

St. Thomas Church, Kathiatoli

St. Thomas Catholic Mission is located in the State Highway 37, in the Nagaon district of Assam. It was established in 1986, under the ecclesiastical province of Tezpur. The diocese had entrusted Fr. Mathew Kanatt with the responsibility of setting up the mission. The area was part of Hojai mission. Increase in the number of Catholics and the geographical vastness of Hojai mission necessitated the formation of Kathiatoli mission.

The mission had a humble beginning and gradual growth. Finding education as one of the needs of the locality, the mission started St. Thomas School in 1986 with the motto 'Knowledge and light to the nation'. It began with a few students in a small building with six class rooms. At that time, the mission had only 17 bighas of land.

It stands as a lighthouse to the people around, leading them to Christ the true light with various activities for the people around the mission. On 5 May 1991 Fr. Thomas Ekka was appointed priest in-charge of the mission and school. During his term, registration of the existing land of 17 bighas was done. He also bought 27 bighas in addition for the extension of the mission and the school and initiated the construction of the new school building.

As the mission was flourishing with the growing of number Catholics and students, the Archdiocese invited the Congregation of the Venerini Sisters to join the mission. On 15 December 1993, the Sisters joined the mission and began to render their service in the pastoral activities and educational mission of the parish. Of the four sisters who came to the mission, two were engaged in village apostolate and two in the school. The sisters who were touring the villages started to visit families, teach catechism, and conduct family prayers for the people in the villages and the mission. It brought about a new spirit and enthusiasm in the lives of the Catholics.

From the year 2002 to 2003, Fr. Maria Soosai served the mission as associate priest. His presence helped the people to strengthen their faith.

On 7 February 2003 Fr. Thomas Ekka was transferred and Fr. Luke Maniangatt was appointed parish priest and principal of the school. He was instrumental in deepening Catholic faith. His persistence and hard work bore fruits and many more accepted the faith. It was during his time the Archdiocese built a new church, boys' hostel and convent. He was instrumental in making the entire campus evergreen with beautiful plants and trees.

Perceiving the need of the Catholic families in the villages to educate their children in English school, he started a school at Dansilla village in 2004. The school fulfils the need of local villages for primary education.

On 2 January 2011 Fr. Thomas Mattathilany was installed as parish priest and principal. During his term, the school celebrated its silver jubilee on 9 November 2012. He extended the school building and laid the foundation stone for a church at Dansilla village.

On 6 June 2015 Fr. Thomas Mattathilany was transferred and Fr. Maria Soosai took over as parish priest and principal. He continued the construction of the church in Dansilla and completed and blessed it on 17 December 2015. He pays regular visits to the villages and as a result the number of faithful coming to the church began to increase. As principal, he gives priority to academic excellence, discipline and moral education. Fr Arockia Dass MMI joined the mission on 21 July 2015 as assistant parish priest.

As per the census of 2015 December there are 242 families with 1240 Catholics spread in 9 villages. The strength of the school is 1260 with classes from Nursery to Class X.

What St. Thomas Mission today is the fruit of the hard work of many hands - priests, sisters, and the faithful. The unity and faithfulness of the people of the mission gives witness to the unfading glories of the Almighty and His saving love.

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