

St. Jude Parish, Nagrijuli

St. Jude Parish at Nagrijuli is located at Baksa BTAD of Assam. The place borders Bhutan and is situated in the valley of Bhutan Hills. Surrounded by different rivers - Bohr, Balti and Matunga, the place is blessed with natural beauty. Initially, conveyance to the place was tough and it remained secluded from the rest of the state. In 1978 a road was constructed to better the communication and conveyance.

Majority of the people of the place are Hindus. It is inhabited by people from different communities - Nepali, Bengali, Assamese and Bodo Cachari. Many of the settlers from the Bangali community were brought by Indira Gandhi during the Indo-Pak war (East Pakistan war in 1972). They live on cultivation and business. The Nepalis came and settled in the place after the British rule. They are engaged in agriculture and cattle rearing. The Assamese are an educated group and they hold most of the important offices. The Bodo cacharis are an indigenous community who depend on agriculture.

Beginnings

Since early years Nagrijuli had a number of Catholics who were looked after by Kumarikatta parish. As the years went by the Archdiocese thought of opening a parish and assigned the responsibility to Fr. Nazarene Acharya. In the beginning he stayed in Tamulpur parish and searched for a suitable plot of land for the mission. Gradually, a house was purchased and he shifted to the new house which had not much facilities. For three years it housed the priests and sisters, and it was also used as dispensary.

Establishment of the parish and ministries

On 19 March 2004 Archbishop Thomas Menamparampil erected a parish at Nagrijuli bifurcating from Kumarikatta parish with Fr. Nazarene Acharya as its first parish priest. The young parish had to face a great deal of opposition and unrest. The temporary school structure was burnt down by the people who did not want the mission to be there for their selfish interest. A few individuals managed to gather a lot of people in order to raise slogan against the parish and the event was wide spread through media. Even the BBC reported as the common people were against the Church. Fr. Nazarene, with the help of a few local leaders managed the challenging situation and found solution to the problems. Later Fr. Arokia Samy joined the mission as assistant parish priest.

The Sisters of Handmaids of Mary from Orissa joined the mission on 2 April 2005. The presence of the sisters helped to gain the good will and cooperation of the people. Their initiatives helped the parish to launch a number of welfare activities for the people, irrespective of caste, colour and religion. Medical camps, literary classes and vocational trainings are conducted regularly.

The mission assists and supports the people in various ways. In the year 2008 many houses were damaged by wild elephants from Bhutan Hills. The distressing situation was eased when the mission offered the school building for shelter.

Conclusion

The mission was started with the aim of reaching out to the underdeveloped. Its services through education and other ministries have helped the society to better its life. Its contribution in the health sector is remarkable with its awareness programmes and timely medical care. Today the parish has grown in number and strength. It has over 2000 Catholics spread in ten villages.

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