

FAIRHAVEN PROVINCIAL NEWS

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As members of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, we must not forget the anti-Christian persecution taking place in the State of Orissa and now in other states in India. Our SS.CC. Community in India is seriously concerned as family members of both Brothers and Sisters are from those troubled areas in the Archdiocese of Cuttack, Bhubaneswar. For me, there is a personal solidarity with the suffering taking place as it was in Orissa that I lived and worked for twenty-two years. The correspondence being received from our SS.CC. Community is heartbreaking. This type of persecution is not new to the Congregation as we were founded during the “reign of terror” of the French Revolution. Over the past two centuries, certain parts of the Congregation have experienced the suffering from wars, revolutions and death through violence.

The anti-Christian attacks in the state of Orissa began at Christmas 2007 and re-kindled on August 23, 2008. Because of death and the destruction of Church property, there was an immediate outcry from the Catholic Bishop’s Conference of India. **Pope Benedict XVI**, in an appeal for peace, condemned the attacks and made reference to India’s long and proud tradition of religious tolerance. Never in the history of India has the Christian Church been so violently attacked as in the Archdiocese of Cuttack, Bhubaneswar. **Archbishop Raphael Cheenath, SVD**, petitioned the country’s Supreme Court to protect Christian lives and property in the state of Orissa as there seemed to be no control of the attacks. He released to news agencies the demand, **“we want some clear help and response from the federal authorities to protect Christians in villages where extremists continue to destroy Church property and attack the Christian community.”**

The global community has responded with condemnation of the ongoing persecution to Christian families and property destruction. In an editorial (September 22, 2008) the national USA Catholic weekly magazine, (*America*), affirmed the **“lassitude of the police failing to live up to their duty to protect their citizens.”** Expressing the sentiments of many, the editorial encouraged the national government to recognize its obligation to send in large numbers of troops to protect minorities and restore trust among those who have been victimized. They mentioned that because Christian schools and institutions are places where the poor can learn English and acquire marketable skills, it has created resentment against the Christians – an open sign of the frustration of many of Orissa’s people. In the state of Orissa, **“many are falling behind while other groups in India society find prosperity. New attention must be paid by the Indian government to neglected states like Orissa, otherwise insistence on religious tolerance that is not accompanied by economic reforms will be pointless.”**

On Wednesday, September 24, 2008, the **European Parliament** approved an agenda for the upcoming European Union/India Summit to be held in France on September 29, 2008. Article 34 addressed the issue of anti-Christian violence in the Indian state of Orissa. The parliament expressed **“deep concern for attacks against Christians and called for compensation to be paid out to Churches and individuals for the property they lost.”** The resolution also stressed **“the need for the perpetrators of the destruction to be brought to justice and called on the central government and national authorities to fully protect India’s Christian minority.”**

Mother Teresa’s successor, **Sr. Nirmala**, made the following appeal:

“Let us not forget our true identity as children of God. We are brothers and sisters of one another, no matter what our religion, race, culture or language is; whether we are rich or poor. Nothing should separate us. Above all, let us not use religion to divide us. The essence of all religion is love – love of God and love of one another.”

More information and pictures can be found on a PowerPoint presentation to be sent separately.

Fraternally in the Sacred Hearts,



Bill Petrie, ss.cc.

ASSIGNMENTS

Fr. Michael Shanahan, after thirty years in India, will return to the USA East Province in six-month's time.

Fr. Patrick Fanning has agreed to become a member of the Province Formation team.

Fr. William Heffron has resigned as the Director of Ongoing-Formation. After consultation, a new director will be appointed.

Fr. Stan Kolasa, Director at Wareham, will be the supervisor for interested discerners/candidates, as part of our "Fairhaven Area Community" welcoming house. A candidate can have a live-in experience at any time during the year in preparation for the pre-novitiate/novitiate. **Fr. Stan** will be assisted by Senior Pastor, **Fr. Tom McElroy**, who will coordinate exposure programs with the three Fairhaven area parishes, Damien Residence and Damien's Pantry.

Fr. Subal Nayak completes his stay at St. Joseph Church in Nassau, Bahamas in the first week of October. He has worked at St. Mary's Church in N. Fairhaven, Our Lady of Assumption in New Bedford, and will now be assigned to St. Joseph Church in Fairhaven and will stay with pastor, **Fr. Tom McElroy** at the Damien Residence.

SS.CC. SISTERS CONTINUING CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

Four events were planned for the Sisters' Centenary Celebration of Thanksgiving on their arrival to Fairhaven 100 years ago. The first was the USC Celebration with the presence of Mother General, **Sr. Rosa**, and Vicar **Sr. Brigid**, in April 2008. On Sunday, August 10, the actual day of the Sisters' arrival 100 years ago, a Mass was celebrated at St. Joseph Church for former students and friends. **Bishop George Coleman** officiated at the liturgy followed by a catered lunch in Damien Hall for over two hundred. The third celebration took place on September 8, 2008 at St. Joseph Church, coinciding with the opening of the school year. **Srs. Eleanor, Muriel** and **Claire** welcomed the students and teachers. It was Mass of Thanksgiving for a legacy which started 100 years ago and still continues today in the spirit of our Congregation Charism. The fourth and final centennial celebration will be held at White's of Westport on Saturday, October 18, 2008 with a dinner/dance sponsored by St. Joseph School. Special guest for that event will be **Sr. Dolorine Pires** from the Pacific Province. Prior to the celebration, Sr. Dolorine will give talks to the teachers and students, continuing the theme of previous visits, the SS.CC. Charism and history.

THE WASHINGTON THEOLOGICAL UNION TRUSTEE RESIGNATION

For over a year and a half, the Provincial Council has been discerning our continued presence on the Board of Trustees at the Washington Theological Union (WTU). At the September council meeting, a final decision was made that no longer will the Provincial of the USA East be a member of the Board of Trustees. A resignation has been sent in and we are awaiting a response as to whether it will be necessary for us to continue our financial commitment for the next two years. The Charism of the WTU has changed over the years. There are now more lay women and men obtaining theological degrees and less clerical students in attendance. The future direction of the WTU will have a new life of its own. It evolves as a prominent Theologate for the laity. At previous USC meetings, setting a feasible place for theological studies, which would be appropriate for all three provinces, was discussed. It was the desire of USA West and the Province of Hawaii not to send students to the WTU. This confirmed the Provincial Council's decision to withdraw as a Trustee.

PROVINCIAL CHAPTER FOLLOW-UP

Visitations are being made as a follow-up to the last Provincial Council meeting. There is a continuing agenda for the prioritization of parish ministries. The visitation schedule is:

September 17-19, 2008	St. Margaret, Seat Pleasant, Maryland
September 29-October 3, 2008	Harlingen, Texas, Edinburg, Texas, Reynosa, Mexico
October 16-25, 2008	Coordinators Meeting in Rome
November 17-21, 2008	Formation and USC Meeting, California
December	Bahamas Visitation

NOVEMBER PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) invites Catholics to pray before the November elections a Novena for life, justice and peace called "*Novena for a Faithful Citizenship*". A copy of the novena may be obtained at www.faithfulcitizenship.org.

PRIESTHOOD SUNDAY

ON Sunday, October 28, 2008, Serra International is arranging for the third annual event of "Priesthood Sunday". Serra International is a worldwide Catholic organization of lay people dedicated to promoting vocations to the priesthood and religious life. A website has been established for suggesting liturgies at www.priestsunday.org.

MISCELLANEOUS

Fr. David Lupo departs Wareham for his sabbatical program on September 29, 2008

Fr. Jim McDonough leaves for Japan in the first week of October.

Fr. John Biffar, who underwent shoulder surgery while visiting his family, has been in Fairhaven and will return to Japan on October 3, 2008.

Fr. Richard Lifrak will attend the National Religious Vocation Conference October 9-13, 2008 in Louisville, Kentucky.

Fr. Columban Crotty will be celebrating his 50th anniversary of priesthood at St. Margaret in Seat Pleasant on Sunday, October 26, 2008.

Fr. Antoine Knibily's paintings have been brought from Wareham to the Provincial House. Director **Stan Kolasa**, who has dozens of paintings and continues to paint, has displayed his paintings on the walls in Wareham. Many retreatants have expressed an interest to purchase an original by Fr. Stan.

Sr. Claire Bouchard, previously the secretary at the Retreat House in Wareham, is now the Administrator and collaborator with Fr. Stan Kolasa.

Fr. Richard McNally and **Fr. Michael Shanahan** both departed from Wareham in mid-September after helping out with Propagation of the Faith talks during the summer.

CONTINUING ORISSA NEWS

Since August 23, 2008, these are some of the statistics:

- ❖ Deaths confirmed – 45
- ❖ Priests and nuns seriously injured – 10
- ❖ Priests kidnapped – 2
- ❖ Houses demolished in 160 villages – 4,300
- ❖ Institutions/Schools destroyed – 7
- ❖ Churches/ Chapels destroyed – 101
- ❖ Convents and Hospitals destroyed – 14
- ❖ Residences of priests destroyed – 5
- ❖ Dispensaries destroyed – 2
- ❖ Vocational training centers destroyed – 3
- ❖ Shops of Christian families destroyed – 126
- ❖ Vehicles burnt or destroyed – 43
- ❖ People displaced in refugee camps afraid to return to their villages - 12,000.



Fr. Subal Nayak writes:

“I would suggest that people write to the President and Members of Congress protesting the persecutions in Orissa. This would be a way of expressing solidarity with the suffering people. Thanks, with prayers, Subal.”



Fr. Alexis Nayak, also from Orissa, writes:

“It was in Orissa, then in Mangalore, in the state of Karnataka, then in the state of Madhya Pradesh, then in Kerala and now in Bangalore, the hub of multi-national business. This morning the fundamentalists once again attacked two Catholic churches and desecrated the altars and the tabernacles to the shock of all. Emergency meetings are being held and police are deployed at various places but nothing seems to stop the ones whose hearts are invaded by hatred and violence. In the hearts, Alexis, ss.cc.”

Fr. Ajith Kumar writes:

“Fr. ChristoDas and Bulu are here in Nayapalli. All the candidates and pre-novices are inside the closed doors. We are praying and making reparative Adoration. Many of the priests who were working in the rural areas have come to Bhubaneswar for safety. Our Sisters are fine but inside their closed door house. Near our house there is nothing much... we are all very safe.”

Archbishop Raphael Cheenath writes:

“In spite of a second wave of persecution and forceful re-conversion of Christians into Hinduism under threat of death, I am confident that our people will group together as soon as normalcy is established and security is assured. We forgive all who, out of misguided zeal and misinformation have inflicted this tragedy on the Christian community. The Church in Orissa will flourish and shine gloriously because it has been purified by the fire of persecution. It will rise again in the glory of the resurrection of the Lord.”





CHILDREN EATING IN THE REFUGEE CAMP FOR CHRISTIANS



A PRAYER CHAPEL DESTROYED



A YOUNG GIRL BURNT IN THE FACE



CHRISTIANS IN A REFUGEE CAMP

*To the Sacred Hearts of Jesus & Mary
Honor & Glory*