



THE DISTRICT OF INDIA

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THE DISTRICT UPDATES

### District Assembly 2023



Fr. Oscar Vasquez, Bro. Michael McAward, Fr. André-Joseph Fétis, and Bro. Bernard Ploeger.

On Day 1, May 18, the formal proceedings of the assembly commenced at Vidyadeep College, Bangalore, at 4:00 pm. Bro. Sukrit Tirkey, the head of the steering committee, welcomed everyone and introduced the theme of the assembly: "Becoming the Religious We are Called to Be in the Future Region of India: Marianist Religious Life-Gifts and Challenges." Following the introduction of the theme, Fr. Sudhir Kujur, the District Superior, delivered a welcoming speech. In his address, he encouraged everyone to make the assembly fruitful and memorable. He then welcomed Fr. André-Joseph Fétis, the Superior General, with a flower bouquet, along with Bro. Michael McAward, the Assistant for Temporalities, Fr. Oscar Vasquez, the Provincial of the USA Province, and Bro. Bernard Ploeger, the Assistant Provincial of the USA Province. The opening prayer for the assembly began with the lighting of the lamp, followed by a prayer led by Fr. Prasad.

In his opening remarks, Fr. André invited everyone to understand the meaning of the assembly's theme, and he encouraged the



Fr. Sudhir Kujur welcomes the esteemed superiors, expressing gratitude and respect for their presence in the assembly.

Brothers to move forward and build the Marianist life in India with enthusiasm. Fr. Oscar expressed his gratitude for the hospitality shown to him and Bro. Bernie. He emphasized that as missionaries, we gathered for a special purpose involving discernment, prayer, and preparation. After his remarks, the participants were asked to share their expectations for the assembly with one another.



Brothers engage in a deep and meaningful group discussion.

Subsequently, Fr. James Dungdung presented his insights on multiculturalism, the multiplicity



of faiths, and poverty. Bro. Saju Chittadiyil elaborated on the importance of recent technology, communication, and welfare developments in India with a PowerPoint presentation. Following these two presentations, Fr. André shared additional insights about the origin of the Society of Mary and Blessed Father Chaminade's role in building a society based upon present realities. The day concluded with a Eucharist at 6:45 pm, followed by supper.



Radiating passion and devotion, Brothers lead a Eucharist service, harnessing the transcendent power of music.

On Day 2, May 19, the schedule began with meditation at 6:30 am, followed by Eucharist and breakfast. The first session focused on fraternity and brotherhood, exploring the integration of diversity through a presentation by Fr. Ignase Arulappen on the church and community as a unified body. After the presentation, participants had time to read and reflect upon excerpts from the XXXIV General Chapter document and articles from the Rule of Life of the Society of Mary, which discuss mixed composition. Testimonies on living mixed composition were shared by Fr. Varghese Manooparambil, Bro. Lucian Tigga, Bro. Bernie, and Fr. Oscar, then recorded messages from Bro Maximin Magnan and Fr. Pablo Rambaud, were also displayed.

The third session, starting at 2:30 pm, delved into the fraternal union of cultures as a prophetic gift, but also the challenges it presents, with Fr. André and Bro. Mike leading the discussions. The fourth session continued

the discussion on the fraternal union of cultures. The day concluded with meditation at 7:00 pm, followed by evening prayer and supper.



On May 20, Fr. Sudhir and the Brothers join in joyful celebration as they bestow heartfelt birthday blessings upon Fr. Jinu Muthukattil and Bro. Dulare Lal Lucas.

On Day 3, May 20, the schedule began with meditation at 6:30 am, followed by Eucharist and breakfast. The first session focused upon mission, with discussions on the qualities of a good mission led by Fr. Oscar and Bro. Bernie. Additionally, traditional Marianist strengths were suggested by Fr André and Bro. Mike. Bro. John Paul and Fr. George Majhi provided a response and summarized the key points. At 10:30 am, the second session continued the dialogue on mission, including group discussions about various ministries, followed by the sharing of group responses with the larger group of participants.



District assembly 2023 participants.

The third session, starting at 2:30 pm, explored new responsibilities in India within the context of the Marianist community. The topics

included responsibility as well as interdependence versus independence, led by Fr. André. Leadership in the region was addressed by Fr. Oscar, and sustainability/economic responsibility was covered by Bro. Bernie. The fourth session included a response from Bro. Darwin Joseph, and planning for the upcoming year, led by Bro. Mike. The day concluded with evening prayer and supper.



Fr. Oscar and Bro. Bernie bestow their blessings upon the Marianist crosses, while offering heartfelt prayers for a meaningful and fruitful preparation year ahead.

On the final day, May 21, the schedule began with meditation at 6:30 am, followed by morning prayer and breakfast. At 9:00 am, the assembly gathered for an evaluation and sharing session. The Eucharist took place at 11:30 am, including a “sending ceremony” led by Fr. Oscar and Bro. Bernie. During the ceremony, a special prayer composed for the Year of Preparation was recited. To mark the conclusion of the assembly, a festive lunch was served at 12:30 pm. The overall sentiment among the participants was one of fruitfulness and joy.



Bro. Mike, Fr. André, and Fr. Oscar with the scholastics.

In the afternoon, there was a meeting of community directors, ministry directors, and accountants, which commenced at 3:45 pm. The day concluded with an evening prayer that highlighted the gifts and vocations of the four jubilarians: Bros. Sanjay Ekka, Oscar Kerketta, John G. Minz, and Fr. Rajesh Kandulna. This was followed by a social gathering.

### Annual Retreat



Participants of the annual retreat, joined by the presence of Fr. Mathew Chemplany, SJ (standing in the right corner of the altar).

From May 23-30, the annual retreat was held at the Good Shepherd Sisters Retreat Centre in Bangalore. Fr. Mathew Chemplany, SJ, served as the preacher for the retreat, which centered around consecrated life. Each day, he emphasized the significance of being a good religious, covering special topics such as being invited to follow Jesus, the vows, spiritual life, community life, healing, being sent on a mission, suffering for the kingdom, and serving God in all things. The twenty-six participants at the retreat were deeply engaged spiritually and found great meaning in their participation.

### Asian Zonal Conference Meeting



Members of the Asian Zonal Marianist Family Council.

From May 4-5, the meeting of the Asian Zonal Conference of the Society of Mary (AZCSM) took place in Korea. The meeting began with discussions among the unit Superiors and the director of the Centre for Marianist Studies regarding issues related to the lives and mission of each unit. During the meeting, it was decided that a long-planned symposium would be held in Bangalore from January 16-21, 2024; the symposium is expected to have twenty-five to thirty attendees.

Prior to the pandemic, the AZCSM had initiated the establishment of the Asian Council of the Marianist Family (ACMF). However, due to the pandemic, its realization was delayed. In this meeting in Korea, unit superiors and presidents of all the branches of the Society of Mary (SM), the Daughters of Mary Immaculate (FMI), and the Marianist Lay Community (MLC) gathered to discuss the modalities for the ACMF and agreed to collaborate as the Marianist Family. As a result, a committee was formed during the meeting to draft the "Statutes of the Asian Council of the Marianist Family." This document will be presented at the 2024 meeting in Bangalore.

### Singhpur Community



Brothers join hands and hearts as they collaborate in building a community wall.

On May 5, the community members gathered to repair the fallen community boundary wall. Fr. James Dungdung, expressing his satisfaction, commended the community members for their hard work and dedication in completing the task. In addition to fixing the wall, they also took the opportunity to clear the

area surrounding the community boundary, enhancing its appearance and safety.

### Scholasticate Community



Bro. Steve Grazulis with the scholastics and the staff.

From April 24 to May 11, the Scholasticate community staff organized a workshop on personal integration, with Bro. Steve Grazulis as the resource person. Bro. Steve was a dynamic and lively speaker who kept the workshop engaging, every morning from Monday to Friday. Bro. Steve focused on three main aspects of human integration: biological, social, and personal. In terms of sexual integration, participants learned to be aware of their own strengths and weaknesses in this area and how it affects their lives as religious. The social aspect emphasized the importance of relationships in our lives and communities, encouraging participants to be sensitive to others' backgrounds in order to build strong Marianist communities. Finally, the workshop explored Myers-Briggs personality types to help participants understand their own personalities and how they deal with issues in life. The scholastics found the workshop extremely helpful and formative, and the community is grateful to Bro. Steve for his generous assistance in guiding the young Brothers.

### REDS Bangalore

On May 15, REDS-Bangalore organized a workshop for the staff. The theme of the workshop was the importance of surveys and their beneficial effects in the REDS-Bangalore programs. The resource persons for the workshop were Fr. Xavier Raj and Sr. M. Sudha,



The workshop participants with Fr. Xavier Raj and Sr. Sudha (far right side).

A.M.S. During the workshop, Fr. Xavier Raj explained the definition and meaning of surveys, types of surveys, the importance and purpose of surveys, advantages and disadvantages, the characteristics of social surveys in social work, particularly in REDS-Bangalore programs. He also discussed the effects and benefits of surveys in social work and highlighted important considerations when conducting surveys. Sr. Sudha explained the surveys' targets and emphasized the importance of documenting them. Approximately 30 staff members participated in the workshop and benefited from the information as they prepared to conduct surveys for the academic year 2023-24. Fr. Arul Raj, the REDS-Bangalore Director, sincerely thanked Fr. Xavier and Sr. Sudha for sharing their knowledge and experience. He also expressed gratitude to the staff for their participation in the workshop. Towards the end, Fr. Arul Raj provided practical guidelines for the staff as they embarked upon conducting surveys in various slums in Bangalore and Hosur from May 16-31. The meeting concluded with birthday celebrations and a delightful lunch together.

### REDS Ranchi

From May 13-15, REDS Ranchi organized a three-day seminar for students in classes 7th to 12th at Prabhat Tara School, Singhpur. The seminar aimed to provide valuable insights and guidance to the students on important topics such as self-esteem, self-acceptance, and choosing the right career.



Fr. Birendra Kullu and Bro. Pratap Guria engage with students, fostering meaningful interactions.

Nilesh Tirkey delivered engaging talks on self-esteem and self-acceptance. Fr. Birendra Kullu delivered a session on career guidance, helping the students to make informed decisions about their future paths. In addition to the enlightening talks, the seminar offered various activities to engage and entertain the students. They had the opportunity to showcase their cultural talents through a lively dance competition and to express their creativity in a fancy dress event. To add some excitement, a thrilling water race was also organized. A total of one hundred and nine students benefited from the seminar, gaining valuable awareness and insights. The overall success of the seminar was evident in the positive feedback received from the participants, who expressed gratitude for the knowledge and experience they gained during the three-day event.

### REDS Patna



A student extends a heartfelt welcome to all participants for the annual day celebration.

On May 13, REDS Patna joyously celebrated its 6th anniversary. The occasion brought together the dedicated collaborators of REDS Patna,

including the Chaminade Training Institute, Patna Women's College, and supportive neighbors. It was a time to reflect upon the journey thus far, and to express gratitude for the mutually beneficial opportunities that have been created. During the celebration, esteemed individuals such as Sr. Celine, Saloni Kumari, Pinky Devi, and Fr. Rajesh Kandulna, provided words of encouragement and inspiration to the beneficiaries of REDS Patna. To mark the occasion, volunteers actively participated in decorating the venue, creating a festive atmosphere. Additionally, snacks and refreshments were shared by all the attendees, fostering a sense of togetherness as well as celebration. The anniversary served as a reminder of the collective achievements and milestones reached by REDS Patna. It highlighted the valuable contributions of the collaborators and volunteers who have been instrumental in the organization's growth and success over the years.

**Auditing** - Bro. Lucian Tigga reports that auditing took place in the District Office from May 10-18 to finalize the details of our annual accounting. He expressed his gratitude to all the Brothers and the office staff who provided valuable assistance in ensuring the successful completion of the auditing process.



**Prabhat Tara High School, Singhpur** - Bro. Sanjay Ekka, the headmaster, proudly announced that a total of 132 students from the school appeared for the 10th board exam. It is with immense joy and pride that 128 of the students successfully passed, remarkably securing a 1st division. The remaining students also passed, obtaining a well-deserved 2nd



division. This remarkable success is a testament to the collective efforts of the Brothers, teachers, and their hardworking students, who displayed exceptional dedication and commitment to their studies. Their unwavering determination and perseverance have played a significant role in upholding the Marianist educational characteristics of our school, which has always been committed to serving the underprivileged of the community. On this joyous occasion, let us extend our heartfelt congratulations to the Brothers, teachers, and most importantly, to the students who achieved this remarkable milestone.

### **Prayer Requests**

Kindly pray for our Brothers and Sisters who are in the process of healing and for their speedy recovery from physical or psychological illness.

Kindly pray for Fr. Sebastian Bara who is recuperating and going through physical therapy.

Stephen Sanga, son of a Blessed Chaminade Parish catechist, passed away on May 9. May his soul rest in peace, and may his family find comfort and strength in the memories they shared with him. Let us keep them in our thoughts and prayers.

Dilip, the cousin of Bro. Melvin Britto, passed away at the age of 21 on May 17. Kindly keep Bro. Melvin and his family members who mourn the loss of such a young man.

Please pray for the Brothers who celebrate their birthdays during the month of June:

05 B., Rayappan  
12 Minz, John Gracious  
14 P., Antony Xavier  
26 Tirkey, Sukrit

