

100 Years of Christian Presence in Puri

Puri, considered being the abode of 'Lord Jaganath', and one of the most holy city for our Hindu brethren, celebrated 100 years of Christian presence. "The Catholic Community has traveled for hundred years through thick and thin and given witness. Today there is still more urgency to give witness of our faith to unite all people in peace, harmony and integrity," said Rt. Rev. Raphael Cheenath, the Archbishop of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar, speaking during the solemn celebration at the Catholic Church premises on 12 December, 2010. Mr.



Mr. Surendra Kumar Mohanty, a well known personality in Puri, who has seen the Christian Community from his childhood days, addressing the audience on the occasion said, "In hundred years one gets old, but here it has happened just the opposite. The Christian Community in 100 years has become so young and vibrant."



During the British rule French and Spanish Missionaries took care of the pastoral needs of the British Soldiers. In 1905 Govt. had given a little place for the Catholic Community in Puri and Missionaries from Cuttack and Khurda looked after the pastoral needs of this community. In 1910 Catholic Community was established in Puri and in 1911 a small residence for the priest was built. The records show that Mr.

Remo Anthony was the first baptized Catholic of Puri in 1949. Gradually the Catholic Community grew and various Religious communities like C.M. Missionaries, Sisters Adorers, Missionaries of Charity both Brothers and Sisters etc. C.M Fathers took care of the Community till 1975. And it was in 1975 that the Parish was given to SVDs and Fr. Marian Zelazek was the first SVD to step in Puri. Fr. Marian did not limit himself to Catholics but spread his arms to serve all types of people specially the lepers, poor and the marginalized. He too began the dialogue and research centre for the educated and the elite group too so that no section of society is left unattended.



The Community has grown steadily though mainly migrants from other parts of India. Today Puri parish consists of 60 families with the Hindi saying coming true “Chota Parivar, Sukhi Parivar” (small family and happy family). After Fr. Marian Zelazek, Fr. Thomas R.A., Fr. Peter Vattakeril, Fr. Mathew Poovanpuzha and Fr. Luke Veliaparambil have served the Catholic Community of Puri as Parish priests though the list of co-pastors goes long. Presently Fr. Luke with his co-pastor Fr. Birender is doing his best to keep the small Catholic Community as vibrant as possible. It was their hard work that made the 100 years come alive on 12 December, 2010.

Fr. Sunil Damor,SVD

St. ARNOLD'S SCHOOL, JHARTARANG ANNUAL DAY CELEBRATION

“I appreciate the bold step of the Divine Word Society for establishing an English medium school away from the city surrounded by the tribal villages and I am sure St. Arnold’s School, Jhartarang will cater immensely to the education of the tribals and the poor,” said the chief guest, Mr. Sarada Prasad Nayak, minister of state for food supplies & consumer welfare. He was speaking on the occasion of the 3rd Annual Day Celebration of St. Arnold’s School, Jhartarang, Rourkela, on 5th December, 2010. It was the day of the children and the parents as the duo had a wide smile on their faces. Parents looked overjoyed seeing their children



on the stage, in shining costumes, dancing to the tune of variety of music and singing along harmoniously with melodious instrumentals played by their teachers.

The two hour long program consisted of variety songs, dances and skit performance blending together east and west. Amidst the big applause of parents and audience the children conveyed the message very loud and clear, “Nourish Love and Flourish Peace.” The show was indeed superb spreading the message of peace and harmony in our multi-religious and multi-cultural society. The School has the strength of 1278 students with 55 full-fledged staff within the short span of three years of its existence. And it was not an easy job to prepare 672 students to perform perfectly on the stage.

No doubt, the whole credit goes to Fr. K.C. Thomas the principal, Fr. Symporian Kujur, Fr. Tomy Geogre and the entire staff for their hard work nourishing the little ones with the values of love, peace and harmony for a better tomorrow.

Fr. Sunil Damor, SVD