounds of Christ. The wounds pointed to the reality of resurrection. Consequently, an apostle, called by Christ was given a firm foundation to go out in mission of proclamation and die as a martyr.

In the year 2013, at the morning meditation in the chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae, the Holy Father Francis spoke on, 'Touching the wounds of Jesus'. Thomas, to whom the Lord appeared eight days after he had appeared before the others, was even incredulous. "The Lord", the Pope said, "knows when and how to do things". He granted Thomas eight days; and He wanted the wounds still to be visible on his body, although they were

"clean, very beautiful, filled with light", because the Apostle had said he would not believe unless he put his finger in them. "He was stubborn! But the Lord", the Pope remarked, "wanted a pig-headed man in order to explain something greater. Thomas placed his fingers in the Lord's wounds."

The Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle enabled Pope Francis to return to a concept dear to him: placing our hands in the flesh of Jesus. We must come out of ourselves, we must take human routes if we are to discover that Jesus' wounds are still visible today on the bodies of all our brothers and sisters who are hungry, thirsty, naked, humiliated or slaves, in prison and hospital. By touching and caressing these wounds "we can adore God alive in our midst". Mere philanthropic actions do not suffice, the Pope added. "We must touch the wounds of Jesus, caress them. We must heal the wounds of Jesus with tenderness. We must literally kiss the wounds of Jesus". The life of St. Francis, he said, changed when he embraced the leper because "he touched the living God and lived in adoration". "What Jesus asks us to do with our works of mercy", the Pope concluded, "is what Thomas asked: to enter his wounds".

Today, we are called to experience the deep and healing wounds of the risen Lord by being with him. This experience leads us to go out in search of the wounds of Christ found in the brothers and sisters out there; starting from our family members to the people of the country and the world at large. St. Thomas, the Apostle, is the epitome of selfless mission that takes its root in the wounds of Christ.

I pray that our faith will be strong like his, and that our love for Christ may inspire us to love and serve our neighbour. With joy in our hearts, let us praise God who, through Saint Thomas, has communicated the Good News of salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord.

+ Shyamal Bose

Installation of New Parish Priests

Most Rev. Shyamal Bose, Bishop of the Diocese of Baruipur, installed Fr. Surojit Mitra as Parish Priest of St. Teresa Church, Basanti and Most Rev. Salvatore Lobo, Bishop emeritus of the Diocese, inducted Fr. Sirnus Topno as Parish Priest of St. Francis Xavier's Church, Budge Budge on June 11, 2023. On the following Sunday, June 18, 2023 Rev. Fr. Kanauj Roy, the Vicar General of the Diocese, inducted Fr. Arup Bor as Parish Priest of the Church of Immaculate Heart of Mary, Ranigarh. The rite of induction of the new Parish Priests took place during the Holy Mass attended by many parishioners who came to say thank you to the outgoing Parish Priest and welcome the new one. The rite of induction consists of the symbolic presentation of a series of rituals such as opening and closing of the main door, sitting at the confessional, ringing the Church bell, unlocking the tabernacle, etc. At the end of the Mass they were welcomed warmly and wished all the best for the faithful exercise of their pastoral ministries to the Parish assigned to each of them.



Fr. Surojit Mitra



Fr. Sirnus Topno



Fr. Arup Bor

- Br. Hrittick Hazra

Palli Unnayan Samiti Baruipur

Pus continued to put its best effort to save children, adolescents and women from the adverse effects of the current socio-environmental challenges of underage marriage, child labour, human trafficking, abuse and violence against women and children and global warming. In the effort to alleviate them from these evil clutches of society and environment, relevant awareness trainings, counseling and rehabilitation, rallies and street plays were conducted. Children Parliament and Community Vigilance Committee are formed for effective outcome of the programme. Besides, on June 5, 2023 World Environment Day was meaningfully observed with transplantation of 305 saplings to beat pollution in its 32 project operational areas. It also installed 700 VA and 1000 VA grid solar system at St. Savio's Boy's Hostel, Panchamkhanda, to address frequent load shedding so that the study of students is not affected. It is also an expressive contribution towards mitigating undesirable consequences of global warming as clean solar energy promotion in Sundarbans.



Paribar Jyoti



In the month of June the staff and animators of Paribar Jyoti conducted several programs in different villages pertaining to different spheres of family life. In spite of the bad weather they could continue their programs comprising of meetings, seminars and workshops. Those who participated in those programs acknowledged to have gained a lot of knowledge for the betterment of their conjugal and spousal life. It was also beneficial for them as parents since there were instructions on physical, mental, spiritual and human formation of children in the family. The staff and animators too got to know from participants many unknown yet vital experiences that they face in their families. Besides, the scheduled training programs, Paribar Jyoti look forward to reaching out to the needy in different areas in the months to come with a view of strengthening family bond.

Youth Orientation, Hogalkuria

On June 20, 2023, a one day youth orientation programme was organized by Youth Commission of Baruipur at De Paul School, Hogalkuria. The day started with the Holy Mass offered by Rev. Fr. Junesh Gomango C.M., Principal of De Paul School Jayanpur. After the Mass, Rev. Fr. Jansingh (Subir) Sobhapat C.M., Parish Priest of Hogalkuria Parish and Mr. Sajal Patra, Parish Youth President, warmly welcomed each Dexco member. Thereafter, Mr. Sarbeswar Chakrabarty, the Diocesan Youth Advisor, conducted a session on strategic leadership wherein he said that 'Leader is not one who creates Leaders; the Leader is one who can create the Leaders of Leading Leaders' after the example of Jesus. A live demonstration was shown with a glass of water signifying the amount of potential we have to become a leader. However, we underestimate ourselves. The next session was led by Mr. Raj Bag, the Diocesan Youth President, on career counselling. He introduced the youth to a new era of digital marketing which they can choose as their career for a greener future. The day concluded with a sharing session by the Dexco members.

- Mr. Raj Bag

Eternal Abode

Mr. Michael Joseph, the beloved father of Rev. Sr. Johncy CMC, breathed his last on June 10, 2023 at the age of 81. He passed away at home owing to stroke. Prior to his death he had been bed ridden for four months, enduring pain and suffering without any complain. He went to eternal abode leaving behind his wife and eight children. While expressing our inmost condolence to the family members let us continue to pray that the Lord may bless him with eternal bliss.

Silver Jubilee Celebration



On June 15, 2023, the Sisters of the Daughters of St. Anne's Morapai, celebrated the silver jubilee of the religious profession of Sr. Salomi, DSA. Most Rev. Shyamal Bose, the Bishop of Baruipur, along with 15 concelebrating priests, officiated a solemn thanksgiving Holy Eucharist in a beautifully decked up chapel. The entrance dance by the young girls with their rhythmic steps ushered the celebrants and concelebrants to the altar. The presence of Rev. Sr. Smitha DSA, the Superior General of the Daughters of St. Anne's, Kolkata, along with many other sisters, fathers, brothers, family members, friends and well wishers made the event grace-filled and joyful for the Jubilarian. Following the Eucharistic celebration, the festive atmosphere continued through a short felicitation programme in honour of the Jubilarian. On this auspicious day, Sr. Salomi poured out her heart in gratitude to God for His undivided love; Bishop and Priests for the gracious presence; Rev. Sr. Smitha and Congregation for their esteemed presence and support; parents, friends and all who offered their precious contribution of life to reach her the milestone of 25 years in the service of the Lord. The celebration came to an end with a festive lunch.

Glimpses from Dishari

Dishari Pastoral Centre organized various faith formation programs for different groups of people. A seminar on Faith Formation was held for the parents at Nazat on June 14, 2023. A BEC seminar was conducted at Amgachia on June 15, 2023 for the unit members and on June 17, 2023, the Youth of Bonmogra participated in a seminar on Faith Formation. Altogether 167 participants actively participated in those programs. Fr. Goutam Naskar, Mr. Ajoy Naskar, Ms. Gargi Mondal and Ms. Subhra Mondal were the resource persons. In his sessions Fr. Goutam Naskar explained the necessity of the Word of God in the daily lives of everyone. He also explained about how to be a witness of Christ to all through BEC. He enlightened the minds of youth about the importance of Christian Leadership. He said 'To be a leader, we must first be led. This is a principle that can't be avoided and if we resist it, we're limiting our potential growth. No one knows it all and everyone needs someone to help them grow'. The participants were happy to participate and draw inspiration from the programs.



Laity Sunday



Sunday, June 25, 2023, was celebrated as Laity Sunday in the various parishes of the diocese with its Theme, "For a synodal church: communion, participation and mission: Synod of Synodality which challenges us to walk together, Priests and Laity". On this special day we acknowledged the ministry of all lay persons in our Parishes and thanked them for their presence in our Parish Cells, Associations, SCC's, Parish Councils and other Church bodies. They make an invaluable contribution to the life of our parishes, making them active, relevant and vibrant. To make the day memorable, St. Stephen's Church, Kalyanpur, felicitated Mr. Patrick Roy and Mrs. Rufina Gomes, the representatives of laity, for their selfless service to the church.

- Ashim Campoo

Ecumenical Meeting

An ecumenical meeting was held on June 28, 2023 at Palli Unnayan Samiti Baruipur. The meeting was attended by the Clergy, Pastors, Religious, Laity and BCP members, altogether numbering 42. Rev. Fr. Sunil Rozario, the Regional Secretary of West Bengal Region for the Commission for Ecumenism, moderated the meeting. In his preliminary address, he applauded the ecumenical endeavour in the Diocese of Baruipur for taking joint initiative with all the existing denominations. He also recalled to mind some of the efforts put earlier by the former Bishops, Clergy, Pastors, Religious and Laity for the enhancement of ecumenical spirit. Thereafter, Rev. Fr. Baptist Pais, SVD, National Executive Secretary of the CCBI Commission for Ecumenism, spoke of ecumenism as a means of permeating God's love to all, irrespective of Churches and Denominations. Before concluding the meeting, there was an open discussion, where some of the participants came up with constructive criticism to evaluate and introspect the effectiveness of the Synodal process as well as our concrete response to the very recent untoward happenings within the country. There was a suggestion to have an orientation on the current issues relevant to the life of the Church.




JULY

10	Fr. J. Pathinathan
12	Br. Soumen Kanji
14	Fr. Sisir Khan
23	Br. Subilash Bar
23	Fr. Meghnad Singha
23	Fr. J. A. Santhanam
28	Fr. Sirnus Topno
31	Br. Rajesh Naskar

Happy Birthday
Dear Fathers & Brothers

Priestly Ordination


10th July
Fr. Tushar Augustine Gomes
Congratulations Dear Father

Memorable & Admirable Month of July

12	Fr. Watteyne Jackues, S.J.
27	Most Rev. Henry D'Souza
28	Fr. De Steenhault Yves, S.J.

Intentions for the Apostleship of Prayer - July 2023

For a Eucharistic life: We pray that Catholics may place the celebration of the Eucharist at the heart of their lives, transforming human relationships in a very deep way and opening to the encounter with God and all their brothers and sisters.

Golden Jubilee of Sacred Heart Church, Thakurpukur (1971-2021)

Though the Parish completed 50 years of its existence in 2021, the celebrations were postponed due to Pandemic. To mark the glorious 50 years of Golden Jubilee of the Parish a solemn Jubilee Mass was celebrated on Sunday, June 25, 2023 along with the Parish Feast of Sacred Heart of Jesus. It was presided over by Most Rev. Shyamal Bose and concelebrated by Most Rev. Salvatore Lobo, Bishop Emeritus of Baruipur, who were themselves former Parish Priests at different times. Most Rev. Shyamal Bose delivered an enlivening and absorbing homily and pointed out how the love of Christ flowing from His Heart sustains not only the Parish as a whole but also every family. The choir added devotion to the Eucharistic celebration with melodious singing. Besides the faithful of the Parish there were many Priests, Religious and special invitees for the auspicious occasion.



The Eucharistic celebration was followed by a Cultural Extravaganza, prepared by the parishioners. The rhythmic steps of the Hindi Community, the colourful and graceful musical movements of Jisu Hriday Bangla choir, the harmonious and melodious English song of the English Choir kept the audience spell bound and enthralled. During the programme former Parish Priests and Assistant Parish Priests were felicitated with *Uttario* and Memento. The winners of different Jubilee competitions were given prizes and certificates. Most Rev. Salvatore Lobo, the Guest of Honour, was given a special felicitation for completing 25 years of his Episcopal Ordination. The Chief Guest, Most Rev. Shyamal Bose, while addressing spoke about the history of the Parish highlighting that the development of the Parish does not depend on the structures but constant renewal within the hearts of the parishioners. The Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. J. A. Santhanam, while appreciating the contribution made by many veterans, encouraged the faithful to be united and dedicated to meet the challenges ahead. The Dance drama "Abhijan" composed by one of the parishioners depicting the history of the Parish was a fitting finale to the programme. Sharing the delicious meal with all was the happy conclusion to the celebrations.

- Fr. Sanjay Minj

NOTICE BOARD

Recollection for the Catechists will be held at Dishari Diocesan Pastoral Centre, Baruipur from July 20, 2023 at 09.30 a.m. to July 21, 2023 after lunch.

Paribar Jyoti

- # Marriage Preparation Course from August 4 - 5, 2023
- # Young Couples Programme from August 25 - 26, 2023

Bishop S. Bose's Programme for the Month of July 2023

Date	Day	Time	Place	Programme
01	Sat	06.30 a.m.	MSC Barrackpore	Inauguration of Academic year
15	Sat	06.00 a.m.	Budge Budge	Mass, Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel
16	Sun	06.30 a.m.	Lalpol Church, Keorapukur	Mass, Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel
21	Fri	10.00 a.m.	Dishari, Baruipur	Mass & Meeting with Catechists
22	Sat	10.00 a.m.	Baruipur	Meeting with Fr. Nikhil Gomes from Bangladesh
27	Thu	10.00 a.m.	Dishari, Baruipur	Meeting of the Priests' Council
30	Sun	07.00 a.m.	Raghabpur	Feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola

Bishop Lobo's Programme for the Month of July 2023

Date	Day	Time	Place	Programme
04	Tue	04.00 p.m.		Returns from Mangalore
06	Thu	09.00 a.m.	Kolkata	Funeral Mass of Sr. Borgia MC at Mother House
09	Sun	07.00 a.m.	Gangarampur	Mass
14	Fri	07.00 a.m.	Midnapore	Goes to St. Joseph's Hospital Midnapore to see Fr. Henry Crasta
16	Sun	07.00 a.m.	Keorapukur	Concelebrates Mass at St. Anthony's Church at Keorapukur for Carmel Feast

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