

ST. PETER'S VISITS THE ASHAGAD MISSION STATION

- Sunil Rebello

On Sunday 18th February, 2007 a group of Parishioners visited our Twinned Mission Parish at Ashagad (next to Dahanu). The first stop was the Manor Mission where the FC nuns run a boarding school for 100 girls and the Jesuits have 40 boys as boarders.

Next we visited Ashagad where Fr. Blaise gave a brief background on the work being carried out in the area.

The Group as a whole had an enriching spiritual experience in seeing for ourselves how the Almighty uses us to reach out to help our less fortunate brothers and sisters. The return journey was a joyous one.

SHANTIVAN SHETKARI SEVA MANDAL

(A brief report by Fr. Blaise D'Souza s.j., Priest-In-charge, Ashagad)

*Ashagad Mission – started in 1967
by Fr. Stanny Miranda, s.j. – a small Church
with the name of Our Lady of the Forsaken was built
at the confluence of two small rivers – the Warli tribals
of the entire Mission were like forsaken children
driven further into the hills and forests – divested
of their best ancestral lands – they were oppressed
and exploited by rapacious money lenders – the hills
and forests became their only haven of security –
hemmed in on all sides by oppressive forces, the Warlis
retreated into their shells – poverty, hunger, malnutrition
and disease seemed to be their painful fate –
who would liberate them from this vicious circle?
Theirs seemed to be a condition of sheer hopelessness.*

In such a situation the Mission became their only hope (Ashagad). Our Lady became the Mother of these Forsaken Children. Fr. Stanny Miranda s.j. and the Missionaries who followed him, became the instruments of God's love for them. The Mission gave them hope of a New Life where they could live with dignity.

Hectic efforts were made to solve their numerous problems. Training in Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Horticulture, Poultry and Fish Culture were organized to help them become employed and self reliant.

Self-Help Saving Groups were formed to help them learn to save and invest in Income-Generating Programmes. Legal Education Programmes to help them fight for their rights to the land and to the forests were begun.

But their liberation would remain an uphill task unless they were educated, learned to read and write and speak up for their own rights for better living conditions.

And so in 1992 the first primary school was set up at Tokarpada to provide education for the children of the Warlis. Two mud and thatch huts were the class rooms. These remain to this day. Two years ago one pukka structure was constructed. Almost 200 children from the outlying hamlets come to this school to study till the 7th Std.

But what about the children living in villages 40, 50 and 60 kms away? Balwadis were started in these villages to provide an ambience and interest for education.

Adult Education was provided to make the parents aware of education for their children.

Health Education to help them become self-reliant in dealing with disease and malnutrition. But where could all their children go if they wanted to be educated as you and me?

Ashagad is 7 kms from Dahanu. But the area covered by the Mission today extends over the 3 talukas of Dahanu, Vikramgad and Jawahar. If the children from all these distant villages were to avail of the education required to become self-reliant, they needed some where to go and carry on their education.

In order to solve this major problem, the Mission started Loyola Ashram School at Nagzari and Jeevandhara Ashram School in Ashagad itself, in 1996.

420 Warli children, boys and girls, reside and study at Loyola Ashram School. 150 more from the closeby villages, attend as day-scholars. Jeevandhara Ashram School is only for advasi girls. There are 300 girls residing and studying here.

As their parents would never be able to afford a full education for their children, it has to be provided free.

Fortunately, under the Ashram School System of the Government, the staff salaries and food requirements are completely paid for.

However, the Mission has to provide for the rest of their needs. This amounts to Rs.5 lakhs a year. This may appear to be a big sum, but has to cover the childrens' expenses for uniforms, casual wear, toiletry, bedding and costs of text books, notebooks and other educational stationery required by each child.

To provide for these needs of each child it amounts to Rs.3.33 per day per child.

That amounts to Rs.100/- per month per child.

For 650 children that amounts to Rs.6 lakhs per year.

Can you stretch out your hands in solidarity with the Mission? It's when we give of ourselves that we really give.

- It means sharing of what I am and what I have, with those less fortunate than me, but who have as much of a right to live a dignified life as I do.
- It means providing them today with what they require, so that their education for tomorrow may be complete.
- And so that we might all be able to walk side by side with heads held high as true brothers and sisters of the same Loving Father.

We at St Peter's, are looking out for ways in which we can help this mission station. We had a collection in October, which generated around Rs. 6 lakh. For photographs of the mission station, please look up our Parish Web site, www.stpetersbandra.com

- Fr. Gerard

Pro-Life Day

25th March

- A Nunes

At the Annunciation Mary said "Yes, Abba Father, be it done unto me according to your will." Jesus came down to do the will of the Father and so to save us.

Are we also ready to do the will of the Father by accepting pregnancy even though it may cause us great difficulty?

God has a plan for each and every life He brings into this world and under no circumstances are we allowed to curb or destroy it.

Unfortunately, millions of babies are being aborted in this world.

The 25th March, the Feast of the Annunciation is also "Pro-Life Day". Let each of us spiritually, adopt a baby who is in danger of being aborted, and ask our loving Lord and Giver of Life, to protect and save the life of the unborn child who is in danger of being aborted.

That is the least each of us can do.

Be Informed

On a one year experiment, we have added one more time slot for weddings at our Church.

On Weekdays – weddings at 4:15 and 5:30 p.m.

On Saturdays – weddings at 4:00 and 5:15 p.m.

On Sundays – weddings at 3:45 p.m. and at the regular parish masses.

Please note, there will be no private wedding masses at our church.

Cut along the dotted line

QUIZ

Combine the Letters

Peter



After Jesus ascended into heaven, his followers preached to many people. Sometimes those followers were arrested and imprisoned.

Combine the small letters with each large letter to form a word, and write what happened to one disciple.

RAKNO.HGO

TDCDPCEOSD.

TCOHOGCO.E

DTORDHLL.ED

OTLAUMOF.

Parents are reminded to encourage your school going children to attend only the 8 am Jesus Club Mass.

MEMORY VERSE

Being a good example.

You are the light of the world
Matt. 5-14

Winners of last month's Quiz:
Gillian Gihira
Giselle Gonsalves
Brian Barnes

MILESTONES

UNITED IN CHRIST

Agnelo Baptista	to	Anita D'Souza
Regan Adolph D'Sa	to	Sapna Menon
Brian Irenio D'Souza	to	Radhika Rodricks
Savio Gomes	to	Savina Noronha
Anthony Gomes	to	Sharon Soares

BORN IN CHRIST

Rhea Maria	d/o	Russel & Ruban D'Silva
Kara Ann	d/o	Russel & Ruban D'Silva
Andre	s/o	Wasvin & Priya Crasto

REST IN CHRIST

Hubert Feuz	89 years	Evershine, Vasai
Joseph Jerome Lobo	71 years	Turner Road
Nigel Remedios	66 years	Boran Road
Ana Francisca D'Souza	86 years	Victory Blocks
Michael Dango	77 years	Hill Road
Merlyn Rodrigues	56 years	Prof. Almeida Road
Joyce D'Souza	76 years	Chapel Road
Abigail D'Mello	77 years	Boran Road

ST. PETER'S LEGAL CELL

- George D'Souza

Originating in 1990, under the guidance of Fr. Bosco D'Souza, the Legal Cell has met for the 170th time, to render advice and guidance "free of charge" not only to the members of our Parish, but also to those (Catholics and people of other faiths alike) from Colaba in the South to Thane in the North of the City.

On an average, about eight clients call on the 2nd Tuesday, each month except during May. The advocates meet in the Parish Parlour from 7.30 p.m. onwards. An announcement to this effect is made in the church on the Sunday preceding the meeting, and a notice is also put up.

We are grateful to the eight Advocates who regularly attend the meetings, although Tuesday is a normal working day in Court for them. We are also grateful to Fr. F. Juan, who takes a keen interest in the cell – particularly on legal matters relating to the Church and Parish.



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