

St. Ambrose's Mission, Goreswar

St. Ambrose Parish, Goreswar is situated in a village 70 km away from Guwahati. Baptist Christians and Lutherans were present much before the arrival of Catholics. The Catholic presence had its beginning with the arrival of a few Catholics from Udalgiri who settled down at Goreswar in the beginning of the current millennium. In the year 2001, Manoj Basumatary, a Baptist Christian, convinced of the authenticity of Catholicism became a Catholic. Later, a few Hindu women who married Catholics accepted the faith of their husbands. There are also instances of those who renounced the Bathou religion (ancestral religion of the Boros) and accepted Christ as their Saviour. They were severely beaten up by their co-religionists but survived the persecutions and remained loyal to their new faith. The timely interventions, guidance, and spiritual support of Fr. Jimmy Mathirampuzha MSFS from St. Paul's Catechetical Centre, Rangia, helped the people to remain rooted in their faith and piety.

Archbishop Thomas Menampampil initiated the process of establishing a mission at Goreswar which holds significance as it is located in the Bodoland Territorial Autonomous District. He entrusted the responsibility of procuring a suitable land to Fr. Maria Soosai. Facing many hurdles while searching for a suitable plot of land the present property was purchased in October 2008. The mission began to make its presence felt with the establishment of St. Ambrose's School. It had a humble beginning with eight children. It was blessed and inaugurated by Archbishop Thomas Menampampil on 2 February 2009 in a room in late Moniram Boro's house. In the same year in July, Fr. Maria Soosai went over to Goreswar from Tamalpur to look after the Mission. The following year, the school was shifted to a temporary shed in the mission campus. By then construction of the school building was in progress. Archbishop Thomas Menampampil blessed the completed building on 19 March 2012.

To minister to the needs of the mission, the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians (MSMHC) were invited by the Archdiocese. Sr. Teresa Basumatary and Sr. Immaculae Tirkey joined the mission in 2012. Realizing the importance of imparting education to girls from rural areas, a hostel was built and was blessed by Archbishop John Moolachira on 19 March 2013.

Fr. Maria Soosai, the founding Father bade farewell to the Mission on 8 June, 2015. Fr. Varkey Valiakalathil SVD headed the mission for nine months and Fr. Bitaju Mathew O.S.S.T. continued until Fr. Maya Martin Mushahary took charge of the mission in 2016.

The Mission has 15 Boro Catholic families at Goreswar comprising of sixty members. There are ten Garo families at Bengalipara and fifteen Garo families at Kashibari, 30 kilometers away from the parish. They were part of Dimakuchi Parish, but due to geographical and administrative reasons, they were incorporated to Goreswar parish. The centre reaches out to an Adivasi village in Urang Basti (Umrit Nagar) near Bengalipara.

Most of the Catholics in the neighbourhood are new converts. They are supportive, welcoming, open, and simple. It is hoped that their faith would be further strengthened and they become more vibrant in the course of time.

As there are no good educational institutions nearby, the establishment of St. Ambrose School has done much good to the society. The value system and insistence on regular attendance have given impetus to the parents to send their children to school. Education of the girls was neglected in the area but the presence of the mission has helped to bring in a change. Current strength of the School is 600. Catholic Children of the locality are encouraged to gain education from the parish school with minimum fees. Children from the catholic families are seen exceptionally fairing well in studies and other extracurricular activities.

Alcoholism and superstitious beliefs are rampant in the area. Influence of the catholic faith has helped them to quit alcoholism. Their transformation caught the attention of people from other faiths and they have expressed their willingness to embrace Catholicism.

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