

AS WE LOOK BACK TOWARDS OUR JOURNEY (2016- 2018)

1. FAITH FORMATION :-

Amravati Diocesan Synod (15 – 17 March, 2014) and its implementation

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Bishop Elias Gonsalves, as per the canonical norms of the Church, initiated the process of organizing a diocesan Synod for the first time in the history of the diocese. Motivated by the idea of having a Synod and realizing that the missionary Amravati Church has to become alive and responsive to the realities and challenges of the times and people of the diocese, adhering to and guided by the teachings of the Church, the call of Pope Francis and the mandate of the CBCI; the faithful, religious and priests of the diocese wholeheartedly accepted the proposal. Responding to the call, about 176 persons consisting of 108 diocesan clergy and religious working in the diocese, about 58 lay representatives, women and men, and 10 provincials or their representatives from their congregations actively participated in the Synod. The draft position papers were discussed threadbare by the participants guided by the Spirit which helped everyone to own up and commit themselves to the processes and outcomes of the Synod. Finally with the theme **‘ToReconcile and Unite all things in Christ’** we brought out a Socio-Pastoral Plan for the Diocese of Amravati. The Synod envisaged the all round development of the Diocese by identifying 8 thrust areas i.e Faith Formation, Education, Health, Communication, Social Development and Environment and brought out the Pastoral Plan for 6 years (2014-2020). On 13th December, 2017 Bishop Elias Gonsalves announced that a Mid-Term Evaluation of the Pastoral Plan would take place during the month of January-February 2018. All the Parishes ,Social and Educational institutes were given structured questionnaires which had to be filled and sent to the expert team comprising Mr. Andrew Fernandes and Miss Maitrayee Bhattacharya. The expert team visited selected Parishes and Institutes in all 5 zones of the Diocese. The Structured questionnaires had to be sent to the expert committee by 31st March, 2018. On 17th August, 2018 Mid- Term evaluation assembly of the Diocesan synod was held at Dyanmata School Auditorium. The participants included the Bishop, Diocesan Clergy, Religious and also Major superiors and Provincials of various congregations. Mr. Andrew Fernandes and Miss Maitrayee Bhattacharya were the resource persons. Fr. Anthony SJ and Fr. Godfrey D’ Lima SJ were the observers of the proceedings. Bishop Elias appreciated the hard work of the resource persons and the expert team for visiting the Parishes and the institutes personally and studying the implementation process of the synod. The two resource persons presented their findings based on the field study they had undertaken and also on the questionnaire that was filled by the Parishes and the Institutes . The resource persons opined that there should a greater collaboration with government departments, NGOs and research institutes. They also stressed on the need for the harmonious blending of the the charisms of various religious congregations working in the diocese as well as the pastoral plan of the diocese. The observers of the assembly appreciated the efforts of the Bishop,clergy and the religious of the Diocese to implement the pastoral plan by giving equal status to all collaborators. They stressed the need of updating ourselves with the various government Schemes and complex problems plaguing the nation. The Bishop concluded the assembly with an emphasis on the creation of Community Welfare Fund in each Parish which will be utilised on the following breaking up pattern for the welfare and upkeep of the Parish.

30%- Education of needy students
20%- Health
30%- Maintenance of the Church
20%- Training and Formation

Canonization of Blessed Teresa of Kolkata

The year 2016 was a very special year for the Catholic Church in India. Blessed Teresa of Kolkata who is popularly known as Mother Teresa was canonized on 4th September, 2016 by Pope Francis. The Diocese of Amravati celebrated her canonization with a three day triduum followed by the blessing of her statue and a grand procession on 25th September, 2016. The celebration culminated with a solemn Eucharistic celebration followed by a spectacular cultural program and agape.

Priestly Ordination

To serve the local Church of Amravati with its ministerial priesthood, Bishop Elias Gonsalves, by duly observing the prescribed rites, ordained Deacon Pradeep Toppo on 9th May, 2017.

Inauguration of the Tresvil Convent, Tiwasa

The sisters of the congregation of the Carmelite sisters of Trivandrum render humongous service at Dyanmata School, Tiwasa. A new convent for them was inaugurated on 24th June, 2017. Bishop Elias Gonsalves presided over the Eucharistic celebration and blessed the convent in the presence of Provincial Superior Sister Clare D'souza along with Sr. Vivienne, Sr. Monica, Sr. Luiza and Sr. Cynthia.

Inauguration of Regional Superior's House at Yavatmal

The new Regional Superior's house was blessed and inaugurated by His Excellency Most Rev. Elias Gonsalves the Bishop of Amravati in Yavatmal. Sr Norma, PSOL the newly elected regional superior was present along with the Provincial and other sisters of the congregation. Fr Mario D'souza, msfs the Episcopal Vicar of the Diocese and Fr. Philip Ekka the Priest in charge of St Joseph's Church, Yavatmal also graced the occasion along with the lay faithful of the Parish.

Inauguration of St Anne's Convent at Rajura and Nandura

On Wednesday 21st July 2017 the Congregation of the sisters of St. Anne Phirangipuram/Guntur, AP (CSSA) held a grand opening ceremony of two new convents in Rajura and Nandura. The inauguration of the new convent at Rajura took place in the morning at 10.00 am. On the same evening the inaugural ceremony of the new convent and CBSE school took place in Nandura. The Nandura convent was blessed by Most Rev. Elias Gonsalves, Bishop of Amravati Diocese in the presence of Rev. Mother Anthonamma Superior general, Rev. Sr. Ratna Mary Provincial superior of Guntur Province AP, Sr. Ignatius Suman Provincial Superior of Hyderabad Province, General consultants, provincial consultants and the Clergy of our Diocese.

On this great occasion Bishop urged sisters to live and witness Christ's values to the Hindu brethren and spread the good news to every heart. The school programme began at 5.30pm with Superior General Mother Anthonamma P inaugurating the school building after which Bishop Elias Gonsalves blessed the campus.

Formation of PPCs and DPC

In accordance with the Pastoral Plan of the Diocese Bishop Elias Gonsalves announced that every Parish in the Diocese should have a structured Parish Pastoral Council (PPC). Bishop Elias personally took a great effort to oversee the formation of PPC in every Parish by personally visiting every Parish and conducting a full day training program for the members of the proposed PPC. This training program was carried out from June 2017 to March 2018. Bishop Elias Gonsalves also made the members aware about the duties of PPC members in accordance with the Canon Law and the particular law of the Diocese of Amravati as envisaged in the constitution of the Parish Pastoral Council drafted by the Diocese. By June 2018 all Parishes in the Diocese had a functional PPC. Thus on July 22nd, 2018 the PPC representatives of all the Parish Pastoral Councils came together and along with the selected and nominated clergy and religious the first Diocesan Pastoral Council meeting was held at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, Amravati under the Chairmanship of Bishop Elias Gonsalves . As per the newly drafted Constitution of the DPC the office bearers were also elected.

Inauguration and blessing of the mass centres at Amjery and Khatkali

Two renovated mass centres were inaugurated and blessed by Bishop Elias Gonsalves in the presence of Fr. Shimon Chummar the Parish Priest of Chikaldara and the faithful of the Parish on 2nd October, 2017.

Inauguration and rededication of the renovated Church Building at Murtizapur and Akot

St. Andrews Church, Murtizapur which was built in the year 1919 was almost in ruins due to its poor foundational structure. Thus, Bishop Elias Gonsalves decided to build a new church for the faithful of this mission who would be able to participate during Liturgical and Para- Liturgical activities with more devotion. After gaining a good support from the National and International donors, the church building was renovated. Finally on 21st October, 2017 at the hands of Bishop Elias Gonsalves and in the presence of many Priests, Religious and Faithful, St. Andrews Church, Murtizapur was solemnly inaugurated and blessed and made open for the faithful to worship and pray. The Golden jubilee celebrations of Fr. Peter Pathare the Parish Priest of Murtizapur added more colour to the celebration. Similarly Our Lady of Fatima Church which was built in 1960 was in a dilapidated state. On 22nd November, 2017 the newly renovated Church building at Akot was blessed and opened for public worship by Bishop Elias Gonsalves in the presence of the Parish Priest Fr. Agnello Dongarkar and other Priests and Religious of the Diocese. The faithful of both Akot and Sanglud were present in large number.

RIP Rev. Fr. K.J Joseph and Rev. Fr. Augustine Olickamalil

The year 2018 was a year of great loss for the Diocese as Fr. K.J Joseph who served the Diocese faithfully for 42 years passed away on 19th April, 2018 at the age of 86. Fr. Augustine Olickamalil who faithfully laboured in the Diocese for 46 years passed away on 27th June, 2018 at the age of 76

Inauguration of MSMHC Convent at Anjangaon

The Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians collaborate with the Diocese and effectively help us in running St. Marys School, Anjangaon. On Sunday, 10th December 2017 the MSMHC sisters held a grand opening ceremony of their convent in Anjangaon. The inauguration of the new convent at Anjangaon took place in the evening at 6 pm. The Anjangaon convent was blessed by Most Rev. Elias Gonsalves, Bishop of Amravati Diocese in the presence of superior Sr. Lucy MSMHC, Sr. Auxilia MSMHC, Sr. Shalini MSMHC, Fr. Nelson Varghese, and the other clergy and religious of the Diocese. The faithful of the Parish along with the teachers also graced the occasion. The convent will be used by the sisters as a residential house and it will also serve as a hostel for the teachers from other states. Fr. Nelson Varghese the Headmaster of the school thanked the sisters for the yeomen service rendered by them in the school. The program concluded with agape.

2. EDUCATION:-

The grand blessing and Inauguration ceremony of St. Francis De Sales Senior School

St Francis de Sales Senior Secondary school blessed and inaugurated on 21 January 2017. Most Rev. Elias Gonsalves, the Bishop of Amravati was the President for the Programme who officially blessed the Building and all within it. In his opening address, he reiterated the need for value education, education that fosters multi-dimensional growth, as he appreciated the Fransalians' presence in Amravati diocese. Honourable Ravi Rana, the MLA of Badnera was the Guest of Honour who cut the ribbon, released balloon and inaugurated the building; he praised the works of catholic missionaries in Amravati, appreciated the mighty works Christians have done in the field of education and the help given to the Poorest of the Poor in different parts of the world. Fr. Jacob Karamakuzhiyl MSFS, the Provincial unveiled the Inauguration and Foundation stone and broke the coconut. He exhorted the school to mould the young minds like that of a flower. The program was graced by the Priests and Religious of the Diocese.

Laying of the foundation stone of the new St. Xavier Cathedral CBSE School Building

The foundation stone laying ceremony of the new school building of St. Xavier's Cathedral School (C.B.S.E.) Amravati was held on Monday, 01st May 2017 at 11.00 a.m. at the hands of the Chief Trustee. Most Rev. Bishop Elias Gonsalves along with Fr. Ramsheen J. A. Vicar General, Fr. Mario D'Souza Msfs, Episcopal Vicar, Fr. Cyriac V.C. Financial Administrator of Amravati Diocese, Fr. Joselyn, the principal, parents, teachers and children prayed and blessed the foundation stone of the new building on the rear premises of Bishop's House Campus, Amravati. The ceremony was remarkably blended with the colorful celebration of Maharashtra

Day in the school quadrangle. The distinguished guests Mr. Shekar Dongarwar, Structural Designer from Nagpur, Mr. Vishwanat Sant, Consultant Engineer from Pune, were also present the function.

Blessing and Inauguration of the new School Building at Tiwasa

The blessing and inauguration of the New School Building and Annual Day the celebration of Dnyanmata English Medium School, Tiwasa was held on 4 March 2017, at 4.00 p.m. The Blessing ceremony and prayer service was conducted by Most Rev. Bishop Elias Gonsalves, Bishop of Amravati; while the inauguration was done by Honorable Minister of State for Home, Dr. Ranjit Patil. The Children put up a colorful cultural programme; with variety of dances, songs and a play on Mother Teresa of Kolkatta depicting as “Mercy is Love in Action”. The Principal of the School Fr. John Mathew, welcomed the august gathering of Rev. Fathers, Sisters, Parents and well wishers. Master Shatayu Bolke and Kumari Roshni conducted the programme while Sr. Monica D'Mello proposed the vote of thanks. All the staff, students and parents worked hard for the success of the programme.

Inauguration of Mount Carmel International School, Akola

Mount Carmel International School was inaugurated by Dr. Ranjit Patil the guardian minister of Akola and blessed by Bishop Elias Gonsalves on 23rd June, 2017 at 10.00 am. The other dignitaries present for this occasion were Dr. Vikram Pachlore and MLC Mr. Gopikishan Bajoria. The program was well organized by Fr. Matthew Karical the Principal of the school and was graced by the Priests and religious of the Diocese.

3. HEALTH: -

Honour for Dayasagar Hospital

Dayasagar which is one of the biggest hospitals of the city, with all the possible equipment is the major serving health institution in Amravati. Day by day the number of patients is increasing and that gave a thought to extent the building. It is to be noted that Dayasagar, a charitable hospital is serving many poor patients in the city as well as many other villages are covered by the hospital through Mobile dispensary. There is another Dayasagar Hospital located deep in the heart of Melghat Region amidst of Korku Adivasies. This hospital also is involved in health ministry to the poorest of the poor. It is a great matter of pride for the Diocese as the Dayasagar hospital run by the FCC congregation was given entry level accreditation by National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH) on 2nd July, 2016. The NABH is a quality control board which is a monitoring authority that grades the hospital as per the qualitative health care provided by the concerned hospital and the FCC sisters under the able leadership of Dr. Sr. Lissy and Dr. Sr. Rechita worked hard to take the hospital to this stage of accreditation

Medical camps an health awareness programs

Medical Camps and various health awareness programs were conducted in different parts of the Diocese. The FCC sisters of the Dayasagar Hospital and SCC sisters of Chikaldera in collaboration with the Diocesan clergy have effectively carried out the ministry of healing and brought solace to the poor and downtrodden people in the various parts of the Diocese. The FCC sisters also started a mobile clinic in for the welfare of the poor Korku tribals of the Dharni region. The FCC sisters also restarted the snake bite treatment in Asadpur on 1st August, 2018 after a huge public demand

4. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT:-

Manav Shakti Sanstha at Zari-Jamni

It is a known fact that Vidarbha region of Maharashtra State is most of the time badly affected by agrarian crises, especially Yavatmal District, where a big number of farmers have committed suicide. Keeping in mind the need of the time, the diocese of Amravati started working for this cause in great manner. Manav Shakti Sanstha (MASS) which is situated in deep isolated area, among the Kolam Adivasies of Yavatmal district is highly engaged into human development works. Apart from the material and financial aid, the center is focusing more on counseling, guidance, extra-classes for children, livelihood programmes etc. many generous hands have come up to help this noble cause. The society was operating in a rented building. In order to ensure that a stable structure was at place a construction of a new building was envisaged and executed. On 25th March, 2017 the new building named 'Sarvodaya' was inaugurated and blessed by His excellency Bishop Elias Gonsalves in the presence of the Director Fr. Victor Tulo & Assitant Director Fr. Cornelius Kujur who laboured zealously in order to bring the project to fruition. The occasion was graced by Priests and Religious as well as the villagers of Zari-Zamini who participated in the Solemn Eucharist followed by agape.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Burse for Distressed Farmers

As a watermark of the diamond Jubilee of the diocese, a burse named "Our Lady of Perpetual Help" burse for distressed Farmers was declared at the hands of His Grace Archbishop Salvatore Pinocchio. After a proper survey and inquiry made, a truly laudable step, as a beginning of this project, an initial cheque of Rs.10,000/- was handed over to a widow named "Rekha Lokhande". The Apostolic Nuncio expressed his happiness on seeing the initiative taken by the diocese and immediately handed over Rs. 10,00,000 /- (Ten Lakh) cheque for this noble cause. The diocese has now taken keen interest in this project and many families are helped. The burse for the distressed was effectively distributed to 63 families after a proper survey. Every family got 10000 Rs. The then director Fr Victor Tulo effectively carried out the program and 25 families were found to live in pathetic condition and immediate support was extended to them by the Diocese. It is indeed a great joy that many people have started small business venture from the amount they received from the Diocese.

Various initiatives by Jeevan Vikas Sanstha (JVS)

The watershed program implemented by Jeevan Vikas Sanstha with the support of Manos Unidas was very successful. The watershed construction program which began on 1st January, 2016 under the dynamic leadership of Fr. Benjamin Horo the Director of JVS was completed by May, 2016 . 64 farmers as well as 692 labourers benefited from this project. The project covered Nanduri and Sosokheda villages. Also various training programs are regularly conducted by JVS under the leadership of Fr. Benjamin Horo which aims at equipping the volunteers as well as skill development programs for farmers and youth

Various Construction, Renovation and Repairworks

As the diocese is spreading its wings to cover various missions, it also stands in need of infrastructure. Therefore, various construction, renovation and repair works are taking place in the diocese. Many schools buildings are being renovated, extended or repaired for the better functioning. Few Churches and Presbyteries of different missions which were in need of an urgent repair were made ready for the proper use.

New Construction of Schools: St Xavier's School CBSE school, Amravati and St. Mary's School, Anjangaon. Dnayanmata School, Tivasa.

Extension of Schools: Sacred Heart School, Paratwada. St. Xavier's School, Shegaon, Mt. Carmel School, Washim. Mt. Carmel School, Borgaon- Akola, Mount Carmel School, Akola and St. Joseph's School, Yavatmal.

Reconstruction of The Two Churches: St. Xavier's Church, Shegaon, Buldhana and St. Xavier's Church, Sanglud; Daryapur Taluka.

5. ENVIORNMENT:-

Vision for a Green Diocese

Taking inspiration from Pope Francis' call in the encyclical 'Laudato si' efforts have been made for moving towards 'Green Diocese' and sustained long term plan has been implemented for this purpose which includes tree plantation in all our institutions as well as limiting the use of cracker and plastic. Also Fr. Jolly Puthenpuracal the priest from our Diocese who is working in Caritas India, Delhi received Vanashri vrukshamitra puraskar from the hands of the chief minister Devendra Fdanavis on 29th July, 2016.