

Nativity Church, Silchang

Nativity Church, Silchang traces its origin in the year 1979 when Fr. G.K. Prakash SDS began visiting the place from Nagaon. Initially he contacted a few people and built rapport with them. Impressed by his approach and supportive stand, the people began to take interest in his sharing. Gradually, he introduced them to Catholic faith and a few received baptism.

Establishment

A plot of land was purchased at Silchang by Fr. Prakash in 1990 in view of starting the mission. He continued to look after the people from Nagaon. Finding the possibility of constituting a parish, Archbishop Thomas Menamparampil canonically erected the parish in 2000.

Initial years

The Silchang parish was consisted of nine sub-stations: Ohoragaon, Dorapani, Urigaon, Upergaon, Borogaon, Kalbari, Amsoi Gate, Nikir and Chubusi. According to the Baptism Register, Fr. G.k. Prakash had baptized 484 families in and around the Silchang parish. It consisted of 378 Tiwa families and 89 Boro families and 17 Toeh families. There were also other Karbi and Nepali families who said to have been baptized.

New Church Building

As the number of Catholics increased, there arose the need for building a church and the foundation stone was laid in 1997. Two years later on 31 December 1997 Bishop Thomas Menamparampil blessed the church in the presence of Fr. Varghese Kizhakevely, Vicar General of the Archdiocese.

Christ Joyti School

Although there were many schools in and around Silchang, there wasn't any English Medium School. Hence, at the request of people Archbishop Thomas Menamparampil laid the foundation stone for Christ Jyoti English Medium School on 7 December 1995 and it was blessed on 7 February 1996. The school grew in number and there was an urgent need for more classrooms. In 2010 more classrooms were added and were blessed by Archbishop John Moolachira on 2 March 2012.

Parish life and activities

In the year 2001 Fr. Shaji SDS was appointed as parish priest with Fr. Varaprasad Rao SDS as assistant parish priest. In 2002 Fr. Philip HGN was appointed parish priest and principal and Fr. Rajan HGN as assistant parish priest.

The devastating flood of 2004 swept across the villages of Silchang, Nelliee and Dharmtul destroying the lives and properties of many people. The mission reached out to hundreds of affected families. They were given shelter, food, and clothing. The caring approach of the Church touched their hearts and they began to appreciate and accept the Catholic presence. This

incident touched many people, and several of them who remained hostile began to be approachable and friendly.

In July 2006 Fr. Josphe Kallikatt was appointed parish priest. In the following year Fr. Rustom Paul Tirkey took over the administration of the parish and continued to serve the mission until 2011.

In December 2010 at the request of Archbishop Thomas Menamparampil the Congregation of the Holy Family Sisters (CHF) joined the mission.

In July 2011 the mission was entrusted to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) and the Congregation appointed Fr. Joseph Thambi and Fr. Simon Dung Dung as parish priest and assistant parish priest respectively. In 2012 Fr. Martin Soosai was appointed as assistant parish priest and in 2015 Fr. James Xavier succeeded him.

The Archdiocese, in 2013 built a hostel for girls and in 2015 constructed a presbytery.

Conclusion

Silchang mission has been instrumental in building and shaping the lives of many individuals, families and the society. The people of the place have been beneficiaries of its pastoral, educative and social interventions. Today, they are blessed with a wider horizon and are set to march on the path of progress.

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