

St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Mariampur

Mariampur is surrounded by North Garo Hills of Meghalaya bordering Assam, 60 kilometres away from Goalpara, the district headquarters. The parish is gifted with the people of goodwill, straightforward, open, living according to the rhythm of nature, freed from worries and tensions, and away from unhealthy competitions of the world.

Background

This community in Mariampur seem to have been there since six decades. Fr. Alexander Maliekal, a veteran missionary of the time, lighted the light of faith and inspired people to live a devoted Catholic life. He visited the place while being the assistant priest at Damra. In 1957, as a pioneer, he built a school and a hostel for boys, which was entrusted to the care of the people of the place. After his departure in 1968, the mission was managed from Damra. In 1995 the Capuchin missionaries took over the mission.

Arrival of Capuchin Missionaries

The essence of Christian missionary life is deep-rooted charity, characterized by selfless service to maximum point experiencing integrity and abundance of life which Jesus came to share with all. Motivated by this maxim the Capuchin missionaries stepped into the Northeastern region of India at the invitation of Archbishop Thomas Menampampil. They came to Mariampur and toiled hard to bring up the mission and to re-ignite the faith of the Catholics. On 5 February 1995 the mission centre was raised as a new parish.

Life and activities of the parish

Mariampur parish has regular Sunday services, first Friday Mass and adoration, family visits, and health care to motivate people to trust in the providence of God and to look towards future with hope and courage. Pastoral care is given and the Sacraments are made available with utmost respect. It has paved way for vocations to priestly and religious life.

Mariampur parish consists of 185 families of the neighbourhood and other seven villages. The parish has regular celebration of the Holy Eucharist and other faith services that unite the people. Regular Catechism classes, active Marian Sodality unit, ICYM unit, and monthly touring programmes are undertaken with great enthusiasm. Since its erection as a parish, it has been actively engaging in pastoral and evangelization works. The mission has hostels for both boys and girls and a dispensary, which gives access to medical care.

Often in the past, Mariampur Parish had been the venue for pastoral training and mission exposure programme of the Archdiocese.

In 1996, Franciscan Clarist Missionary Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament (CFMSS) arrived and are engaged since then in social service, health care, education and pastoral ministry of the

parish. Their presence in the mission has made notable achievements in different aspects of the parish.

Conclusion

The parish has been thriving over the years with programmes and activities enhancing the life of the parish. Number is being added every year as a result of the witnessing life lived by the Catholics.

The dispensary is considered a boon to the people of the area as it has helped in improving the health of the people. Providing quality education the school has been instrumental in lighting the life of many, especially poor children of the surrounding villages. Its social service wing has been influential in establishing economic stability of the people. The SHGs which are introduced have helped them to develop saving mentality.

The mission has further plans to develop the people with free computer education, electrical course, and skill development programmes.

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