



# CHRISTIAN BROTHERS



**Nine is Mine**

**JANUARY 2015**

## NEWSLETTER

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Things have a price and can be for sale, but people have a dignity that is priceless and worth far more than things.

- Pope Francis

Dear Brothers and friends of Edmund,

Greetings from a cold Delhi that is gradually beginning to become less chilly.

January has been a very significant month for our Province. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of November, 1889, four Irish Brothers Vincent Casey, aged 40, Fabian Kenneally, aged 33, Edward Aherne and Ambrose Flynn, both of whom were barely out of their teens set out from Liverpool for India. Their journey took 46 days. They arrived at the Calcutta port on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January, 1890. These four Irishmen were joined by the 16 Calcutta Brothers (a local indigenous congregation) to form the Indian Province of the Irish Christian Brothers.

Thanks to the faith, commitment and hard work of the early group of Irish Christian Brothers, the Indian Province was set on a strong foundation. A number of boarding schools were established and the Irish Christian Brothers became well known for the schools they ran.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of January, 2015 the Christian Brothers celebrated the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the coming of these 4 brave men. One of them- the Leader of the group -Vincent Casey died within a few months of exhaustion and the heat. The second -Fabian Kenneally was the first Provincial and his term lasted 25 years.

The Eucharistic celebration on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January, 2015, was presided over by Archbishop Thomas D'Souza of Kolkata. Br. Hugh O'Neil, Congregation Leader came from Rome to inaugurate the celebrations

As the Jubilee year continues, let us not forget the commitment and dedication of our early Irish Christian Brothers. As the words of the song say, "I imagine our world if they hadn't tried, We wouldn't be here celebrating today."

Yours fraternally

*Mark*

## 125 GLORIOUS YEARS

125 years of the coming of the Irish Christian Brothers in India. 125 years of the first institution under the care of the Christian Brothers in India. 125 years of the charism of Blessed Edmund Rice on this soil. A journey of 125 years which does not seem long in the time frame of history is a journey of the Christian Brothers in India, risking and leaping, falling and rising, touching the lives of many in quiet and humble ways carrying on with the vision of Edmund, making inclusions to adapt to the contemporary needs. The seed planted 125 years ago, had to grow, drawn by the Mystery called God, awakened by His presence, seeking meaningful and respectful ways in which the Edmund family stands in harmony with the whole Earth community.

In St Joseph's College, Kolkata, we were privileged to witness the 125 years celebration as this institution is the first in India, where the journey had begun.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of January, 2015, we began with the Eucharistic Service Celebration with Rt. Rev. Thomas D'Souza, Archbishop, leading the prayers. The celebration was inaugurated by the Congregation Leader Rev. Br. Hugh O'Neil.

The welcome was very Indian with the teachers and the students of the three in-house institutions Aashirvad Vidyalaya, St George's School and St Joseph's College, danced to the hymns by Tagore. A very big choir comprising of the SJC boys, led and trained by Br Christopher created the perfect ambience. The Archbishop, the Brothers, led by the Principal, were extremely patient to take a close look of the exhibits put up by the students.

The CB schools, St Mary's O & D School, Dum Dum, St Patrick's and St Vincent's from Asansol, Goethals Memorial School, Kurseong, St John's H School, Chandigarh, St Columba's, New Delhi along with the three institutions here, put up an exhibition. All other CB institutions were also represented by their



flags during the inaugural. The topics included geography, history, culture, food, literature, sports, scientific and economic developments and famous personalities, in Kolkata and in Ireland, then in the late 1800s and now. West Bengal was portrayed in details by the junior school with little boys dressed as live models. The eight essentials of the CB schools in context to SJC, the history of SJC and St Joseph our Patron Saint were also there to top the charts.



In the evening there was a cultural program put up by the various CB schools. Their performances were topical and unique bearing relevance to the 125 years celebration. Br Julian McDonald presented each school with a token from the Congregation. The show ended with a flamboyant display of letting off hot air balloons, 125 of them, lighting up the night sky, with hope and faith that the light would spread all over.



The next morning, on the 31<sup>st</sup>, the exhibition continued. The boys were given a break with the Principal inviting all to dance in the hall. The guest schools, the hosts, the students and the teachers all danced to the beats matching the mood. It was very encouraging to see some of the Brothers to be also present with the group who were enjoying themselves. The party continued that evening with a musical show. The past pupils, present students, teachers sang to keep the crowd enthralled. As the crowd gathered the dance floor was set ablaze with rocking music by Francis Lepcha and his band and the students, teachers, guests and all danced along.



On the 1<sup>st</sup> of February, Sunday, the guest schools were to go around the city for local sightseeing before they started to depart. Their stay at SJC gave all here a great pleasure and the boys here still talk about them and the good times spent together.

On Monday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February the exhibition continued until a little after mid-day for some of the neighboring schools visited SJC. Parents also

visited the school on all the three days of the exhibition.

The decorations were slowly taken off, the exhibits were removed, and all returned back to their daily school life. It is in all our regular activities that we find the Mystery is revealed and it is in this Faith that we Celebrate and live.

*Debasish Bhattacharya*

## Jubilee at St Joseph's College, Kolkata

St Joseph's College, celebrated its quasiquicentennial anniversary in a grand style at their school grounds in Kolkata.

In an august gathering of brothers, principals, distinguished guests, teachers, students, parents, families, former pupils and members of the wider community the function started with a Thanksgiving Eucharistic Celebration on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2015.

This was followed by the inauguration of the Exhibition. Christian Brothers schools from around India put up charts and models and posters of various aspects of Edmund Rice, the history of Calcutta and India, and education down the ages. Photographs and documents relating to many aspects of school life over the last 125 years were tabulated and put together for display for visitors to the school. St Patrick's presented, together with posters and charts depicting the essence of the community spirit of Blessed Edmund, a model of the school which sent many 'down memory lane'.

A cultural programme was organized in the evening of the same day. St John's, Chandigarh enthralled the audience with their rock band and *bhangra* performance. St Vincent's showcased the history of their school. St Joseph's Kolkata put up a dance drama on the life of Blessed Edmund Rice. St Patrick's captivated the audience with two group songs, *BETTER MAN* and *I'M YOURS* together with a PowerPoint presentation on the good work of the school in keeping with the vision of Edmund Rice.

*Ruben Bose*

## GRATEFUL THANKS

The lives of ten brothers, who worked in India and whose necrologies had hitherto not been written, appear in the 2015 Necrologies. Martin Fernandes wishes to thank and acknowledge the following, whose contributions in one way or another were of immense help in the writing of these short necrologies :- Brother Baptist Finn, whose phenomenal memory enabled him to provide many dates, details and anecdotes, Br. John Steinmayer, Br. Miles Allams, Br. Liam Deasy, Br. Lenny Lobo, Br. Tino D'Abreo, Br. Brendan MacCarthaigh, the late Br. Pat Murray, Sabino D'Souza, Mr. Jim McGinniss and Mrs. Kavita Sen. "

## LURSHAI'S THANKSGIVING MASS IN WAHRIHNONG

The 25<sup>th</sup> of Jan 2015 witnessed the local thanksgiving celebration of Lurshai's Final Vows, in Wahrihnong. The Bishop of Nongstoin, Rev Victor Lyngdoh presided over the Eucharist. The gathering was graced by other priests and religious from around the diocese and from Shillong as well. More than 1200 faithful from all over the hills had gathered to celebrate a son of the soil making his Final Profession in the 100<sup>th</sup> year of the CB's presence in the Khasi Hills. We from St Edmund's Campus took a bus load of people for the programme including the support staff from School and College, apart from the Schols, Grads and friends of the Brothers. The Nongsiang family (Lur's Family) were there in full strength and about 40 of them had pitched camp in Wahrinong a day before to organise the celebratory meal of the day.



The Eucharistic celebration began at 10am on a cool yet brilliantly sunlit Sunday of January on the newly cut sports field of Edmund Rice Mangkara Mission School. During the Thanksgiving Eucharist, Lurshai read out the khasi translation of the Vows he made in Asansol and prostrated himself in front of the altar while the Bishop prayed over him. The Bishop's homily was inspiring as he stressed on Lurshai's commitment, especially in this year of the Consecrated Life. Lur himself gave a fiery testimonial after the mass as he recalled his journey from his earliest days, from the vocation camp to the present time. He spoke with pride and passion about his vocation and his call to be a Brother in the Congregation of Christian Brothers and in the footsteps of Blessed Edmund Rice.

The local samla(youth) formed the choir and they were ably assisted by the Schols and Grads who chipped in with a couple of hymns. The MSMHC Sisters along with the local women had done a fabulous job of decoration the stage and it look resplendent with beautiful flowers adorning the altar and its environs. The mass was followed by a short Cultural program with items from various youth groups from around the villages. The Schols and Grads once again entertained the crowds with an Adivasi dance from the tribes around Jharkhand/ Chhattisgarh. Speeches and songs interspersed the hour and a half of entertainment. We were then treated to a sumptuous banquet with a great variety of dishes lovingly prepared by Lur's folks. All in all, it was a wonderful day and it was an endearing sight to see Lur soaking in the love and adulation of all those gathered in support of his decision to commit himself to be a Brother for life.

*Parag D'Costa*

## VOCATION PROMOTER'S REPORT FOR JANUARY

As avid readers of my monthly reports, I'm sure you would have realized that last month I did not send in any report. Yet, this month I shall not make up by having this report doubly long. Now you can breathe easy!

In the past two months, not much new ground work has been going on. It has been a time of meeting up with boys who had said yes initially to find out if they are really serious about the CBs or not. A few boys (from our own schools) are still interested in the CB way of life and I have met their families. As many wise men before me have said, 'Don't count the number of boys until you see them climbing the hill', so just wait for a couple more months to find out the 'actual number'.

December also saw me take a break for the Tertianship and Annual Retreat in Asansol. On my arrival in Asansol I realized that I hadn't sent out my Christmas cards to the boys and the St. Vincent's Tech came to my rescue. I had personalized cards made for me and (don't tell my retreat director, but) I spent most of my time there writing and posting them to the hundreds of boys. Obviously, my efforts have borne fruit with many boys calling and messaging me as a result of the cards. Not to mention, Christmas night I nearly exhausted my famous 'SMS Pack' and Whats App trying to send instant greetings to as many as possible.

January has been a nice time with my REAL community in the Bow (many of you have no clue as to where I belong) where I have spent almost 3 weeks, including the very special time of the Sequisential (or some word like that) Jubilee of George's and Joseph'. This time was spent developing the website [www.edmundrice.in](http://www.edmundrice.in) I am searching for good articles and images to put up on the website. I also am planning to bring out a brochure/ leaflet/ handout for the busy months of fishing coming up ahead.

The next and most important thing to do is to 'take a holiday' while the students prepare and appear in their Board Examinations, because after that I expect to go non-stop until Mid-June.

As I conclude this report I request you to do at least one of the following:

- ◆ To send in photographs for the brochure /video / advertisements/handouts
- ◆ To give a talk to the Catholic boys of higher education institutions (or get me into those places) or at Vocation workshops/retreats
- ◆ To suggest ways to attract mature vocations
- ◆ To organize/help out in Vocation Camps being conducted in March and April
- ◆ To prepare material that could be used for Vocation Promotion
- ◆ To spread the news about the vocation website: [www.edmundrice.in](http://www.edmundrice.in)
- ◆ To contribute articles and suggestions for improvement to the vocation website by signing up and logging in
- ◆ To pray for good/mature vocations

## NINE IS MINE RALLY AT JANTAR MANTAR



5000 children from various sections of Delhi joined representatives of 27 states and union territories who had gathered in the national capital for the culmination of the Global Action 2015 launch. These children who were largely in their teens assembled at Jantar Mantar to seek the fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals that are due to be delivered by the end of this year.

Children from numerous schools and civil society organisations that represent varied child-rights issues, joined the children's social forum that called for a budget that reflects a stronger commitment toward the last child. Using varied media like street plays, flags, drums, posters, slogans, puppets, unicycles, and varied regional dances children highlighted the issues of children of India. The children also honour a one minutes silence in honour of their Bapu by gesturing Gandhi's Monkeys to symbolize children millions of India's children who are not given age appropriate forums to speak or whose voice goes unheard or who's still live in bondage in varied degrees.

15 year old Swarnalaxmi who braves total vision impairment from childhood addressed the gathering in her role as the 'Prime Minister' of the national children's parliament that is facilitated by the **NINEISMINE** campaign. She called urgently for a society that ensures the inclusion of all particularly children with disabilities and from various vulnerable communities including Dalits, Muslims and Adivasies.

Varied global and National campaigns rallied in to call for a society that honours the Millennium Goals as well as includes children in the new Sustainable Development Goals. Amitabh Behar the global co-chair of the Action 2015 Launch said that this gathering joined the energy of similar gathering across 80 nations of the world.

Ms Annie Namala launched the Up for School global campaign which draws attention to ensure that every child has access to equitable quality education. Ms Namala added that 'in India the campaign is to draw in the children of socially excluded communities.'

Paul Diwakar, the National Convener of the *Wada Na Todo* Abhiyan which leads the **NINEISMINE** campaign called for a deliberate focus on children from vulnerable communities in our

Budgets. With little over 60 days left for the 31<sup>st</sup> of March, Ambarish Rai called for the complete implementation of the Right to Education by the set deadline.

The children staged a flash Mob in support of the global One Billion Rising campaign that ended with all the 5000 children singing and dancing to the tune of 'Jagore Dilli Jago'. The children of the **NINEISMINE** campaign also staged a second flash mob in which the children asked for the fulfillment of all their rights. The streets of Jantar Mantar reverberated with the chorus "Sadda Haq Ette Raq" as entire gathering dance and gestured their demands.

Speaking at the close of this event, organised by young people of New Delhi themselves, Br Steve Rohan called for young people and the nation call to commit themselves to building an INDIA – an Incredible Nation Dedicated to the Inclusion of All. The gathering closed with a unique rendition of the national Anthem in sign language as a symbol of the children's commitment to amplify the voice of the unheard.

