



The Fragrance of a Life Offered to God

What makes a saint? Is it a life filled with extraordinary achievements, great works and public recognition? Or can holiness be found in a life that is hidden, marked by suffering and lived quietly away from the eyes of the world?

The life of St. Alphonsa of the Immaculate Conception, India's first canonized woman Saint, gives us a beautiful answer. She lived for only thirty-six years, much of that time within the quiet walls of a convent, often struggling with illness and pain. Yet that hidden life became a life of extraordinary holiness.

The fragrance of St. Alphonsa is the fragrance of the Crosspatience, humility, suffering and love.

One of the most striking episodes of her early life took place when she was only thirteen. Her foster mother wanted her to marry, but Alphonsa was convinced that God was calling her to religious life. Determined to protect her vocation, she deliberately placed her foot in burning embers, hoping that the resulting injury would prevent anyone from wanting to marry her. Recalling the incident later, she wrote: "If my body were a little disfigured no one would want me!... O, how I suffered! I offered all for my great intention." We should not romanticize such an action. But it reveals the intensity of a young girl's desire to belong to Christ. Her vocation was not a passing emotion. She was prepared to suffer for what she believed God was asking of her.

Eventually, she entered the Franciscan Clarist Congregation and took the name Alphonsa. But religious life did not mean an escape from suffering. Her health remained fragile, and she experienced serious illnesses, haemorrhage and painful wounds. After making her perpetual profession in 1936, she described her experience in these words: "From that time, it seems, I was entrusted with a part of the cross of Christ." She added, "I have a great desire to suffer with joy." These words reveal how she understood her suffering. She did not merely endure pain because she had no choice. She tried to unite her suffering with the suffering of Christ and turn it into an offering.

There was another suffering in her life which was less visible but no less real. In 1940, a thief entered the convent at night. The experience left Alphonsa deeply frightened and resulted in a serious nervous breakdown. For almost a year she was unable to read or write normally and lost much of her former capacity. Yet she remained prayerful and continued to concern herself with others. Her Cross, therefore, was not only physical. She knew fear, weakness, helplessness and mental anguish. Yet suffering did not destroy her trust in God.

Her final illness reveals this surrender most powerfully. In 1945, her health deteriorated severely. She suffered convulsions, vomiting and intense

physical pain, and her final year became one of almost continuous agony. Yet, writing to her spiritual father in February 1946, she said: "I have offered myself completely to Jesus. May He do with me as He pleases." She went on to say, "I feel that the Lord has destined me to be an oblation, a sacrifice of suffering."

Here we discover the secret of her holiness. Alphonsa did not possess worldly power or influence. When illness confined her, she could no longer accomplish many of the things that an active and healthy person might do. But she could still offer herself. And this is where her life speaks directly to us.

We often think that our lives become meaningful through achievement. We want our work to be recognized, our sacrifices appreciated and our contributions noticed. Alphonsa presents another measure of greatness. A life offered to God need not be spectacular to be sacred.

Her holiness was found in hidden things: fulfilling her duties, living patiently with others, teaching when her health permitted, accepting illness, enduring pain, praying and remaining faithful when she could not understand why God was allowing so much suffering.

Her own words are particularly striking: "I consider a day in which I have not suffered as a day lost to me." She did not mean that suffering itself is good. Rather, she had learned to see even suffering as something that could be united with Christ and offered in love.

That message is deeply relevant today. Many people carry crosses that nobody sees: the parent exhausted by responsibility, the person silently carrying grief, the one struggling with disappointment or loneliness, or the person who continues doing good without recognition. St. Alphonsa tells them that such a life is not insignificant. A patient acceptance can become prayer; a hidden sacrifice can become an offering; a painful experience can become an act of trust; and a faithful duty, performed without applause, can become holiness.

Perhaps, therefore, the most fitting tribute to St. Alphonsa is not simply to admire her, but to imitate her. We can pray when life is difficult, forgive when we are hurt, remain faithful when God seems silent, and offer our daily struggles rather than surrender to despair. Above all, we can learn from her to love Christ not only when life is beautiful, but also when the road becomes hard.

St. Alphonsa did not have a spectacular life. She had a surrendered life. And that was enough. Her life leaves us with a truth our achievement-driven world can easily forget: a life offered to God need not be spectacular to be sacred. It only needs to be given with patience, humility, faith and love.

+ Shyamal Bose

CRI Baruipur Unit Gathering

The CRI Baruipur Unit organized a gathering on 22 August 2026 at Dhyana Ashram. The programme was graced by the presence of Most Rev. Shyamal Bose. We extended to him a warm and cordial welcome and expressed our heartfelt love, gratitude and appreciation for his gracious presence among us.



Fr. Faustine Brank, Advocate, High Court Calcutta, was the resource person for the gathering. He presented a very relevant and informative session on the topic, "Legal Aspects in Our Ministry Keeping the Present Scenario." His presentation was insightful, practical and enriching. It helped the participants to understand the importance of being aware of the legal aspects related to our ministry and encouraged us to carry out our apostolate with greater responsibility, awareness and seriousness.

- Fr. Manish Cap.

Palli Unnayan Samiti Baruipur



On 4 & 5 August 2026, Palli Unnayan Samiti Baruipur (PUSB) in collaboration with the Indian Red Cross Society, successfully organized a two-day Assessment Camp for senior citizens and persons with disabilities.

The camp provided comprehensive health and disability assessments, including dental, eye, hearing (ENT), and disability-specific functional assessments, ensuring that each participant received appropriate evaluation, consultation and guidance based on their individual needs.



The programme was conducted smoothly with active participation from beneficiaries and dedicated support from the organizing teams.

The successful completion of this assessment camp reflects the shared commitment of Palli Unnayan Samiti and the Indian Red Cross Society towards promoting inclusive healthcare and improving the quality of life of vulnerable communities.



Palli Unnayan Samiti Baruipur there was an orientation program on Safeguarding Policy for all its staffs and Community Teachers on 17 August 2026. Mr. Provakar Bar and Ms. Asmath from the organization named Association of Bengal Collaborators for Development (ABCD) facilitated the session as resource persons. The policy was implemented with immediate effect for PUS Baruipur organization. There were total 37 Community Teachers from SAD Langalberia and SAD Sundarban project and 9 project staffs were present in the program including the director of PUS Baruipur.

- Fr. Kanauj Roy

Youth Commission

The Youth Commission of the diocese of Baruipur organized a series of programmes in August 2026 to strengthen youth participation, leadership and faith formation in the Diocese. A Youth Orientation Programme at Hogalkuria Parish on 02 August 2026 brought together 46 young people and introduced the newly elected DEXCO members while highlighting the role and responsibilities of Catholic youth in the Church. The programme included faith and leadership inputs, interactive activities, games and fellowship.



On 09 August 2026, National Youth Sunday was celebrated at Dishari Pastoral Centre, Baruipur, with 153 participants. The celebration included the hoisting of the Diocesan Flag, Eucharistic celebration presided over by Most Rev. Shyamal Bose, and the Oath-Taking Ceremony of the newly elected DEXCO members. A skit competition on the theme "Take Courage! I Have Overcome the World", animation and prize distribution added enthusiasm to the celebration. The programme renewed the youth's commitment to serve Christ and the Church.

A further Youth Orientation Programme at Keorapukur Parish on 16 August 2026 gathered 69 young people for faith and leadership formation. Fr. Saumen Mallik led a session on leadership and the role of youth in building the Church, followed by animation and group activities. The programme encouraged the youth to take greater responsibility and participate actively in the life and mission of the Church.



- Ms. Julie Mondal

RIP



Mrs. Anastiya Shanti Mondal, beloved mother of Fr. Ujjwal Mondal, went to her eternal rest on August 5, 2026, at around 4:00 p.m. at Chittaranjan Hospital. Her Funeral Service was held on the following day at Ranigarh Baptist Church, 5 No. Jyotispur, followed by the burial of her mortal remains at the Baptist Cemetery. We commend her soul to the loving mercy of God and pray that He may grant her eternal rest and perpetual light shine upon her. May the Lord comfort, strengthen and sustain Fr. Ujjwal Mondal and all the bereaved family members during this time of sorrow. May her soul rest in peace.

- Fr. Deepak Ekka

Faith Formation Programmes for Children and Youth



A Catechism Training Programme for Sunday School children and Altar Servers was organized at Dishari Pastoral Centre on August 16, 2026, with 71 participants from different parishes of the Diocese of Baruipur. The programme aimed to strengthen the faith of the children and deepen their understanding of the Catholic faith. Fr. Ramen Pailan, the resource person, conducted an enriching session on the basic teachings of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Sacraments. His inputs helped the children grow in their knowledge of the faith

and appreciate the importance of the Sacraments in their Christian life. The programme also encouraged them to recognize their responsibility as young members of the Church, particularly in their service at the altar.

A two-day Seminar on Faith Formation for Youth was held at Dishari Pastoral Centre from August 22-23, 2026, with 72 young people from various parishes of the Diocese of Baruipur. The seminar sought to strengthen the faith of young people and help them remain rooted in Christ amidst the challenges and allurements of contemporary society. Fr. Saumen Malik, the resource person, guided the youth through meaningful input sessions, creative action plays and group discussions. These activities encouraged the participants to reflect on their faith, identify the challenges they encounter in today's world and discover practical ways of living their Christian commitment with courage and conviction. The participatory nature of the seminar created an atmosphere of enthusiasm, openness and fellowship. The youth were encouraged to share their experiences, listen to one another and grow together in faith.



Both programmes concluded with the celebration of the Eucharist, strengthening the participants in their Christian commitment. The programmes served as meaningful opportunities for faith formation and spiritual renewal, nurturing children and youth to become committed and joyful witnesses of Christ in the Church and in the world.

- Mr. Dipankar Sardar

Happy Birthday!

September

01	Fr. Bablu Sardar
05	Br. Rohit Sharma
05	Br. Uday Mondal
22	Fr. Alope Anthony Kanji
23	Fr. Pradeep Roy
25	Fr. AlexciusKindosfx
26	Fr. Augustine E.

**Happy Birthday
Dear Fathers and Brothers**



**29th September
Fr. John Britto**

Memorable & Admirable

Month of September

15	Fr. Joseph Mani, S.J.
20	Fr. Fallon Pierre, S.J.
27	Fr. Alphonse Crasta, S. J.
28	Fr. Anil Mitra, S.J.

NOTICE BOARD

Annual Retreat of Priests of the Diocese of Baruipur will be at Bandel from 20-26 September 2026.

Intentions for the Apostleship of Prayer - Month of Sept. 2026

For the care of water: Let us pray for a just and sustainable management of water, a vital resource, so that everyone may have equal access to it.