

Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Nagaon

Bishop Joseph Mittathany of Tezpur established Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish at Nagaon in 1979. Later, when the centre became part of the new diocese of Guwahti it was gifted to the Salvatorian Fathers for their pioneering work in the Northeast.

The beginnings

In its initial stages the Catholic Church in Nagaon faced a lot of difficulties. The very Christian presence was ridiculed and threatened by certain fanatic groups. With the tireless efforts of Fr G.K.Prakash the Church came into existence at Nagaon. Fr. Prakash is admired for his love and concern for the poor people and for the great effort made, to maintain the faith of the people. In the beginning, many people misused the opportunity provided by the church. Though they were baptised, they remained Catholics only for monetary and other benefits. In the course of time, a few remained faithful to the teachings of the Church and the parish was built on their faith.

Fr. Prakash is known to have contributed much to the Catholic faith in the area. His tireless efforts and initiatives to bring life to the people drew many to accept the faith. He had been generous in aiding them with financial assistance and support. But a number of people took advantage of his generosity and failed to pay heed to his instructions to live the faith. Although he tried to persuade them, he was not successful in bringing them back. As a true missionary, he did all possible things to make the Catholic Church grow in number and strength. Hence he bought several plots of land in different places with the intention of building churches. He was well versed in Assamese language and was proficient in communicating with all people. His desire to propagate the Catholic faith to as many people as possible urged him to start the Christ Jyoti Press. It facilitated the publishing of prayer and hymn books and Bible study materials. He succeeded in publishing small booklets in Assamese for evangelisation and Catechesis.

Origin and Expansion

The origin and expansion of the Catholic Church in Nagaon and its surrounding areas speak much about the strenuous effort of Fr. Prakash. He was instrumental in initiating many centres which in the course of time became parishes. Churches at Dhing, Silchang, Kaki, Tangia, Khatorguri, Bebejia and Borkola are some of them.

Since its establishment, the parish had its services held in a temporary shed and later it was shifted to a tin-roofed hall. The new church building was blessed in December 2000. Fr. G.K. Prakash SDS was the first parish priest and Fr. James Thapa SDS succeeded him in 2010. Since 2014 Fr. Philip Pukkurayil SDS serves as the parish priest.

The church at Nagaon has three colonies named after the first three Salvatorian Missionaries who came to Assam in 1889 - Marianus Colony, Jordan Colony and Otto Colony.

Congregations and Centres of Service

The parish has the presence of different congregations engaged in various ministries. They are the congregations of M.P.V., M.C., H.S.M., F.C.C., and S.D.S. The Inter-diocesan philosophate, St. Clements Major Seminary is situated at Bhakatgaon, a village close to the parish. Adjacent to it is the minor seminary of S.D.S Fathers.

Conclusion

The Parish Church of Sacred Heart of Jesus has been an effective instrument in building up the Christian community in Nagaon. The Salvatorian Fathers thus contributed their best to build up the Christian community and continue to do it for the glory of God.

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