

Christ King Church, Mallangkona

Christ King Church, Mallangkona is situated in West Khasi Hills, Meghalaya. Majority of the people are Garos. They are agrarians, cultivating aracknuts, rubber, ginger, pineapple, rice, broom, silk worms (Muga). Jhum cultivation is also famous in this place.

Human inhabitation in this area known to have begun in the year 1901. The place is named after Malleng Rabha who is believed to have been the first one to stay in this village. In 1903 people from Chotcholgaoni and Damrangonoi migrated to Mallang.

The beginning of Christianity

The area began to be under the Christian influence since 1955 when the American Baptist missionaries began to visit the place. It is they who sowed the seeds of Christianity in the place. They won over most of the Garos and baptised them. Later, they appointed Rancharam Marak as pastor to coordinate the pastoral activities.

The beginning of Catholicism

Fr. Alexnandar Maliekal was the first catholic priest to visit the place. He came from Damra in the year 1964 and met Mana Jingmei Marak and laid foundation for Catholicism in Mallangkona. Sangdon, Digresh, Henemi, Sominla and Jikson were the first ones to become Catholics.

Later, Fr. A. Victor SDB made several visits to the place and helped the people to sustain their faith. He helped them to grow in their faith, explained the Word of God, catechised and taught them the importance of Sacraments. The influence of people who received Catholic faith inspired many more to embrace Catholicism. By abandoning the customary beliefs and practices they brought transformation to their lives. With the help of the Salesian Society, Fr. Victor SDB started a Garo medium school in the place. As the relevance of English education took precedence, in 1988 during the term of Fr. John the school was converted to English medium.

Mallangkona was earlier under the jurisdiction of Shillong Archdiocese. Later, it was given to the diocese of Tura and again it was entrusted to Shillong as it forms part of West Khasi Hills. Later when the diocese of Guwahati was erected in 1992 it became part of the diocese.

An organised mission work began in 1996 with the erection of Catholic Church, Mariampur. The priests and sisters from Mariampur made frequent visits to Mallangkona and helped the people persevere in their faith.

Establishment of the mission

In 2006 Daughters of St. Thomas (DST) started their Convent in a temporary shed at Mallangkona and took over the School management. They toured the villages, gave health

awareness programmes and provided medicines to the sick in the villagers. Gradually they opened a dispensary and began taking care of the sick, particularly those affected with Malaria. They paid attention to the faith formation of the people, organised prayer meetings and daily Rosary which were well attended.

Erection of the Parish

In 2007 Mallangkona was erected as a parish with Fr. Thomas Kochupurackal SDB as the parish priest and Fr. Jose Mathew as the assistant parish priest. Later Fr. Sojan Pulickal was appointed as associate parish priest. He took interest in meeting the people in the villages and made regular programmes to strengthen the faith of the people. In 2008 Fr. Sojan was appointed parish priest. Much development of the centre happened during his tenure.

Fr. Philip Pazhambasseril is the present parish priest and Fr. Mathew Kisku Assistant Parish Priest. They jointly work for the faith formation of the people and give special attention to the sick. Today the mission has 22 villages, 722 families and a total of 4813 Catholics. By organising annual retreats and Sabha, seminars, celebration of the Sacraments in the villages the parish continues to assist the spiritual life of the people.

Conclusion

The witnessing life of the Catholics continues to attract many to join the Catholic Church. New members are being added through the Sacrament of Baptism. Many illicit and irregular marriages are rectified. As a whole there is liveliness in the life of the people and better participation in all the church's activities. The people of the parish live in peace and harmony.

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