



HATIGAON TIDINGS

MSMHC GENERALATE - LITTLE FLOWER CONVENT, HATIGAON



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September - December 2017



Grand Finale

Platinum Jubilee

Grand finale of MSMHC Platinum Jubilee Celebration was held on 9 November 2017 with the Rector Major of Salesian Family, Rev Fr. Ángel Fernandez Artime.



A day of thanksgiving during the North-East Regional Pastoral Conference on 8 September. Solemn Holy Mass officiated by His Excellency Most Rev. Giambattista Diqattro, Apostolic Nuncio along with the Secretary General of CBCI and all the members of the North-East Regional Pastoral Conference marked the event.

October 24, the 75th Foundation Day of the Congregation was celebrated at Hatigaon. Highlight of the day was the opera on Venerable Bishop Stephen Ferrando by the students of Little Flower School, Hatigaon which enthralled the special invitees and parents of students who were present in thousands.

Missionary symposium held from 5 to 8 November was one of the most important parts of the yearlong platinum Jubilee celebration. The symposium was solemnly inaugurated by Sr. Philomena Mathew, the Superior General on 5 November. It had the participation of over 250 members from all the provinces.



FROM THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

A Year of Grace

*“For the Lord is good and his love endures forever;
His faithfulness continues through all generation.” (Ps 100:5)*

We have just concluded the platinum jubilee year of our congregation which provided us opportunities to ponder on the great goodness of God in our lives. The presence of the Rector Major, Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime, the 10th successor of Don Bosco on the occasion was a great blessing as he reminded us of Don Bosco and our beloved Founder. The Jubilee flag was brought down by him as a sign of surrendering ourselves to the Lord who accompanied us in the ups and downs of the Jubilee Year. While many were able to take part in the celebration, others were united in spirit to celebrate this great event of the congregation’s history. It was a fitting occasion to thank God and give him the glory for his accompaniment throughout the past 75 years. The rich experiences of the past has been the testimonies of his great love and faithfulness.

The past one year has been a time of blessing with the tangible experience of God in numerous ways. Definitely he was present in all our endeavours, guiding us to bring out the best in every facet of our life. Our gratitude to God becomes genuine when we take to heart the inspirations we have received from the jubilee year programmes and by living those with great intensity of love and gratitude, paving the way for renewal and deeper commitment in our consecrated life and mission. We began the jubilee year with a spiritual retreat facilitated by a team from Attappady, Kerala along with other hundreds of women religious from our region. Indeed, the occasion gifted us with deep desire for God and to be renewed in

our life and mission. All through the jubilee year, the Lord walked beside us; at times like a ‘pillar of cloud’ at other times like a ‘pillar of fire’, leading and guiding us, purifying and encouraging us to go forward with clarity of vision and purpose. Certain times, his call was loud and clear and many of us might have heard him speaking to us through persons and events, experiences and happenings; sometimes, the Lord’s call came to us in the most gentle whisper of our own conscience, inviting us for a introspection of our personal journey as a missionary sister and a retrospection of our collective missionary and spiritual journey as a congregation. Hopefully all of us in our own unique way paid heed to God’s call to walk steadily on the path of renewal.

The call to radical renewal is an ongoing process which does not end with the conclusion of the jubilee year. It will go on if only we offer our daily fidelities to this lifelong commitment consciously, and with deep inner freedom and personal conviction.

The blessings and favours we have received during this special year may see us more motivated to walk steadily on the path of personal holiness ...



The blessings and favours we have received during this special year may see us more motivated to walk steadily on the path of personal holiness, thus contributing our share to the renewal of the mother congregation.

Throughout the Jubilee Year, the maternal presence of our Blessed Mother safeguarded us and together with our Founder we too say: “All is the work of Mary.” I entrust to the motherly care of our blessed Mother, the Help of Christians, ‘the working through’ of the process of our renewal which is ‘an already and not yet experience’ for the vast majority of us. May ours be Mary’s contemplative heart which ponders all that we have heard, seen and experienced during this year; may it linger on in our hearts and take deeper roots in our lives.

May the prayers and paternal assistance of our beloved Founder aid us in all our efforts to be radically committed to our consecration and mission, desiring to become saints, great saints, giving many saints to the mother Church.

**Sr. Philomena Mathew
Superior General**



Grand Finale of MSMHC Platinum Jubilee Celebration

MSMHC Welcomes Rector Major at Hatigaon

The grand finale of the Platinum Jubilee celebration of the MSMHC was held on 9 November 2017 Hatigaon with a solemn thanksgiving Holy Mass presided over by the Rector Major Fr. Ángel Fernandez Artime, the tenth successor of Don Bosco. Being the concluding day of the four-day long missionary symposium, a large number of Sisters and novices were present.

A colourful welcome accorded to the Rector Major by the sisters, novices and the students of Little Flower filled the atmosphere with joy and delight. He was overwhelmed to see the huge

number of MSMHC Sisters and the Novices; and the cultural extravaganza by the students which displayed the splendour and grandeur of the region.

Addressing the Sisters, the Rector Major spoke to them of the need to become powerful witnesses of Jesus and reminded them of their call as missionaries to venture out to the areas where people long for the Gospel. He also emphasized on the need to live close to the poor and those in the periphery.

A short felicitation was arranged after the Holy Eucharist to honour the Rector

Major, Fr. Ángel Fernandez Artime. Sr. Philomena Mathew, the Superior General extended a warm welcome on behalf of the entire congregation and thanked him for his great support, especially for his presence on the occasion of the platinum jubilee of the congregation. She recalled with gratitude the salesians who fostered the congregation in its initial days and placed on record their valuable contributions towards its growth.

During the programme, Sr. Philomena Mathew, Superior General and all the six Provincials and the



Italian Delegation Superior clad the Rector Major with various traditional costumes symbolizing the multi-cultural facet of India.

Another significant moment of the occasion was the releasing of the book, “In Pursuit of Living the Mandate”, a special publication edited by Sr. Shiji James and Sr. Irene Zosiami, brought out to commemorate the platinum jubilee year of the Congregation.

The closing ceremony of platinum jubilee was held immediately after the felicitation programme. The yearlong celebration came to a close as the Rector Major lowered the jubilee flag which was hoisted in front of the Generalate house.

The event was participated by the major superiors of Salesian family: Fr. VM Thomas SDB, Provincial of Guwahati, Fr. George Maliekal SDB of Shillong, Fr. Nestor Guria,

Sr. Elizabeth George FMA of Guwahati and Sr. Jancy Francis SMI of Guwahati and other important dignitaries.

The jubilee year was indeed a time of blessing; it was an opportune time for the MSMHC to ponder over the past bygone seventy-five years. Founded on 24 October 1942 at Guwahati it has the tale of a wonderful history. It’s testing time of the founding years and the period of struggles have been the time that it experienced God’s providential care. The Congregation kept growing since its inception and has launched out to many areas of Church’s mission.

The platinum jubilee celebration was opened on 26 October 2016 with the hoisting of the jubilee flag by Archbishop John Moolachira and Sr. Philomena Mathew, the Superior General addressing the gathering and officially declaring the platinum

jubilee of the Congregation open. As it was the concluding day of the spiritual retreat held for the religious women of the Northeast, organized by a team from Attapady, the event had the participation of over 500 religious from the region. The day was marked with a solemn Eucharistic celebration presided over by the Archbishop John Moolachira of Guwahati, con-celebrated by Fr. Varghese Kizhakevely, the Vicar General of the Archdiocese, Guwahati. What added to the significance of the event was the introduction to the Holy Mass by Late Sr. Elizabeth Packumala, the former Mother General who played a vital role in the congregation. All those attended the event can never forget the ardency and vigour with which she conveyed the day’s importance, stressing the pivotal role played by Bishop Stephen Ferrando, the founder and the pioneers.





A Day of Thanksgiving

Platinum Jubilee Celebration with Nuncio and Members of NE Pastoral Conference

September 8 marked a significant day for the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians (MSMHC) on its Platinum Jubilee year with the celebration of a solemn Eucharist officiated by His Excellency Most Rev. Giambattista Diquattro, Apostolic Nuncio to India and Nepal along with Most. Rev. Theodore Mascarenhas, the Secretary General of CBCI and all the members of the North-East Regional Pastoral Conference. The presence of the Archbishops, Bishops and Major Superiors of the region and other dignitaries made the event uniquely elating and inspiring.

The occasion had an added reason for rejoicing as it had the presence of five golden and twenty-four Silver Jubilarians who celebrated the gift of their consecration to God in the Congregation.

Superior General, Sr. Philomena Mathew in her welcome address at the start of the Holy Mass, expressed joy and gratitude to all present and briefed the assembly about the importance of the event. Gratefully acknowledging the support and help of all the Bishops, major superiors, parish priests, laity and every one with whom the members collaborate,

she thanked all those who gathered for their encouraging presence on the occasion.

During the brief felicitation ceremony that followed after the Holy Eucharist, His Excellency Most Rev. Giambattista Diquattro, Apostolic Nuncio to India and Nepal expressed his joy for having got the opportunity to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Congregation's foundation. Commenting on the chosen theme of the Chapter that calls for a radical renewal of life according to the vision of Founder Venerable Bishop Stephen Ferrando, he said, "The radical renewal calls for giving absolute supremacy for Jesus Christ".

Most Rev. Dominic Jala Archbishop of Shillong and President of North Eastern Regional Bishops' Conference in his address spoke about the important role played by the Congregation in the region, especially its contribution towards building up the young Church.

Most Rev. John Moolachira, Archbishop of Guwahati appreciated the Sisters for commitment and dedication. He said, "From my long association with them I can vouch that they have imbibed from their founder, Most Rev. Stephen Ferrando and their formators, a strong missionary spirit and it is evident in their ability to work in remote areas."





Editorial

In God's Own Time

In God's own time everything is made beautiful, for he is the one who takes control of all. Dianne Wilkinson, an American southern gospel songwriter and singer in her poem 'All in God's own time' focuses on three important characters portrayed in the Bible. Noah, the righteous man of his time, perhaps might have asked many times, "Lord, when will it rain", but kept building the ark, struggling through day in and out, in spite of seeing no sign of an end of the world. The world around him laughed at him and called him a fool but finally his faith in God led him to see the dawn of the day of hope. Moses, the chosen one of God to free his people was reluctant and tried to flee away. He thought of himself as unfit to carry out God's plan. But God persisted him to carry forward his mission of saving his people, leading them to the Promised Land. Another significant personality we encounter in the Bible is Job, who is known for his patient endurance while facing the tests of the evil one. In his great misery, having lost everything and everyone he might have questioned God for his inaction. But God gave him the grace needed to overcome the tests. Definitely, God's plan for his people is the best. It is only in knowing his will and accomplishing his plan we can find true peace. In the eyes of the world, we may not be wise and intelligent but what counts most is our reliance on God. At times the trials in life may seem too great that we tend to doubt in his love, but it is those times that we are guided to understand him better. Because, he gives us the grace to endure and persevere until the end.

The jubilee year that marked the 75th year of our foundation has just passed. It was indeed a time to recall the way we have come into existence and to be aware of the growth over the years. Indeed, it is in God's own time the MSMHC came into existence. The story of the past seventy-five years unfolds to us a story of struggles and pain. Nevertheless, the loving kindness of God and his constant accompaniment made everything beautiful. The Founder and the pioneers were his humble instruments, through whom he made known his plan. They were submissive to God and remained attuned to his voice. It is through them he sketched out our way of life. Their life experiences teach us of the need to place our trust in him, who takes the control of everything. Certainly, the journey they made was not always easy. Possibly they might have questioned God on many occasions as they encountered challenges that tested their faith. Their unwavering faith and great desire to do his holy will surpassed everything. May their spirit continue to kindle the fire that is within us and the years ahead be blessed with faith and love.

Sr. Shiji James

TITBITS

WELCOME TO NEW BATCH OF JUNIORS



The new batch of Juniors who arrived for ten-month course in Hatigaon were welcomed by the community on 15 December. The 34 member group consists of representatives from all the six provinces and Sr. Lucinda Salboro from Hawaii.

EUCCHARISTIC PROCESSION - DISPUR



The community of Hatigaon along with the students of LFS actively participated in the Eucharistic Procession held at Dispur Cathedral that gathered thousands of faithful from various parishes of the Archdiocese.

CHRISTMAS JOY AT LFS



Tiny tots of LFS in Hatigaon get dressed in bright colours for pre-Christmas celebration before the winter break.

Mission Symposium Fosters Radical Renewal

A four-day long missionary symposium was one of the long awaited moment of MSMHC during the platinum Jubilee year. The symposium was solemnly inaugurated by Sr. Philomena Mathew, the Superior General on 5 November after a meaningful Holy Mass celebrated by Fr. Johnson Parackal SDB, Executive Director of DBI, Guwahati.

The forum opened a setting conducive for serious study and reflection as it had a series of sessions on selected topics by different resource persons. Earnestly desiring to bring about a radical renewal, around 280 members participated in the event,



reflecting on MSMHC life and mission. Most of the papers were presented by the MSMHC Sisters who made genuine efforts to enlighten the members on the life and mission. There were also papers by a few eminent persons who are among the close associates of the MSMHC.

They helped in gaining a deeper understanding on the need for bringing adequate changes. On the final day of Symposium, the participants were enthralled by the Opera presented by the Novices from Mary Immaculate Novitiate, Mawroh on the life of Bishop Stephen Ferrando.



LFS Relive Bishop Ferrando on MSMHC Foundation Day

MSMHC Foundation day celebration at Hatigaon on 24 October was a day of gratitude and thanksgiving. The highlight of the day was the opera on Bishop Ferrando staged by the students of LFS after the Holy Eucharist presided over by Fr. V. M. Thomas, Salesian Provincial, Guwahati, along with other priests from

the neighbouring institutes. The stunning performance of the students arrested the attention of thousands who gathered on the occasion at the school ground.

The opera depicted the inspiring life story of Venerable Bishop Ferrando who was a passionate missionary and a holy pastor in the Northeast for 46





years. The two hour long programme kept the entire audience spellbound as it was intermingled with beautiful narration, dialogue, music and dances. The play presented the Venerable as a man of high calibre, deep faith and wisdom. It pointed out that he made no compromises while executing his duties as a leader and guide. His courage and wisdom led him take up the challenges of the mission. His readiness to do whatever demanded of him is explained well in the scenes that depicted his service during the world war. It also displayed how the Italian missionary who came to Northeast India in 1923 along with his companions took keen interest in learning the language, customs and traditions of the people. In the new land of his mission, besides being a true missionary he played the role as Novice Master and Rector for 10 years and finally took up the role of shepherding the diocese of Krishnagar for a year and then the diocese of Shillong for 34 years.

The opera highlighted the circumstances that led to the founding of MSMHC on 24 October 1942 and the



works of the Sisters. The moving episodes were truly inspirational and motivating that everyone who watched the show commented on the magnanimity of the holy pastor who toiled for the people of the region. The play also helped to give an understanding to the viewers about the life and mission of the MSMHC.

The opera staged on 24 October at Hatigaon had the participation of

above 600 students taking various roles of the scenes and dances that were choreographed to blend the setting of the play. It was indeed a concerted effort of the staff and students of LFS. Hats off to the LFS family for their committed efforts to give the best gift to MSMHC on its foundation day by reliving the founder and the founding days.





Forever 'Yes': Final Commitment

Thirty-five Sisters made Final Profession on the occasion of the feast of the Immaculate Conception on 8 December 2017 at MSMHC Generalate, Hatigaon. The Holy Eucharistic celebration began at 10.00 am, officiated by His Grace, Most Rev. John Moolachira, Archbishop of Guwahati.

Speaking about the meaning of consecration Archbishop John reminded the Sisters of their call to live in total submission to the will of God. Commenting on the day's importance, he said, "the feast of the Immaculate Conception is a beautiful occasion for one's self-offering to God." He exhorted the Sisters to be like Mary in responding to God and to find joy in living the vows of obedience, chastity and poverty.

The formal proceedings of the final profession were held during the Liturgy. Sr. Philomena Mathew, the



Superior General received the vows of the sisters in the presence of Sr. Rose Paite, General Councilor and Sr. Ancila Jose, Economer General.

The day's programme was graced by the presence of many priests, sisters and brothers from nearby institutions, and the sisters' parents and relatives.

In the evening, the community organized an hour of adoration to thank the Lord for the gift of Sisters who made their final commitment. At the end of the adoration, the finally professed

sisters surrendered the crowns before the statue of our Blessed Mother as a sign of their trust and confidence in her maternal care and love.

Prior to the event, the Sisters had a two-month long intensive programme of prayer and special classes at Bethel, Barapani under the guidance of Sr. Nancy Augustine, General Councilor for Formation.

The group arrived at Hatigaon on 6 December and continued their prayer and reflection until the awaited morning, 8 December.

First Profession

The feast of Immaculate Conception this year was an important moment for the MSMHC Sisters in Shillong as fifty-three novices made their first profession at Mary Help of Christians Cathedral, Shillong.

The occasion was solemnized by His Grace, Most Rev. Dominic Jala, Archbishop of Shillong presiding over the Holy Mass along with other priests.



The formal initiation and official ceremony of profession were held during the Holy Mass.

The event was witnessed by

hundreds of faithful gathered from far and near, especially the parents and relatives of the sisters who made their profession.



Ten-month Juniorate Programme ends with Certificate Ceremony

Thirty-four Junior Sisters were awarded Diploma for one-year course in MSMHC Spirituality under Ferrando Institute of Spirituality (FIS) on 28 September 2017. The ceremony was held in the evening at the Conference Hall, in the presence of all the members of the community of Hatigaon. Sr. Rani Mathew, the



Junior Mistress presented a detailed report of the year's programme and the Junior Sisters expressed their gratitude to everyone who contributed to their growth during their stay at Hatigaon.

The certificates were presented to them by the Superior General, Sr. Philomena Mathew and the mark



sheets were given by the Assistant General, Sr. Mary Perunilam.

The Juniorate programme is an intensive course held at MSMHC Generalate, Hatigaon, meant to strengthen the Sisters who have completed their two years' experience in various communities after the first profession.



Renewal Programme for Batches 1980-1984

The Sisters comprising of six groups, belonging to the batches from 1980 to 1984 gathered at Bethel, Barapani for a two weeks programme. The programme began on 12 evening with an hour of adoration, during which the organiser of the programme, Sr. Mary Perunilam surrendered the entire program and the participants to the Heart of Jesus through the Immaculate Heart of Mary and prayed for the participants. Welcoming the group in the session, Sr. Mary spoke

of the importance of their gathering as a group. Stressing on the importance of making the best use of the time which is meant for sharing, reflection and renewal she said, "Renewal or transformation is possible only through personal encounter with Jesus." She also said, "This could also be a mid-way preparation for your golden jubilee and to remain focused on eternal life." She wished everyone a fruitful time saying, "Let this coming together enable you to strengthen your motivation, to widen your hearts, to sharpen your insights, to energize yourselves to plunge more whole heartedly into the task that God has assigned to you."

The entire programme was planned to give the group an experience of renewal, sharing and learning from each

other. The spiritual retreat animated by Fr. Ajimon MSFS focussed on the richness of God's mercy and love. Prior to the retreat was the sessions by Sr. Mary Thadavanal for three days. She dealt with psycho- spiritual integration, self-discovery, building positive self-image and healthy community life. There were also interactive sessions by Sr. Philomena Mathew, the Superior General and Sr. Nancy Augustine who was their Novice Mistress.

Besides the sessions on different topics, the group had time for outing during which they visited Siloam, Ferrando Speech and Hearing Centre, Mawroh Novitiate and Peachlands. Visit to Mawroh Novitiate and Peachlands made them feel nostalgic about the bygone days.

NEWS FROM OVERSEAS

MSMHC Platinum Jubilee - Hawaii

MSMHC Sisters in Hawaii celebrated the Congregation's 75th anniversary of the founding with hundreds of their closest friends and well-wishers with a Mass and dinner at St. Elizabeth Church in Aiea on 5 October 2017.

Bishop Larry Silva and 10 priests celebrated the liturgy in thanksgiving for the contributions made by the MSMHC to the local church during the nine years of its service in Hawaii. In his homily, Bishop Silva praised the hidden, humble service



of the sisters, explaining how "little things make a huge difference."

At the end of the celebration Sr. Ruth spoke on behalf of the community. "Today our hearts are filled with gratitude and joy that

overflows within us as we recall the various ways God has guided us through to reach these 75 years with him and his people," said Sr. Ruth while expressing her thanks to all those gathered for the occasion.

Youth Gathering at Meki

The parish of Meki, Ethiopia along with the MSMHC Sisters organised a three-day programme for the youth of the parish. The days were packed with various sessions on different

topics of interest, Bible quiz and Singing completion.

One of the most beautiful experiences was the evening time wherein the participants who were about 300 were led to go in procession with lighted candles, saying the Rosary and singing songs to Mary.



Meki holds Closing Ceremony of Platinum Jubilee



On 21 October 2017 the MSMHC in Meki had the solemn closing ceremony of the Platinum Jubilee together with the Arsinegelle community.

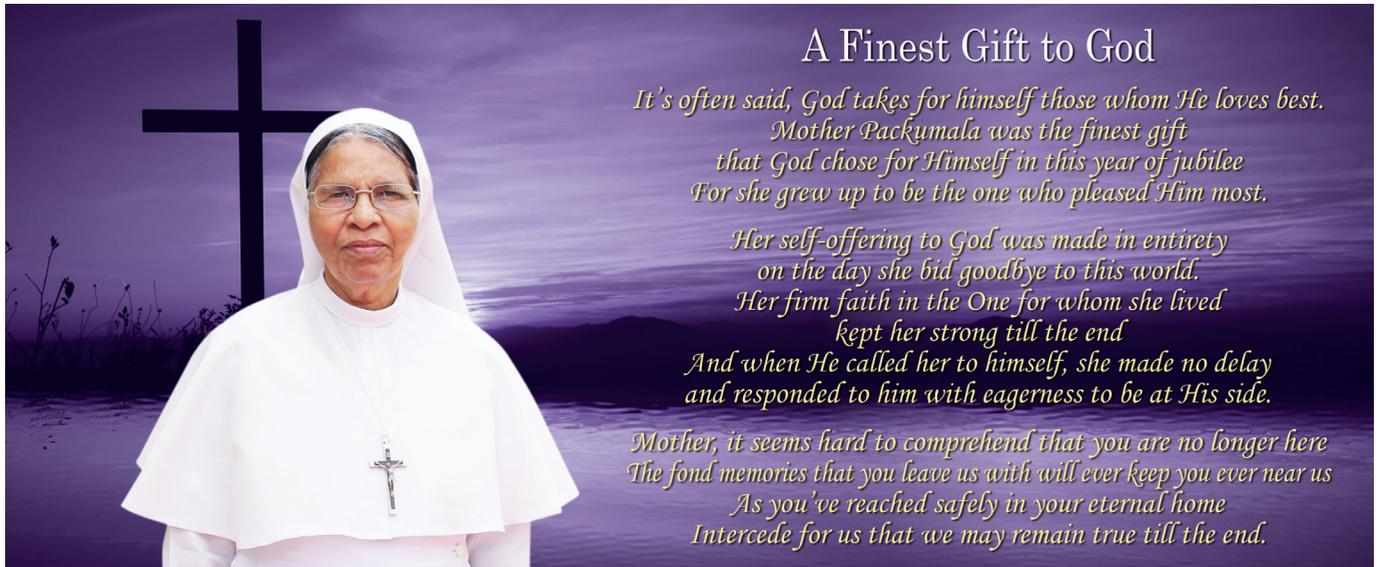
The event was marked by the presence of two Bishops and 16 Priests for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

Besides the priests and sisters, the parishners of Meki were invited to participate in the celebration.

Hope House in Swaziland Celebrates World AIDS day

Hope House celebrated World AIDS day on the 30 November together with the Clients, minders and invitees. The gracious presence of Bishop Jose at the event was a blessing.

Speaking on the occasion, the Director of AMICAALL, Mr. Benedict Xaba, applauded the government for its continuous commitment in the supply of antiretroviral drugs, no matter how tight the budget. "The test and start programme has been very difficult to implement because we were not sure whether or not the supply of drugs would go dry, until the government assured us of its commitment in supplying the drugs and making HIV a priority," he said. He congratulated the service providers of Hope House for their commitment to look after the terminally ill over the past years. He said, "there is hope at the Hope House as the sick do not get only treatment but also love."



A Finest Gift to God

*It's often said, God takes for himself those whom He loves best.
Mother Packumala was the finest gift
that God chose for Himself in this year of jubilee
For she grew up to be the one who pleased Him most.*

*Her self-offering to God was made in entirety
on the day she bid goodbye to this world.
Her firm faith in the One for whom she lived
kept her strong till the end
And when He called her to himself, she made no delay
and responded to him with eagerness to be at His side.*

*Mother, it seems hard to comprehend that you are no longer here
The fond memories that you leave us with will ever keep you ever near us
As you've reached safely in your eternal home
Intercede for us that we may remain true till the end.*

Final Journey of Mother Packu



The sudden passing away of Mother Elizabeth Packumala shocked many, leaving sadness and grief in their hearts. She was indeed one of God's precious gifts to the Church and MSMHC. What remains vivid in the minds of those present during her last moment is the expression of serene joy and contentment which was seen in her face. Swiftly she passed away to her eternal home on 27 November morning, leaving behind many beautiful memories to last forever.

In Guahati, the MSMHC along with many friends and well-wishers awaited for the arrival of the body of Mother Packumala from Kolkata on 28 November evening. From the International Airport at Guwahati, the body was taken to Hatigaon where a large number of Fathers, Sisters, teachers, students, friends and well-

wishers were waiting at Little Flower School gate in Hatigaon.

After the moving reception from the School gate to Convent at 7.30 p.m., there was a Holy Eucharist presided over by Archbishop John Moolachira of Guwahati, accompanied by Bishop Andrew Marak of Tura, Bishop Paul Mattekatt of Diphu and Bishop Emeritus, Robert Kerketta of Tezpur, Fr. V.M. Thomas, Salesian Provincial of Guwahati and many priests from various parishes and institutions in Guwahati. A large number of sisters, friends and well-wishers attended the Holy Mass and paid respect to Mother. The mortal remains was taken to Peachlands, Shillong at 3 a.m. on the following morning. At Peachlands, Holy Eucharist was celebrated at 6. a. m. presided over by Fr. George Maliekal, Salesian Provincial

of Shillong along with other priests. Later, the mortal remains was taken to the MSMHC cemetery at Mawroh at 12.00 noon in solemn procession. The Funeral Mass was celebrated at 2 p. m. by Most Rev Dominic Jala, Archbishop of Shillong along with Rt. Rev Michael Akasius Toppo, Bishop of Tezpur and many other priests from the Northeast. Sr. Philomena Mathew, Superior General during the introduction at the start of the Holy Mass briefed the gathering about the last moments of Mother's life. Condolence messages were delivered by Sr. Mary Thadavanal, the former Superior General and a few other representatives of various groups. Michael Akasius Toppo, Bishop of Tezpur took lead for the final rites and prayers and everyone present paid their last respect.