

St. Claret Church, Borjhar

St. Claret Church is located at Borjhar, on the western fringes of the metropolitan expanse of the city. It is 20 kilometers away from Guwahati. The international airport - Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi, the main airport of the Northeastern States of India is situated close to it. Besides, Borjhar accommodates many other renowned institutions of private and public sector. Hence, it has population from various parts of the country.

Establishment of the Mission

The Catholic population of Borjhar was taken care by the Catholic Church, Sonaighuli until the arrival of the Claretian Missionary Fathers (CMF) in 1995. Imparting Catholic education in that place was a felt need by the Archdiocese. Thus, a school was opened in 1996. Fr. Abraham Valiyakandam CMF and Fr. Joseph Areeckathundathil CMF were the pioneers of the mission.

Erection of the Parish

On August 2, 1998 St. Claret Parish was canonically erected by Archbishop Thomas Menaparampil with Fr. Paulose Joseph CMF as its first parish priest. Initially, the religious services were held in the school hall. At first, the parish had eight villages with five language speaking groups: Adivasi, Assamese, Garo, Rabha and Boro. Besides these, there is a floating population who work in the government departments and in military and paramilitary forces.

Growth and Expansion

The centre's newly built church was blessed by Archbishop Thomas Menaparampil in the presence of the Delegate Superior of Northeast Claretians, Fr. Jose Anchupankil CMF and the parish priest Fr. Pius Thuruthiyil on December 12, 2010.

In 2015 St. Claret Parish was bifurcated and a parish was erected at Loharghat. Presently, the parish has two villages: Mairapur and Rani. The Mairapur village has a chapel and Mass is celebrated every month. The village at Rani has few catholic families and they join the parish for Sunday Mass.

There are six women religious congregations with eight communities: Apostolic Carmelites, Missionaries of Charity, Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians, Clarist Franciscan Missionaries of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Holy Spirit Sisters, Carmelite Sisters of Charity of Vedruna, and three men's congregations: Clarist Franciscan Missionaries of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Society of the Divine Word and Salesians of Don Bosco.

The Clarist Franciscan Missionaries of the Most Blessed Sacrament (CFMSS) closely collaborate with the parish and help to organize various village programmes. The Holy Spirit Sisters (SSPS) and Carmelite sisters of Charity of Vedruna (CCV) help to conduct regular

catechism classes for children. The CCV sisters are also engaged in the school since their arrival in 2015.

Parish pastoral council is held twice a year. The parish executive committee consisting of five members along with the parish secretary assists the parish priest for planning the regular activities. Parish has associations of women, youth and altar boys. These associations assist the parish to organize Sunday liturgy and other days of importance.

In the past Fr. John Kochupurackal and Fr. John Arackaparambil served the mission as principal and assistant parish priest respectively. Presently, Fr. Siby Kadamthode is the parish priest.

Conclusion

The parish has been instrumental in bringing together the floating population and to reach out to the surrounding villages. There is a steady growth in the number of Catholics, especially in the villages. The school has been effective in imparting values and morals to the young, motivating them to become responsible citizens.

*** *** ***