

St. Paul's Catechetical Centre, Rangia

St. Paul's Catechetical Centre at Rangia was established to facilitate the various pastoral activities of the Archdiocese of Guwahati. It was a dream of Archbishop Thomas Menampampil to set up a centre for catechises to strengthen the faith of the Catholics in the Archdiocese, which had many far-flung areas. Rangia was located as central and easily accessible to the people all over.

Geographical Location

Rangia is situated 52 kilometres away from the state headquarters, Guwahati. It is the regional divisional headquarters of the Northeast Frontier Railway. The river Borolia flows through the heart of the city. The place has the presence of several educational institutions.

Establishment of the Centre

Having located Rangia as the suitable place to set up the Centre, the task of finding a place and establishing the centre was entrusted to the Missionaries of St. Francis De Sales (MSFS) in 1994. The congregation entrusted the responsibility to Fr. Mathew Puthumana. Initially he stayed in a rented house and looked for a plot of land. When a suitable plot was found, he initiated the process of purchasing and building the centre. Archbishop Thomas Menampampil inaugurated the Centre in 1996 and the Centre began to conduct catechetical trainings, retreats and other animation programmes.

Later, the Congregation of Fatima Sisters began their regional house, Formation House, Grihini Centre and a dispensary adjacent to the Catechetical Centre. Two sisters from the Congregation help out the activities of the Centre.

The administration of the Centre was handed over to the Oblates of St. Joseph (OSJ) from 2011. And the congregation appointed Fr. Jeason Thanikkot and Fr. Sheldon Fernandez as its Director and Associate Director. In 2014 Fr. John Chakkalackal was appointed Director of the centre. Presently Fr. Roju Jose Kadavil OSJ and Fr. Edwin Simethy OSJ serve as its Director and assistant director respectively.

Programmes and activities

The Centre conducts catechetical trainings, retreats and other animation programmes at various intervals. It organises programmes such as head catechists' training, village catechists' training, catechism training for teachers, marriage preparatory programme, life orientation programmes, liturgical animation programme for altar boys and girls and empowerment programme for men and women. It also undertakes outreach programmes namely: parish retreats, retreat for youth, men and women, preparation for the reception of the sacraments and vocation discernment programmes and Bible camps.

To revive the life of the Catholics, programmes are organised for various groups. In view of reaching out to a larger audience, the team began conducting programmes in the villages. The people are given inputs on scripture, sacramental life, teachings of the Church and family values. They are also informed about the main events of the Church and its main programmes. All the programmes conducted in the centre give much thrust on living one's faith. Therefore, the participants are given chances to pray before the Eucharistic Lord and are encouraged to receive the sacrament of reconciliation frequently.

Conclusion

The programmes conducted in the centre are well appreciated. The centre has helped to bring revival in the lives of individuals, families and the society. The faithful are better informed about the Church's life and activities. They are now able to take leadership roles and work together thus making the local Church vibrant. The formation of various committees and movements in the parishes has given them forums for sharing their faith experiences. Today, the faith is truly lived and shared; there is more collaboration and participation in liturgical and other services; social life is strengthened and there is harmony and integration.

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