



## Lessons from the Message of Lourdes

*I went every day for a fortnight, and each day I asked her who she was, and this petition always made her smile. After the fortnight I asked her three times consecutively. She always smiled. At last I tried for the fourth time. She stopped smiling. With her arms down, she raised her eyes to Heaven and then, folding her hands over her breast she said, "I am the Immaculate Conception."*

*Testimony of Saint Bernadette Soubirous*

On December 08, 1854, Pope Pius IX proclaimed the dogma of Immaculate Conception in the Apostolic Constitution *Ineffabile Deus*. A little more than three years later, on February 11, 1858, a young lady appeared to Bernadette Soubirous. There began a series of visions. During the apparition on March 24, the lady identified herself with the words: "I am the Immaculate Conception".

"I saw a lady dressed in white, she wore a white dress, an equally white veil, a blue belt and a yellow rose on each foot." recounted Bernadette later. Bernadette made the Sign of the Cross with the lady and they prayed the Rosary together in silence. When the prayer ended, the most beautiful lady suddenly vanished. Four years later, in 1862, the Bishop of the Diocese declared the faithful "justified in believing the reality of the apparition." Pope Leo XIII authorized a special office and a Mass, in commemoration of the apparition, and in 1907 Pope Pius X extended the observance of this feast to the entire Church. Bernadette was later canonized as a saint in the Catholic Church for living a holy life. She lived the Message of Lourdes she received for all of us in the Grotto.

In this editorial we shall meditate on some of the important lessons we can draw from the apparitions our Lady at Lourdes.

**1. Do not be afraid:** Bernadette was afraid just before the first apparition. However, after

making the sign of the Cross with our Lady she was no longer frightened. The Trinitarian invocation dispels fear and gives way to peace and courage to travel the journey of spiritual warfare on this earth.

- 2. Do everything for Heaven, our true home:** Our Lady said to Bernadette, I do not promise you happiness here. It is in carrying our crosses united to His Cross that we can find joy. Bernadette said, "I can do everything for Heaven, my true home". This teaches us to give up parochial worldly values and goals and be armored to live for eternal life.
- 3. To hear the message of Revelation from the heart:** During the third apparition, on February 18, 1858, the Virgin spoke for the first time: "What I have to say to you does not have to be written down". This means that Mary wished to communicate with Bernadette in a loving heart to heart way. From the very start, Bernadette was invited to open the depths of her heart to this message of Love.
- 4. Respect for fellow human beings:** Bernadette was overwhelmed by the second statement of the Virgin Mary: "Would you be so kind as to come here for fifteen days?" It is the first time that Bernadette was addressed in a formal way. She felt she was respected and loved, as a person in her own right. We are all worthy of respect in the eyes of God, because He loves each one of us. This respect needs to be translated to all the other human beings who are created in the image and likeness of God.
- 5. God still loves the sinners:** In Bernadette's time the Grotto was a dirty, hidden, damp and cold place. The Grotto was called the "pigs' shelter" because that was where the pigs feeding in the area usually took shelter. This tells us that God comes to join us where we

are, in the midst of our poverty and failures. The place of apparition reminds us of the stable where the incarnation took place. God loves us as we are and makes persistent effort to make us respond to him.

- 6. Miracles do happen:** The miracles of the Gospels are true and continue today at Lourdes. Over 7000 scientifically documented medically inexplicable cures remain on file in Lourdes of which the Catholic Church has proclaimed 70 as miracles. "With God all things are possible."
- 7. Why me?:** Bernadette suffered from Asthma and stomach problems after the cholera and tuberculosis outbreaks. She was sickly even at the moment she was called. St. Bernadette said, "If good God allows it, there must be something good in it for me".
- 8. A life of penance:** The message of Lourdes is the Good News of the Gospel message of prayer, penance and poverty. Like each of us, Bernadette had suffering in her life. Penance can be a suffering or sacrifice, a prayer or a good work offered for someone away from God. Our life, with all the joys and sorrows, can be offered as a penance to gain spiritual merit for ourselves and others. It does a lot of good in the Kingdom of God by fostering repentance.
- 9. Our Mother is with us:** Prayer is a conversation between us and God. She prays with us, listens to us, lifts our prayers to God through her motherly heart. She prays with us as she did with Bernadette every time she met in the Grotto. We are never alone.

As we celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes on February 11, let us ask for the grace of responding to the revelation of God in our life. May our Lady bless each one of us in our journey towards heaven.

+ Shyamal Bose



## YOUTH ORIENTATION



The diocesan youth commission conducted three youth orientations in three parishes of the diocese. The first was on January 14, 2024 for the 71 youth of St. Francis Xavier's Church, Budge Budge. The second was on January 21, 2024 for the 63 youth of St. Paul's Church, Canning and the third was on January 23, 2024 for the 70 youth of the Church of Our Lady of Fatima, Gosaba. The crux of the three orientations was geared towards setting life's goal, building self confidence and developing leadership qualities. Besides, they were also briefed about ICYM. Fr. Rajen Singh, Mr. Sarbeswar Chakrabarty and Dexco members were there to take the sessions and animate them with the sharing of their personal experiences as youth of the diocese.

- Fr. Rajen Singh

## Congratulations



The Catholic Diocese of Baruipur congratulates **Mr. Raj Bag** for being elected as the National Youth President of Indian Catholic Youth Movement for the term of 2024-2026. We wish him all the best for the new innings to serve the youth of our country.

## Congratulations



We heartily congratulate our Dear Fr. Kanauj Roy on his elevation to National CDPI Treasurer & joint Secretary during the election held at XX CDPI Conference in Jaipur.

- Fr. Goutam Naskar

## PARIBAR JYOTI

With the coming of the New Year, Paribar Jyoti with great enthusiasm extended its service to different parts of the Diocese through different trainings, seminars, family cell meetings and counselling. Some of the services worth mentioning of this month are, Seminar for Husband-Wife Relationship at Canning, Parenting at Basanti and Kalipur for the parents of adolescents as well as Personality Development for the youth of Morapai Parish at Laxmikantapur. They could reach out to 524 persons through these trainings, seminars, meetings and counselling.

- Fr. Uttam Naskar



## SEMINAR ON LEGAL AWARENESS AND GOVERNMENT SCHEMES



The women commission of the diocese of Baruipur hosted a seminar on Legal Awareness and Government Schemes for the women of the diocese on January 21, 2024 in Dishari. A total of about 65 women joined the seminar which started with a preliminary address by Most Rev. Shyamal Bose. Subsequently, while Mr. Herod Mallik, the working president of Bangio Christio Pariseba, West Bengal, emphasized the need of unity among the believers; Advocate Aditya Tiwari informed them about the different government schemes available for women. It was followed by the session of Fr. Faustine Brank on legal awareness pertaining to the women.

On this occasion Mr. Parimal Poti, one of the founding personalities of BCP, was felicitated. In his address he briefed about the genesis and historical growth of BCP.

- Ms. Babli Das

## UNITY OCTAVE PRAYER

A prayer meeting for Christian Unity was organized in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and St. Teresa of Calcutta, Baruipur on January 21, 2024. The Prayer led by Fr. Deepak Ekka started at 04:30 p.m. wherein the presence of Most Rev. Shyamal Bose, priests, pastors and faithful of different denominations was meaningful in signifying unity among believers praying together as one body of Christ fostering the spirit of ecumenism. The theme: You shall love the Lord your God...and your neighbour as yourself (Lk 10:27) was unfolded during

prayer and reflection. The parable of the good Samaritan challenged us to cross boundaries that call our attention to the bonds that unite the whole human family grounded in the common foundation of faith in Jesus Christ. This common prayer for Christian unity has served as a means to enhance a renewed sense of fellowship, collaboration and shared mission, echoing the prayer of Jesus that "they may all be one" (John 17:21).

- Fr. Deepak Ekka

## PALLI UNNAYAN SAMITI BARUIPUR

The social service wing of the diocese directed its machinery towards the well being of the under privileged people of the society with special focus on children, adolescents, women and differently able persons. They helped 86 persons of Sandeshkhali to obtain disability certificate and avail *Manobikbhata* from Government schemes.

In its effort to alleviate the victimized families Linkage meeting for counseling and rehabilitation was organized on January 03, 2024 at Fulmalancha Gram Panchayet under Basanti Block. 35 representatives from ASHA, ICDS, NGO, CVC, AGG, village leaders and Local police participated and enhanced themselves to be at the service to the victims and access benefit and other emergency help.



Rallies and Street Plays on social violence such as underage marriage, human trafficking, domestic violence against women and children were conducted at Dabu village under Canning Block I and Nabagram Gram Panchayet under Baruipur Block on January 10 and 23, 2024 wherein there were 137 participants. In pursuit of the same there was also a training for strengthening Community Vigilance Community on January 18 & 19, 2024 for 37 selected persons who would be rendering their support to dispel violence and abuse against women and children. In line with the same concern a mass awareness campaign at "Sundarban Birs Munda Adibasi Tusu Mela" was held at Bariya village of Chunakhali Gram Panchayet under the Basanti Block on January 23, 2024. The posters, banners and leaflets were displayed and distributed among 750 people as means of Mass Campaign.

Capacity Building Training on Children's Parliament was facilitated by Mr. Pralay Bayen for 36 selected adolescent boys and girls from January 11-12, 2024. The participants Boys and Girls were stimulated to act towards mitigating the social evils of the society and be the instruments of change in the life of their peer group.

- Fr. Saumen Malik

## DISHARI AT A GLANCE

Dishari Pastoral Centre conducted a number of different programs in last two months such as faith formation for the parents at Salkia, Christmas get-together for the Sunday school children as well as altar servers and finally Christmas get-together for the members of BEC. Altogether 710 participants took active role in those events.

Most Rev. Shyamal Bose had graced the two gatherings and celebrated Mass for them. Through his inspiring message he encouraged the participants and imbued them with the hope to walk in the light of Christ. There were as many as 15 priests from different parishes and institutions to grace the gathering and encourage the participants with the message of Christmas. Participants were given the prizes for various competitions as well as a common gift was presented to all of them. The spirit of happiness and joy of Christmas was seen in the face of the each participant.

- Fr. Goutam Naskar



## LET THEM FLY

### ANNUAL FUNCTION OF ST. MARY'S SCHOOL, KALYANPUR

St. Mary's School in Kalyanpur celebrated its annual function this year on January 19, 2024. The theme of the program was "Let Them Fly".

The program was presided by Most. Rev. Shyamal Bose, Bishop of Baruipur. Rev. Fr. Dejus John Retnam, Professor and HOD, Department of Multimedia, St Xavier's College, Kolkata graced the occasion as the chief guest. While Bishop Salvadore Lobo was the guest of honour; there were present a number of notable dignitaries.

The program started with lighting the lamp and garlanding the image of Mother Mary. The guests were felicitated by Fr. John Britto, Fr. Himangshu Poti and Sr. Kiran. The welcoming dance was followed by the dance performance of Nursery and Kindergarten students. The school choir filled the stage and captivated the attention of the audience with their melody and charm. On the 100 years of the book *Abol tabol* by Sukumar Ray, the students of class 3 to 6 remembered the poet by reciting poems from *nonsense verse*. All the energetic performances charmed the audience and they in turn applauded. The main attraction of the function was the drama of the Trial Scene from *The Merchant of Venice* by William Shakespeare, enacted by the students of class 7 and the dance drama based on the theme Let's Fly that depicted the mental struggle of the children torn in between the competition and the urge to be free and fly high.

The school which was started in 1980 as a Bengali Medium Primary school had been converted into a full fledged English medium School in 2015. It has now about 420 children on its rolls from preprimary to class VII. A new building is being put up with the help of donors and well-wishers to accommodate the growing number of children and give better facilities and amenities.

- Seheri R. Laskar





# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

## FEBRUARY

02	Br. Sudip Chakraborty
06	Fr. Uttam Naskar
08	Fr. John Britto
13	Fr. Abonindro Das
14	Fr. Prolay Boidya
15	Fr. Jackson Lawrence, S.F.X.
17	Br. Pritam Mondal
18	Fr. Molloy Mondal
24	Br. Hrittick Hazra

*Happy Birthday Dear Fathers & Brothers*

# Priestly Ordination Anniversary

## FEBRUARY

11	Fr. Sarojit Mandal
13	Fr. Goutam Naskar
24	Fr. Rajen Singh

*Congratulations Dear Fathers*

## Memorable & Admirable

### Month of February

05	Fr. Siluvai Francis S.J.
22	Fr. Abani Bagh
27	Bishop Linus Nirmal Gomes, S.J.

## Intentions for the Apostleship of Prayer - Month of February 2024

**For the terminally ill :** We pray that those with a terminal illness, and their families, receive the necessary physical and spiritual care and accompaniment.

## Joint Meeting of Diocesan Priests and CRI of Baruipur Diocese



A joint Meeting of Diocesan Priests and CRI of Baruipur Diocese was organised in Dishari on January 18, 2024. It was convened as a follow-up meeting of the Annual Regional Meeting of the Bengal Regional Bishop's Conference, Conference of Diocesan Priests of India and Conference of Religious of India held in Krishnagar from November 14-16, 2023 as there were some pressing matters which were suggested to be communicated to all the priests and religious of the region. Fr. Peter Ashish Das

SDB, while introducing the agenda welcomed Most Rev. Shyamal Bose, Rev. Fr. Arjen James Tete, S.J, the Provincial of Calcutta Province and resource person and all the members. Subsequently, after the presentation of the minutes of the previous meeting the resource person made us aware to the current political situation of the country with facts and figures and its prospective impact. He cautioned all to be alert to make use of different platforms in our ministries to conscientise the people about it as part of our role in the society. There was open discussion wherein many of them came up with various concerns affecting the life of the church.

Thereafter, Most Rev. Shyamal Bose, opened the discussion on the preparation and celebration of the Ordinary Jubilee 2025. The four Zonal Groups with a convener and members were formed to study and propagate the tenets of the four constitutions of the Vatican II to Christ's Faithful as a worthy preparation for the Jubilee.

- Fr. Deepak Ekka

## NOTICE BOARD

- Paribar Jyoti: # Marriage Preparation Course from 2<sup>nd</sup> February to 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2024  
# Young Couples Programme from 23<sup>rd</sup> February to 24<sup>th</sup> February 2024
- Chrism Mass will be on March 26, 2024 in the church of St. Teresa of Child Jesus, Basanti.

## Bishop Shyamal Bose's Programme for the Month of February 2024

Date	Day	Time	Place	Programme
29th Jan - 8th Feb	Mon-Thu		Bangaluru	CCBI and CBCI Meeting
09	Fri			Returns to Baruipur
10	Sat	09.00 a.m.	Raghabpur	Pastoral Visit
11	Sun	07.00 a.m.	Raghabpur	Mass & Confirmation
13	Tue	10.30 a.m.	Basanti	Meeting of Basanti St. Xavier's F. P. School
14	Wed	07.00 a.m.	Baruipur Cathedral	Mass - Ash Wednesday
15	Thu	10.00 a.m.	Dishari - Baruipur	Seminar of all the Parish Priests and Head of the Institutions
22	Thu	10.00 a.m.	Dishari - Baruipur	Strategic Planning of all Commission Heads
24	Sat	10.00 a.m.	Archbishop's House, Kolkata	RVA Meeting
27-29	Tue-Thu		Burdwan	Regional Pastoral Council Meeting at Chetana

## Bishop Salvadore Lobo's Programme for the Month of February 2024

Date	Day	Time	Place	Programme
02	Fri	07.00 a.m.	Gobrachawk	Mass for Inauguration of DSA Tersiaship
04	Sun	08.30 a.m.	Lilua	Mass and Confirmation
05	Mon	10.00 a.m.	Dishari - Baruipur	Canon Law Seminar for Priests at Dishari
06	Tue	10.00 a.m.	PUS - Baruipur	RRT Program for Bengal and Jharkand at PUS
07	Wed	10.00 a.m.	Dishari - Baruipur	Canon Law Seminar for Priests at Dishari
27-29	Tue-Thu		Burdwan	Regional Pastoral Council Meeting at Chetana