

# Troubadour

Volume 65, No.1

Autumn 2022





In the 12th century Christ spoke to St Francis of Assisi from this cross:

*“Francis, go and rebuild my Church which you see is falling down.”*

Don't complain about the Church in the 21st century.

Hear Our Lord's call and do something about it!

*The Friars Minor have followed St Francis' example for the last 800 years.*

**Why not be one of them?**

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# Troubadour

A MISSIONARY MAGAZINE

*at the service of*

- The Franciscan Missionaries working throughout the world but especially in disaster areas.
- The Franciscan Missionary Union.



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**COVER PHOTOGRAPHS:**

*Front cover:*

In southern Pakistan, residents of a flooded area float on a makeshift raft.

Photo: Caritas Pakistan.

*Back cover:*

Thoughts and hope for flood survivors.

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# Pray for Pakistan

and those affected by the floods



We have all seen and heard of the devastating floods in Pakistan. One of our friars in Pakistan sent us some photos showing the terrible devastation in his own area and how his parishioners have been severely affected.

Fr Eric Rassani ofm teaches in the Seminary and also looks after a little Parish. The following photos that he sent show some of the utter devastation his parishioners have experienced in the recent floods. He, like Pope Francis, asks for our prayers for all those affected by the disaster. The people are not able to do very much until the waters go down and some drying out of fields and houses happens. After that they may be able to replant and rebuild their broken homes. Many of the poorer people are the most severely affected. Many live in Mud-

built houses and these will need lots of repairs and cleaning. A major concern is always to access clean water otherwise, as Fr Eric says the spread of malaria and dengue is unstoppable. The Seminary although much more strongly built also suffered from the floods. You can see some of the devastation from the following images.



*"I want to assure the people of Pakistan, hit by floods of disastrous proportions, of my closeness. I pray for the numerous victims, for the wounded and those forced from their homes, and that international solidarity might be prompt and generous."*

Pope Francis



The floods have affected more than 33 million people, with more than 1,000 dead and many thousands more injured. Cities as well as rural areas have been overwhelmed. Livestock was killed in many instances and already meagre crops ruined. It will take enormous faith and effort to rebuild the damage done.

# Indian Mission

## KARBI & ADIVASI TRIBES AT DIPHU

An exciting new project is being undertaken by our Indian Friars who give this account of the growth of the Mission.

The Franciscan Friars of St Thomas the Apostle Province, India came to North East India responding to a letter from the then Archbishop of Guwahati Most Rt. Rev. Thomas Menampambil SDB in 1997. The land and its people were captivating but challenging. The Church was very young and vigorous needing dedicated labourers. We chose the most difficult belts of Assam to respond to the needs of the people and the Church.

*Young Karbi men dressed in traditional clothing during a cultural festival.*

Friars have undertaken the mission after a considerable time of in-depth study of the surroundings namely North Guwahati (a belt of staunch Assamese Brahmins) and Salbari (the most backward belt of Garo's – a dominant tribe in North East). The friars have faced all sorts of ordeals to build up these two missions with a quality educational institution serving over 2400 children. Later another Mission parish was established in the Diocese of Nongstoin in the State of Meghalaya. Recently we have taken up one more remote mission centre in the Diocese of Diphu in the State of Assam.

The people of this area are very poor and live in utter poverty. They live in huts, which are built of mud and twigs and bamboos. Some have zinc sheets as a roof. Many of them live in the hills which are infested with Malaria. They mainly depend on the forest for their livelihood and sustenance. The indiscriminate felling of trees and reckless exploitation of the forest has caused forest depletion. Tribal life is profoundly affected by the deforestation. The

situation is made worse by the corruption existing in various Government departments like Revenue, Police, Justice, Development and Education.

The overall objective of the Mission is to bring about the integral development of the people of Karbi and Adivasi tribes through Franciscan presence, education, social and healthcare services. The specific objectives are: having a Franciscan presence by establishing a Franciscan Friary; educating the children by establishing a school; empowering the present generation of youth, adult and women through our social work and to establish a Hospice for basic health care services in collaboration with religious sisters.

I am sure that you will see this as a project worthy of our assistance and support. We have already sent substantial funds to begin this work and the following photo's show some of the work being done to establish the basic structures which are so badly needed.

## Intermediary Report

**Project Title: The Integral Development of Karbi and Adivasi Tribes People through our Franciscan Presence and Mission**

### Status of the Project:

As part of this project, we have to build a friary for the friars and a school for the children in this new mission. Upliftment through providing sustainable and good education, social development and Pastoral work to nearby Catholic Adivasi Tribal people. Friars Nathaniel Tirkey and Shanborlang are the pioneers of this mission. Friars staying in this mission for almost a year. Friars stay in the near by diocesan parish and studied the place. They visited around 30 small villages in and around this mission. They rendered pastoral services during the Lent and Easter season. They also met different religious present in and around especially the Franciscan religious. Friars now had a good knowledge and experience of this new mission. Friars began with the clearing of the place for the construction. They have dug two borewells since the first one was a failure. Recently, we have laid the foundation for the friary building. We have already spoken with the contractor for starting of the school construction parallelly, with the aim that the school is ready by next March, for the new academic year.

### The Challenges:

- There was no electricity supply to this new mission- friars are to work towards it from the electricity department- Things work very slowly here
- Assam is ruled by BJP- A Pro Hindu Political Party. Any Christian organization starting the mission work is looked with suspicion in the government offices.
- The diocese gave the land to the friars- The agreement was made between Diocese and the Franciscan Province in India. But the land is not yet registered in the name of the Order. Friars worked towards it. They have done all the required things from our side. The file is pending in the government office. Again any registration to be done in Christian organization is not considered very fast. We need to persevere it continuously
- We find difficulty in finding the contractor to execute the construction locally. A few we could find, but the quoted rate is very high. We need to request our own contractor who did construction work in North Guwahati- which is 250 Km away from new mission to take up the contract. He had agreed finally.
- The problem of local labour. Since we are new to the mission, we couldn't find local labour for the work immediately.
- The land given to us by diocese is not a plain land. It's a kind of forest with lot of trees etc. There was lot of time taken for the demarcation of the land and also clearing of the land.

### The Goal as per the Plan Presented in the Original Project

- Construction of School-1st Phase
- Construction of Friary

### Conclusion

The beginning of every mission is difficult and its adventurous. We can't take anything for certain. A lot of exploration and new learning has happened with regard to this mission. But we are sure that after five to ten years, our Franciscan presence is going to make a lot of difference to us and to the people whom friars are going to serve.

Foundations of Friary commence : Borewell Digging.



*Foundation Laying for Friary by Vicar General of Diocese*



# Bishop's House Bellary

## Renovation progress

*Work continues on the restoration and refurbishing of the Bishop's House in Bellary which had been the home of many of the older friars of the Province of Great Britain in the past. There is still much to be done and work is continuing. Shown here are some photos to show the ongoing progress.*

*Thank you for your support.*





# DIocese OF BELLARY

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1 July 2022

Dear Rev. Fr. Edmund Highton OFM,

Warmest greetings to you in the name of Jesus!

We offer our sincere gratitude to you and the Order of Friars Minor (English Province) for your kind and generous contribution of EUR 50,000.00 towards renovation of the Bishop's House, Diocese of Bellary.

The renovation work of the 206 years old house is in progress. We hope to complete it in the next 3-4 months. The house serves as Bishop's residence and diocesan pastoral offices.

We have attached some photographs of the house showing the progress of the renovation work.

Your timely financial help has been a great help. We sincerely appreciate it and remain grateful to you. We assure you of our prayers for your good health and the well being of all the donors.

With fraternal regards,

*Henry D'Souza*  
01-07-2022

+ Henry D'Souza  
Bishop of Bellary



To:  
**Rev. Fr. Edmund Highton** ofm  
Provincial Director of the FMU  
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Right Rev. Henry D'Souza,  
Bishop of Bellary.

## Bellary Facts...

Bellary is a city in the state of Karnataka, India. It is 306 km from the state capital of Bangalore, 351 km from Hyderabad, 557 km Chennai and 761 km from Mumbai.

**Catholics : 29,262**

**Languages : Kannada, Telugu, Urdu, and English.**



Bellary is in the Hyderabad-Karnataka, Deccan region.



Roofing reinforcement work begins.



Structural building work continues.





# St Kizito Minor Seminary Malawi UPDATE



You may remember that in the last issue of **Troubadour** we reported the terribly poor conditions of the classrooms at the Seminary and also the outside washing facilities which we helped them to build. Now we are happy to show you some of the improvements made at the Seminary and also the washing lines which they have erected to get their clothes dry. No need any longer to lay them on the grass but the clothes fly

high in the breeze. A good use of wind power and will power! The classrooms had worn out ceiling boards and worn out floors, doors and windows without handles and unfriendly unusable chalkboards. There was walls and pathways badly needing repair and or repainting. With the help of you, our benefactors, we were able to send funds to help in the renovation of many of these issues. They thank you for your invaluable help.

If you refer to the last issue of the magazine you will see these locations as they were. The renovations, with some before and after examples are shown here. We are sure you will agree that the transformation is remarkable. The students are benefitting, and will continue to benefit, from their new surroundings.



*Before.*

*After.*



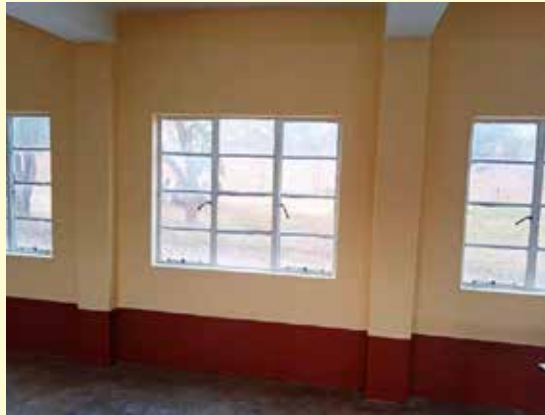
*Above: The old blackboards.  
Below and right: The new renovated blackboards.*

*Below: The newly refurbished doors include working locks.*



*Below: The ceilings and walls were repainted.*





*The refurbished windows have been sealed and now have locks, offering greater comfort and safety.*



You will see from these photographs that the kind donations from our benefactors and parishioners really do make a huge difference to lives of so many less fortunate than ourselves.



*The classrooms are now much more appealing and positive places in which to learn.*



*Students will certainly reap the rewards from their new environments.*

## Two newly constructed laundry drying sites

As well as the extensive refurbishment of the interior and exterior of the buildings two new clothes drying sites were installed.



*Seminarians used to dry clothes on the ground before the construction of the drying lines.*



*Work in progress - Levelling of the site in preparation for concrete slabbing.*



*The concrete being laid prior to the final lines being erected.*



*The poles are up and the clothes lines are in place ready for use.*



*The whole drying process is now more hygienic and practical.*

## Prayer for Peace of Saint Francis of Assisi

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me bring love.  
Where there is offence, let me bring pardon.  
Where there is discord, let me bring union.  
Where there is error, let me bring truth.  
Where there is doubt, let me bring faith.  
Where there is despair, let me bring hope.  
Where there is darkness, let me bring your light.  
Where there is sadness, let me bring joy.  
O Master, let me not seek as much  
to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love,  
for it is in giving that one receives,  
it is in self-forgetting that one finds,  
it is in pardoning that one is pardoned,  
it is in dying that one is raised to eternal life.*



“I want to assure the people of Pakistan, hit by floods of disastrous proportions, of my closeness.”

Pope Francis

