

St. Francis De Sales Parish, Narengi

St. Francis De Sales Parish is cosmopolitan in its true sense, as it consists of multilingual and multicultural faithful. The people of the parish hail from the states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Jarkhand, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh and speak languages such as Hindi, Assamese, Garo, Boro, Khasi, Nagamese, Manipuri, Telgu, Tamil, Malayalam, Khasi and Jaintia. Aproximatly twenty percent of the faithful are quasi domiciles. Majority of the parishioners live in the villages while others reside in urban areas.

Establishment of the parish

St. Francis De Sales Parish, Narengi was opened by Archbishop Thomas Menamparambil in 1997 and was entrusted to the Congregation of Missionaries of St. Francis De Sales (MSFS). The parish was carved out of the Resurrection parish, Sonaighuli and St. Joseph Co-cathedral parish, Panbazar. The first parish priest was Fr. Tomy Thekkel.

The parish has a total catholic population of 1300 from 420 families. They are from the villages and neighbouring communities. The villages of the parish are situated far and near. Among these, Bongaon, Bonda, Ekrahari and Hathisila are near to the parish. Other three villages such as Sualiluka, Kilingkok and Sompathar are far away from the city culture as they are situated in the midst of the forest. Conveyance to these villages is only footpath and it takes a walk of three hours to reach these villages. The parish has a lively and active Adivasi community settled in Amsung Jorabath, a small Boro community at Gitanagar, a vibrant community of different tribes in the Army Cantonment, and several families settled at different streets under the township.

Background

Initially, Fr. Tomy Thekkel was residing in a building that already existed in the newly purchased plot of land. Later, in the same plot of land, the MSFS provincial house and SFS School were built. When the new Provincial house was completed in 1996, the Chapel of the Provincial house began to be used as the parish church and till date the Holy Mass is being celebrated in the same chapel.

On 21 July 2016 the foundation stone for the new church was laid by Fr. George Panthanmackel, the Provincial, and the site was blessed by the Archbishop John Moolachira. The construction of the new church is expected to be completed by 2017.

Fr. Sebastian Kuzhupil (1999- 2002), Fr. Joseph Thekkel (2002-04), Fr. Bernard Sangma (2004-09) and Fr. Thomas Nirappel (2009-11) served the parish. Presently Fr. Shaibu Ezhanikat is the parish priest. In the past, Fr. Clean Nongbak Areng (2011-12) and Fr. Nikseng Manda Sangma (2013-15) have rendered their services as associate priests. The Congregation of MPV Sisters renders their services in the parish and the school.

Conclusion

The parish at Narengi has been impacting the lives of the people in various ways. The pastoral, social and educational services have helped the people to better their spiritual and societal life. The parish has been the centre of unity for the people from multi-cultural and linguistic groups, especially on important days of celebrations and anniversaries.

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