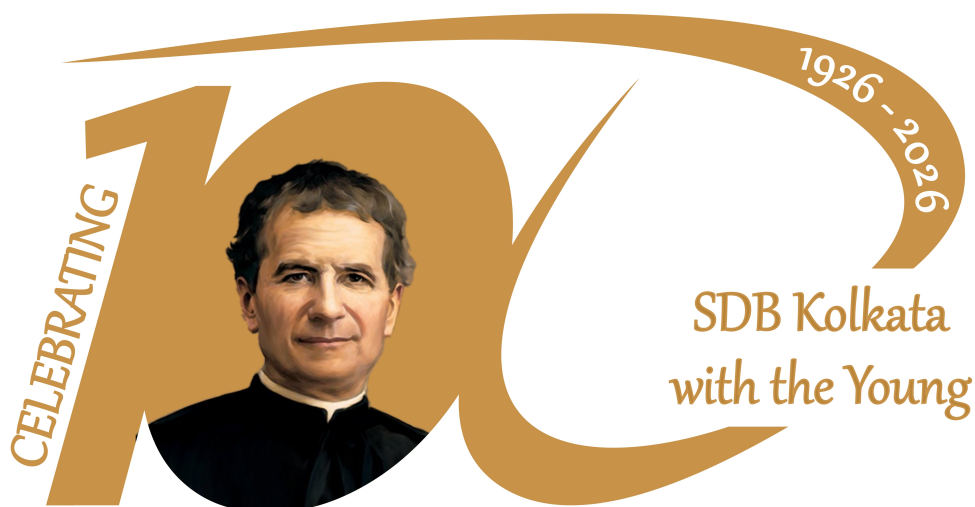




JP-57-1/25



My Dear Confreres,

As the first rays of 2025 dawned upon us, we embarked on a profound journey as Pilgrims of Hope. This New Year is truly a gift from God, offering boundless possibilities and opportunities to infuse hope and radiance into the lives of young people worldwide—especially those who are poor, abandoned, and marginalized.

The Year we have begun calls us to renew our commitment to the Salesian mission. In the spirit of Don Bosco, we extend mercy and loving kindness to the youth entrusted to our care, creatively addressing their needs through the unique settings in which we serve. Whether through education, pastoral guidance, or direct outreach, our efforts are a tangible expression of God's love and compassion.

As members of the Salesian Family, whose unity we joyfully celebrated during the month of January, we are invited to walk hand in hand with the youth, inspiring them to dream of a brighter future. By accompanying them with hope, we work together to build a world where peace, justice, and love prevail. Together, as a united Salesian Family, let us continue to serve with zeal, ensuring that no young person is left behind in their quest for a fulfilling life.

I. Ordination of Deacon Johnny Ruram

The ordination ceremony of Deacon Johnny Joseph Ruram commenced on the evening of 16 January 2025, with an hour of adoration, followed by the “Thokka” celebration—a traditional Garo tribal ritual symbolizing purification and cleansing of the candidate, along with prayers for his prosperity. Representing the province, Fr. Bikash Mondal and I were privileged to participate in the ordination of Fr. Johnny Joseph Ruram, the second Salesian priest from the region.

The ordination was conferred on 17 January 2025, by His Lordship Most Rev. Ponon Paul Kubi, CSC, Bishop of the Mymensingh Diocese, at Mary Our Help Parish, Utrail-Birisiri. The ceremony witnessed the presence of approximately 40 concelebrants, including 10 Salesian priests. The liturgy was beautifully enhanced by the parish choir, comprising boys and girls from the local hostels under the guidance of Fr. Victor Mankhin, SDB, who sang melodiously in both Bengali and Garo languages.

Following the ordination, various cultural and entertainment Programmes were organized to celebrate the joyous occasion. The event concluded with a grand meal served at the parish complex, attended by nearly 400 faithful and religious.

The following day, Fr. Johnny Ruram celebrated his first Holy Mass in his hometown, Garaunda. It was attended by a large congregation, including the faithful, several diocesan priests, and six Salesian priests. It was a moment of immense joy and thanksgiving for his family and the local community.

Fr. Johnny's ordination motto, inspired by John 6:68, is: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." May this guiding scripture verse inspire him daily to remain close to Christ, the source of eternal life, and to dedicate his life in service to the Church and society.

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Fr. Johnny Ruram for his courageous commitment to follow the Lord in the spirit of Don Bosco. May God abundantly bless his ministry and inspire many others to answer the call to serve.

2. Empowering Lay Collaborators

From 20-22 January 2025, a three-day residential training Programme was conducted to enhance the skills of social workers and tuition teachers from Azimganj, Polsonda More, Gazole, Barapahari, and Joypur. A total of 24 participants attended the Programme, which aimed to equip them with the tools and techniques needed to support children and communities in rural tuition centres and hostels effectively. The event commenced with an inspiring inaugural address by Fr. Sunil Kerketta the Vice-Provincial, setting a positive and motivating tone for the sessions.

The training covered various essential topics. Sessions on basic counselling and child psychology provided participants with the knowledge to better understand and address the needs of children in their care. A key focus of the Programme was hands-on training in using the newly implemented cloud-based database management software. Participants learned to document daily activities, track progress, and generate reports, improving their capacity for efficient data management and accountability. Additionally, they were introduced to the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) and ASER surveys, integral tools in poverty eradication projects. These sessions emphasized the importance of accurate data collection and active community engagement. Practical demonstrations on using data dashboards further empowered participants to make informed, impactful decisions.

To foster collaboration and teamwork, the Programme included recreational outings and team-building exercises. These activities not only strengthened the participants' ability to work cohesively but also created a sense of fellowship and mutual respect.

The Programme concluded with a feedback session where participants shared their experiences and reflected on their learnings. A certification ceremony followed, recognizing their dedication and successful completion of the training. The event ended with a heartfelt vote of thanks, celebrating the participants' commitment and the smooth execution of the Programme.

This initiative effectively empowered participants with the skills and tools needed to better serve children and communities while ensuring efficient data management and reporting practices. Special thanks are due to Fr. Jijo, the Economer, and Fr. Sunil Kerketta, the Vice-Provincial, for their exceptional efforts in organizing and conducting the Programme successfully. Their leadership and support ensured the Programme's meaningful impact on all who attended.

3. Salesian Family Day in North Bengal

The North Bengal-Bihar-Sikkim Zone celebrated Salesian Family Day 2025 at the Salesian College Siliguri Campus, bringing together 69 participants. This included 36 Salesians (SDB), 14 Cooperators, 8 FMA Sisters, 6 MSMHC Sisters, and 4 SMI Sisters, all representing various Salesian Family groups.

The event was animated by Fr. Vice-Provincial, who reflected on the themes of Jubilee 2025: Pilgrims of Hope and Strenna 2025: Anchored in Hope, Pilgrims with Young People.

A special highlight was the Holy Mass, presided over by Fr. Babu Joseph, who preached an inspiring homily on the timely topic of Christian Education and the Role of Christian Youth in Nation Building.

Participants also enjoyed a delicious meal prepared by Fr. Jagjivan Tirkey and his team, reflecting the warm hospitality of the Salesian community. Heartfelt appreciation is extended to Fr. Tomy Augustine, the Rector, and the members of the Salesian College Siliguri community for generously hosting the event.

As individuals, families, and communities, let us journey through 2025 as Pilgrims of Hope, walking alongside the young and anchored in faith and hope. Special thanks go to Fr. Vice-Provincial for his dedicated efforts in animating the Salesian Family Day for the North Bengal-Bihar-Sikkim Zone.

4. Salesian Family Day in South Bengal

The Salesian Family Day in South Bengal was joyfully celebrated on 23 January 2025, beginning at 9:30 AM with the 2025 Jubilee Anthem. This was followed by a presentation of the 2025 Strenna, titled Anchored in Hope, Pilgrims with Young People, by Fr. Stefano Martoglio, the Vicar of the Rector Major.

Participants then broke into smaller groups based on their respective Salesian Family affiliations for reflective discussions, preceded by a coffee break. Each group presented their insights, focusing on supporting young people.

Salesian Cooperators emphasized addressing youth challenges like depression through counselling and prayer. Many cooperators, being teachers, offered to support young people and their parents in navigating these struggles.

ADMA (Association of Mary Help of Christians) committed to being “angels of hope” for the young, encouraging parents to join the group and guide their children in faith.

Past Pupils highlighted initiatives to bring hope to restless youth through counselling, sports, music, and family-strengthening activities.

SMI Sisters pledged to support young people by nurturing their talents and deepening their faith through evangelization and catechesis.

Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians focused on fulfilling the aspirations of young people through family visits, counselling, and prayers.

FMA Sisters (Daughters of Mary Help of Christians) suggested creating an environment of love to help young people rediscover their faith.

Salesian Fathers and Brothers observed the need for better focus and commitment among the young and stressed accompaniment in both physical and digital environments.

The day continued with a well-animated liturgy including the Holy Eucharist, with different groups taking on various roles. After lunch, the Salesian Cooperators organized a lively family circle event, featuring a spirited game of housie as the highlight.

Gratitude is extended to the Vice-Provincial and Fr. Nirmal Toppo for their meticulous planning and execution of the Salesian Family Day in South Bengal.

5. Salesian Family Day in Nepal

In conjunction with the annual Salesian Family Day in North and South Bengal, a virtual study and reflection on the 2025 Strenna was held for the Salesian Family in Nepal. Traditionally, this event is regionally organized, but this year it was conducted online, enabling participation from members of all nine Salesian (SDB) and two FMA (Daughters of Mary Help of Christians) presences in Nepal.

The session was coordinated by Fr. Augusty Pulickal, with the presentation of the Strenna led by Fr. George Anil Kujur from Chinchu, a missionary ad gentes in Nepal. Together with the participants, Fr. Kujur explored the 2025 Strenna, “Anchored in Hope, Pilgrims with Young People,” weaving in insights from Don Bosco’s writings and other Salesian documents.

During the interaction session, Fr. Stephen, Rector of Don Bosco Thecho, chaired a lively discussion where SDB and FMA members shared practical ways they are already living the Strenna in their communities and proposed strategies for

enhancing its impact. The session concluded with a message from Fr. Sunil Kerketta, Vice-Provincial, Councillor and Coordinator of the Salesian Family. He encouraged all members to focus on making Salesian settings more welcoming and inclusive, emphasizing the importance of addressing the concerns of young people.

Gratitude is extended to Fr. Augusty for his initiative and leadership in facilitating this enriching discussion with the Salesian Family in Nepal.

6. Visitation of DB Utrail-Telunjia

From 6 to 16 January 2025, I had the privilege of visiting the two Salesian communities of Don Bosco Utrail-Telunjia and Don Bosco Khonjonpur-Lokhikul, as well as the non-canonical presence of Don Bosco Moushair–Dhaka in Bangladesh. These communities are actively engaged in their mission of serving the people across three dioceses: Rajshahi, Mymensingh, and Dhaka.

The Salesian community at Don Bosco Utrail-Telunjia, which I visited from 6 to 8 January 2025, is composed of seven confreres who dedicate themselves to a variety of ministries, including formation, pastoral care, education, and developmental work. A key initiative of this community is the aspirantate, founded in 2010, which nurtures local vocations to the Salesian way of life. Currently, 14 aspirants, divided into first and second-year groups, are pursuing their HSC (Higher Secondary Certificate) examinations before moving to the pre-novitiate stage at Khonjonpur.

The community's involvement with the youth is evident through its vibrant oratory activities conducted at the Don Bosco Youth Centre. These include sports, music, and educational programmes that benefit over 350 young people from surrounding villages. Lay volunteers and aspirants actively participate in the oratory initiatives in nearby areas, and Fr. Gabriel Momin is set to take charge of this important ministry.

The Parish of Mary Our Help, established in 2009, serves as a spiritual hub for 630 families across 23 villages, 16 of which have their own chapels. A new church, dedicated in 2015, enhances the spiritual experience of the parishioners. The parish also manages a sub-centre in Garaunda and has an active ADMA (Association of Mary Help of Christians) unit.

The Zeferino Hostel, established in 2011, offers lodging and nourishment to 60 Catholic boys from classes VI to VIII at a nominal fee. The hostel is managed by Fr. Sebastian Thekkel, Br. Dinesh Hembrom, and a Boarding Master, ensuring a conducive environment for the holistic development of the children. Additionally, the parish operates five coaching centres in nearby villages, catering to 80 children from Kindergarten to Class II, preparing them to integrate into the main school system.

In the field of developmental work, the community supports local families through initiatives like assisting in the purchase of land and construction of homes, with repayment plans in place. A sponsorship Programme currently benefits 150 individuals, while the Cikisa Somitee extends support to the sick in need of medical aid.

Education plays a pivotal role in the community's mission. St. Xavier's School, initially established by the Diocese of Mymensingh, offers Bengali-medium

education to 600 students from Classes I to X. An English-medium section, introduced in 2019, has gained prominence and now serves 115 students. The school complements its efforts with Don Bosco College, which was founded in 2019 and provides higher secondary education for Classes XI and XII. Recognized by the Ministry of Education in 2018, Don Bosco College has earned accolades, including being named the best college in Netrakona district in 2024, and currently has 300 students.

The Savio Hostel, established in 2018, offers accommodation to 107 Catholic students attending St. Xavier's School and Don Bosco College. Managed by Fr. Gabriel Momin and two Boarding Masters, the hostel provides a nurturing environment for the students' academic and personal growth.

The Utrail-Telunjia community's dedication to pastoral, educational, and developmental work reflects their commitment to uplifting the local population both spiritually and materially. Their multifaceted initiatives serve as a beacon of hope, fostering integral human development and evangelization in the region.

7. Visitation of Khonjonpur-Lokhikul

The Salesian mission at Khonjonpur-Lokhikul is a vibrant centre of pastoral care, education, and formation, aimed at fostering holistic development and spiritual growth within the local community. This mission encompasses a range of services, including parishes, schools, hostels, and a formation house offering aspirantate and pre-novitiate Programmes.

St. John Bosco Parish, Lokhikul, inaugurated on 5 February 2012, is part of the Diocese of Rajshahi and was initially overseen by diocesan priests. Currently led by Fr. Emil Ekka, this parish serves approximately 600 faithful spread across 22 villages, six of which have Catholic communities. The parish operates five Mass centres where services are conducted monthly. The local community, comprising Mahalis, Oraons, and Santals, benefits significantly also from the active participation of the Salesian Sisters (SSMI) in pastoral ministry.

Mary Help of Christians Parish, Khonjonpur, established in 2015 by Fr. Pawel Kociolek, has a strong focus on nurturing the faith and fostering Christian family values. Now led by Fr. Joseph Pham, this parish caters to around 750 Catholics across ten sub-centres, serving as a vital spiritual hub for the faithful.

The Don Bosco Schools in this region provide quality education to children from diverse backgrounds. Don Bosco School in Lokhikul, founded in 2015, currently serves 150 students from Nursery to Grade 8. Managed by the Salesian Sisters (SSMI), the school boasts a team of ten teachers and a Sister headmistress. The majority of students are from other faiths, with Catholic students also enrolled. Don Bosco Strauss School, established in 2018 in Joypurhat town, serves 170 students from Nursery to Grade VI and is poised for further growth. A more recent addition is Don Bosco School in Mahadevpur, founded in 2024 as a sub-centre of Lokhikul Parish. Located 35 kilometres from Lokhikul, the school began in a modest tin shed and currently accommodates 53 students, with plans for expansion. Lay collaborators assist in its management.

The mission also operates two small hostels in Lokhikul for students attending Don Bosco School. A boys' hostel houses 14 students, while a hostel managed by the Salesian Sisters (SSMI) accommodates 40 Catholic children, both boys and girls. These hostels not only provide a nurturing environment for academic and personal growth but also encourage vocations to the Salesian mission.

The formation house at Khonjonpur includes an aspirantate for senior students and a pre-novitiate Programme. The aspirantate enables students to pursue higher education in nearby Joypurhat, while the pre-novitiate Programme provides a one-year formation period. Currently, there are two pre-novices—one stationed at Khonjonpur and the other in Dhaka.

Through its dedicated efforts in pastoral care, education, and formation, the Salesian community at Khonjonpur-Lokhikul remains steadfast in its mission to uplift the local population spiritually, socially, and intellectually.

8. Visitation of Don Bosco Moushair–Dhaka

The Salesian presence in Moushair-Dhaka has seen remarkable growth since its establishment, marked by significant milestones and impactful activities. This mission has become a beacon of hope and service, catering to the spiritual, educational, and developmental needs of the local community.

Infrastructure development has been a cornerstone of this mission's progress. In October 2017, 36 kattas of land were purchased in Chalabon, Dakhinkhan, Dhaka, providing a foundation for future growth. A temporary chapel, blessed in March 2018, served as a starting point for pastoral and community activities. Over time, a six-storey building was constructed, including residential spaces for Salesians and guests. While Block B is fully completed and functional, Block A remains under construction, reflecting the ongoing development of the mission.

St. John Bosco Parish, Dakhinkhan, began as a sub-centre of Holy Rosary Parish on 25 March 2018, and later became part of the newly formed Vattara quasi-parish in 2019. Officially inaugurated on 22 April 2022, it was elevated to a full-fledged parish in May 2022, with Fr. Francis Alencherry as its first parish priest. The parish serves over 1,000 Catholics, primarily migrants, across two sub-centres: Dolipara and Rajabari. Active groups such as the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA) and the Legion of Mary enrich the pastoral mission. Efforts are also underway to establish a Charismatic Prayer Group in Rajabari, further strengthening the faith community.

Don Bosco School Dhaka–Moushair, established in January 2022, fulfills a pressing need for Catholic educational institutions in the area. This primary school focuses on providing English-medium education to disadvantaged children. By 2025, it will have 134 students from Nursery to Grade VII, with plans to expand to high school level. A dedicated school building is under construction to accommodate the school's growing enrollment and evolving needs.

Youth engagement is a key priority for the Salesian mission in Moushair-Dhaka. Weekly Programmes conducted in Dolipara, Rajabari, and the Moushair Centre

offer catechism, games, and tuition classes, benefiting approximately 50 children and adolescents. Aspirants actively lead these initiatives, fostering spiritual and personal growth among the youth. The Don Bosco Youth Group at Moushair Centre remains vibrant, creating a sense of community and belonging among young people.

Formation initiatives play a vital role in nurturing vocations and preparing future Salesians. The formation house at Don Bosco Moushair supports senior aspirants pursuing B.A. degrees and pre-novitiate training. Currently, there are four aspirants and one pre-novice under the guidance of Fr. Francis. Theology students attending the Holy Spirit Major Seminary are also accommodated at the formation house, reflecting its significance as a centre for spiritual and academic formation.

The newly opened Don Bosco Home, inaugurated on 11 January 2025, provides a safe and nurturing environment for 16 boys, most of whom are Catholic. The boys, who attend Don Bosco School Dhaka–Moushair, are cared for by Br. Tisu Ignatius Malsam, assisted by another Brother, ensuring their well-being and holistic development.

The Salesian Coordination Centre serves as a vital hub for collaboration and unity among Salesians in Bangladesh. It hosts meetings, retreats, and discussions that strengthen their mission and foster a shared commitment to the charism of Don Bosco.

This official visit to the Moushair-Dhaka mission provided a profound insight into the remarkable growth and transformative impact of the Salesian presence in Bangladesh. The tireless dedication of the confreres, under the leadership of Fr. Francis Alencherry, exemplifies the spirit of Don Bosco in action. Their sacrifices and commitment continue to inspire and bring hope to countless lives. May God abundantly bless their mission and endeavours.

9. Napam Porob at Bandel Basilica

The annual Santal Pilgrimage, known as Napam Porob, was celebrated with great fervour at Bandel Basilica on Sunday, 5 January 2025. The Santal community of the parish meticulously planned the event over several meetings. Pilgrims began arriving on Saturday evening, and by 9:00 AM on Sunday, the Fatima Garden was bustling with over 10,000 participants, according to estimates.

The day began with the recitation of the Rosary at 9:00 AM, followed by a solemn Holy Mass presided over by Fr. Salvadore Lobo, SJ, and concelebrated by 16 priests. The entrance procession featured three groups of traditional dancers approaching the altar from different directions, creating a spiritual atmosphere. Before the Mass, Fr. PA John the Prior of the Basilica extended a warm welcome to all the pilgrims.

The offertory procession, led by dancers, was a significant highlight. Offerings of chickens, goats, rice, and fruits were joyfully presented in gratitude for blessings received through the intercession of the Blessed Mother over the past year. By 1:00 PM, the pilgrims dispersed for lunch. Many had brought their own meals, while others enjoyed a meal of kichudi served by the 'Kichudi Kitchen' at St. John's School for a nominal fee.

The cultural programme commenced at 2:00 PM, featuring captivating traditional dances. The Municipal Councillor of Ward No. 3 welcomed the attendees on behalf of the Municipality and shared an inspiring message. The star attraction of the afternoon was a performance by Mr. Stephen Tudu, a renowned Catholic singer. By 5:00 PM, the pilgrims began their return journey, bringing the day to a peaceful close.

Congratulations to the Santal Community for their excellent organization and the Basilica Community in making the pilgrimage a grand success.

10. Walking Pilgrimage

The Walking Pilgrimage, popularly known as the Bandel Walk, was held on Saturday, 12 January 2025, organized by the Catholic Association of Bengal (CAB). The event commenced with a Eucharistic Celebration at the Church of Our Lady of Happy Voyage, Howrah, at 5:30 AM. By 7:00 AM, pilgrims gathered near Bally Station to begin their walk along the GT Road. The procession was led by a cross bearer, accompanied by a mini-truck carrying a beautifully decorated statue of Mother Mary. Hundreds of pilgrims joined the walk in smaller groups along the route.

The first groups of pilgrims arrived in Bandel Basilica around 1:00 PM, where Salesians welcomed them and offered blessings with Holy Water. Meanwhile, the Mother's Sodality led prayers in the Basilica for those awaiting the arrival of the main group. Over 70 volunteers from the parish efficiently managed the crowd and ensured a smooth flow of the programme.

Another group of walking pilgrims from Kalyani reached the Basilica by 4:30 PM, while the main group from Bally arrived at 6:15 PM. By that time, the Basilica and its balcony were already filled with faithful pilgrims.

After the pilgrims settled in the Church, a Holy Mass was celebrated, with Fr. Soroj Mullick as the main celebrant. During the Mass, Fr. PA John the Prior of the Basilica warmly welcomed the pilgrims and expressed gratitude to CAB for organizing the event.

The Church and balcony remained open until 8:00 PM to accommodate latecomers, who came to pray and light candles, completing the day's sacred journey. Both pilgrimages showcased the deep faith, unity, and devotion of the Catholic community, making them truly memorable spiritual events.

11. Animation Programmes in Bangladesh

In the early weeks of January 2025, Fr. Bikash Mondal the Youth Delegate visited various communities across Bangladesh, actively engaging with the youth from different centres. During his interactions, he encouraged them to participate in youth Programmes hosted in India and motivated them to take greater initiative in organizing events and Programmes within their parishes and communities. His efforts emphasized fostering active cooperation and leadership among the youth. Overall, the youth in Bangladesh are thriving and making commendable progress in all their centres.

The youth delegate also explored the possibility of organizing a Youth Fest in Bangladesh. Notably, the Diocese of Mymensingh is hosting the National Youth Fest this year at Telunja, where our youth will play a pivotal role. We extend our best wishes for the success of this significant event and look forward to its impact on the youth of the region.

With his rich experience in education, the youth delegate conducted animation Programmes for teachers in Don Bosco schools, emphasizing the Salesian system of education. These sessions also included motivational talks designed to inspire and empower the educators. Additionally, he organized similar motivational Programmes for teachers in other prominent schools in Dhaka and its surrounding areas, contributing to their professional and personal growth.

Our Don Bosco schools in Bangladesh are steadily progressing, building a solid foundation for holistic education. We remain grateful for God's continued blessings and pray for further growth and success in the mission of educating and empowering the youth.

12. Visit to the Salesian Mission in Nepal

From 20 to 22 January 2025, I had the opportunity to visit the Salesian Mission in Nepal, focusing on communities in the Kathmandu Valley and West Nepal. The visit, coordinated by Fr. Augusty Pulickal, provided valuable insights into the challenges and achievements of the mission.

The Technical School in Thecho faces significant challenges, including low enrollment in its vocational courses. The diploma Programme in Electrical Engineering has been temporarily suspended due to insufficient students. Short-term courses ranging from three to six months are currently offered, and the small hostel accommodates 14 boys from diverse backgrounds. While the Social Development and Outreach activities under the Development Office are thriving, it may be necessary to re-evaluate the focus of the apostolate in Thecho.

The community at Don Bosco Lubhu, comprising three confreres, manages a school up to Class XII, a boarding facility, and a quasi-parish. The Nepal Don Bosco School is well-regarded for providing quality education, especially to children from economically disadvantaged families. The boarding facility houses 25 boys from Classes XI and XII, most of whom are Catholic.

The quasi-parish serves around 35 families, totalling 160 members, who actively participate in Saturday Mass. Catechism classes, led by the Mary Ward Sisters, follow the Mass, utilizing audio-visual aids to enhance engagement.

The community faced severe flooding during the monsoon season, which caused extensive damage, including the collapse of the school boundary wall, damage to library books, and destruction of computers in the administrative block. Additionally, the Municipality has mandated that the new wall be built 10 meters inside the original boundary. Despite these setbacks, the community demonstrated resilience by funding repairs using their savings.

Don Bosco Ratachor-Chinchu community which became a non-canonical presence on 24 July 2024, operates from a rented house and engages in pastoral, educational, and social development activities.

The Salesians own nearly four acres of land in Ratachor and are working toward establishing a permanent presence, in line with the Rector Major's vision expressed during his 2019 visit to Nepal. A Mass Centre, offered by the Bishop of the Apostolic Vicariate of Nepal in 2022, now serves the local Catholic community of 13 families.

Plans are underway to meet the local demand for a school in Ratachor. The Salesians have received authorization to apply for government approval to open a nursery and kindergarten. There are also long-term plans to expand the school with additional classrooms as further permissions are secured.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the confreres in Nepal for their tireless dedication and commitment to the Salesian mission. May God bless their efforts to lay a strong foundation for a future delegation in Nepal, fostering hope and growth among the people they serve.

13. Blessing & Inauguration of Br. Maurice Wing, Liluah

The Feast of St. John Bosco was celebrated with great solemnity and joy at Don Bosco School, Liluah, on 31 January 2025. The day commenced with a morning Eucharistic Celebration in the beautifully adorned St. John Bosco Church, Liluah which was filled to capacity. Among the attendees were the Salesians, staff members and Catholic students from the Day School, Technical School, and Night School, as well as parents, parishioners, religious members from the neighbourhood, Cooperators, Alumni, and well-wishers of the school.

I had the privilege of being the main celebrant for the Holy Eucharist. I reflected on the life and mission of St. John Bosco in the light of the day's Scripture readings, emphasizing the protective presence of Mother Mary over Don Bosco School, Liluah. I shared my cherished association with DBL as a young Brother along with my personal association with Fr. Patrick Sheehy and Br. Maurice Nicholson.

Following the Mass, the enthusiastic gathering proceeded to the newly constructed school building, **Br. Maurice Wing**, named in honour of Br. Maurice Nicholson. Br. Maurice, fondly remembered for his unwavering commitment to principles and his deep love and dedication towards his students, was honoured as I blessed and inaugurated the wing. His remarkable legacy was revisited through a reading on his life and his contributions to the province of Kolkata.

The celebration was sustained with a beautifully animated choir that filled the atmosphere with sacred hymns, creating a heavenly ambiance. This was followed by a series of religious rites, including Scripture readings, prayers, and the solemn blessing of the entire wing.

The day's festivities concluded with a fellowship meal, bringing the celebrations to a joyful and memorable close.

14. Blessing of Barapahari Hall

Barapahari Parish comprises about 72 villages located in the Rampurhat, Nalhati, and Mayureswar police station areas of Birbhum District, divided into four substations. Previously, this region was part of the Cilimpur Parish. The mission work in Barapahari began in 1989 under the patronage of Mary Help of Christians, with the boarding school starting in 1991 with just 12 boys. In 1992, a girls' boarding school was established with 6 girls.

In 1999, the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians (MSMHC) came to the parish to lend their support. By 2000, land was purchased, and construction began for the convent and girls' boarding. A coaching centre building was also erected in 2004 for the children in the boarding schools.

One long-cherished dream of Don Bosco Barapahari was the construction of a multi-purpose hall to host various parish events, especially during major feasts. With support from the province, the community was able to construct a large hall, which is set to be inaugurated and blessed on 7 February 2025.

Given that the Parish of Mary Help of Christians serves around 1,500 families and hosts two large boarding schools with about 300 children, managed by the Salesians and the MSMHC Sisters, the new multipurpose hall will be of immense help. I am deeply grateful to the confreres, Sisters, and collaborators of the Barapahari mission for their dedicated efforts in furthering the work of evangelization and education with great zeal and enthusiasm.

15. Condolences

Fr. Abraham Panackachaly was called to his eternal home at 1:25 AM on 29 January 2025 at Park Clinic, Kolkata. Later that day, a requiem Mass was celebrated by Fr. C.J. George with the participation of members of the Salesian Family, and friends numbering over 50, who gathered in prayer at the Provincial House.

As we prepare for his funeral, which will take place on 1 February 2025 at Bandel Basilica, let us thank God for the exemplary life and witness of Fr. PJ Abraham. Throughout his journey as both a Salesian Brother and a Salesian Priest, he remained deeply committed to his vocation, embodying the spirit and heart of St. John Bosco. May his legacy of faith and dedication continue to inspire us.

We offer our sincere condolences and prayers to all those confreres and members of the Salesian Family who lost their dear ones in the month of January 2025.

- To Sr. Provincial Superior and the MSMHC Sisters of Tezpur Province on the demise of Sr. Agnes Toppo MSMHC on 2 January 2025 at St. Mary's Convent, Tetenbari.
- To Fr. Provincial and the confreres of Panjim Province on the death of Fr. Chrysologus D'Cunha on 6 January 2025.
- To Fr. Provincial and the confreres of Dimapur on the passing away of Fr. Joseph Kulathunkal on 9 January 2025 at Rue Home, Jorhat, Assam.

- To Sr. Superior General, Sr. Provincial and Sisters of Sisters of Mary Immaculate on the demise of Sr. Maria Pallikunnath on 24 January 2025 at SMI Mother House, Krishnagar.

16. Conclusion

Today, on the beautiful day of 31 January 2025, we joyfully celebrate the Solemnity of Saint John Bosco, our beloved Father and Founder. This annual commemoration serves as a powerful reminder of our unwavering commitment to the Salesian mission and our deep bond with confreres and members of the Salesian Family across the globe. It is a day to reflect on the profound legacy of Don Bosco, whose vision and example continue to inspire us as we touch the lives of countless youth.

In the spirit of Don Bosco, we carry forward his mission of leading and accompanying the young, especially those who are marginalized, with tender love and kindness. The Strenna of each year provides us with practical direction to fulfill our mission meaningfully and effectively. For 2025, “Anchored in Hope, Pilgrims with Young People” invites us to journey alongside the young, bringing joy and hope into their lives. This guiding theme challenges us to remain steadfast in our hope, walking in solidarity with the young as they navigate the challenges of our times. It urges us to instill in them a sense of purpose, courage, and optimism, empowering them to become agents of transformation in their own lives and in society.

As responsible members of the Salesian Family, we embrace this mission wholeheartedly. By our presence, let us bring light to dispel darkness, warmth to melt indifference, and love to heal wounded hearts. Together, as one united family inspired by Don Bosco, let us renew our dedication to building a better world for the young, a world where they can live in hope, joy, and peace.

Yours affectionately in Don Bosco,



Fr. Joseph Pauria SDB
(Provincial)

