

St. John Paul II Parish, Loharghat

St. John's church, Loharghat was erected in 2014 under the patronage of St. John Paul II. It is 50 kilometers away from Guwahati city and is under the jurisdiction of Kamrup rural district of Assam. The nearest town to this parish is Mirza and it is close to the famous picnic spots, 'Chandubi' and 'Accoland'.

Catholic population of the parish is around 600 with 115 families that are spread across four villages: Balakwa, Borjuli, Derkhajuli and Hajarani. Among these, Balakwa and Borjuli consist of Garos, Derkhajuli with Adivasis and Hajarani with Rabhas. Most of the people in these villages depend on agriculture for their livelihood.

Origin of Catholicism

Origin of Catholicism in Loharghat goes back to the times when the missionaries visited the place from Damra mission. But the community was not organized nor did they have a place of gathering. Gradually, the Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity began to visit the families of the Catholics and catered to their spiritual needs. Later on, the parish community at Sonaighuli began to render assistance to them. And, when Borjhar parish was erected in 1995, the priests and Sisters from there looked after them. Considering the need to accompany the growing Catholic population the Archdiocese decided to open a parish.

Establishment

In 2011 a primary school was started under the guidance of Oblates of St. Joseph (OSJ) and on 9 November 2014, Archbishop John Moolachira erected the Loharghat mission as a parish under the patronage of St. John Paul II. The new school building was blessed on 19 March 2016. Present parish priest is Fr. Sheldon Fernandez.

The Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent De Paul (SCV) arrived on 31 January 2016. They are engaged in the education and pastoral ministries of the parish.

Conclusion

St. John's parish has travelled a long way in its voyage to the present face. Its presence amidst the pluralistic society has been a unifying factor. Though belonging to different tribes and languages, the people remain united and supportive of each other. The church's contribution towards education and women empowerment in the area has been praiseworthy over the years.

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