



DEHONIANS INDIA

December 2024

Voice of the Superior

Word made Flesh! World made Fresh!

Dear Confreres in the Heart of Jesus!

The month of December has been the month of the **Word Incarnate** who has taken the centre stage in each of our lives. Each of our communities both formation communities as well as pastoral communities have meaningfully celebrated the **Nativity of the Babe of Bethlehem**. During this month, we had the **perpetual commitment of 5 of our confreres** who have become the permanent members of our Dehonian Family. Two of our confreres have received the priestly anointing in Odisha. This is the **concrete sign of God's love towards us and the gift of Infant Jesus to our Congregation in India**.

During this month, the District Administration had its Council meeting and has made some decisions regarding the **life and the mission of the District and its confreres**. I also had the privilege of attending the **International Theological Commission Meeting in Rome**. The time I spent in Rome gave me the opportunity to have the **personal dialogue with the General Superior, General Secretary, General Treasurer & the General Councillors** concerning our mission in India. I am very grateful to them as they gave me the quality time to have the personal dialogues and for **showing keen interest in our mission here in India**. I am also grateful to our Indian confreres in Rome (**Fr. Hruday, Fr. Kashmir, Fr. Harish & Fr. Manish**) for their **spirit of fraternity and the generous hospitality**.

Let's **gratefully remember all the wonderful things that the Lord has done** for us throughout the year in 2024. Let us **take all the good things we have learned** during this year and also **make concrete attempts to rectify the mistakes of the past** and we shall **joyfully venture** into the **Jubilee Year 2025** with a renewed vigour as the **Pilgrims of Hope**.

Long live to the Heart of Jesus
Through the Heart of Mary

Fraternally Yours in the Heart of Jesus,

Fr. Michael Augustine SCJ







Spiritual Exercises and Special Devotions for Christmas

Dear friends, we had a fruitful time of Advent to prepare ourselves as a community and individually through different spiritual exercises and special devotions. Our brothers were engaged in different activities in the colleges and in our community for the Christmas celebrations. On 17th December, we had our community Christmas celebration and on the 19th all our brothers have gone for the holidays. They had a meaningful time with their families and parishes. All the parish priests have sent good reports about our brothers. All of them were very helpful in their respective parishes. The community members visited our neighbouring religious communities to share the joy of Christmas and New Year. Priests in our community went to different parishes for the pastoral ministries.

Fr. Christy Peter SCJ



Christmas: a time of intense pastoral & spiritual engagement

It was a month of manifold blessings. We were engaged with usual ministries and pastoral apostolates. We have visited '**Snehashram**', (Trissur), and we could spend some time with the inmates over there. We were engaged with our Christmas ministries. We could go to different parishes to extend our priestly service. Our deacons have visited us during this month and they have shared with us their experiences and activities in their respective parishes where they render their diaconate service. On Christmas day, we have **visited our Dehon Bhavan Minor Seminary community**, and had a beautiful time over there with our confreres.

Fr. Thomas Raju SCJ



Cheerful Community Christmas Celebration

In the month of December, all the community members were very much busy with their Pastoral ministries, the students were busy with their Christmas preparations, Exams, decorations of the house, chapel and making cribs. This month we were gifted with a new car by the Indian District Administration, sponsored by the USA province to cater to the need of the formation community. Foreseeing the entry of a new car for our seminary, Fr. Ajith Vincent SCJ, with the help of some of our seminarians prepared a car shed. We had the **community's Christmas celebration** on 18th December. All our students were thrilled to put up their talents for this wonderful celebration. It was really a pleasant news to hear that **Fr. Ajith Vincent SCJ was elected to be the Vice-President of Cochin CRI**. And on 20th of December, all the students both from Kerala as well as Odisha left for their Christmas vacation.

Fr. Abraham Lazar SCJ



Message of love and compassion through celebration and visits

The entire month of December was filled with various activities. Beginning with the external preparation of Christmas. Secondly From the part of the community, **Fr. Mariano and Br. Ravi Teja** have visited the families of our brothers from Odisha. They have experienced their **love, care and concern of those families**. And thirdly, we had celebrated the **birth of Christ in a remarkable way**, by going to the parish to attend the vigil mass, cutting cake as a **symbol of togetherness**. We had Christmas celebration, where we shared our **message of love and compassion to each other**.

Br. Ravi Teja Madanu SCJ





Reflecting and Radiating Christmas Joy

December was a month of spiritual richness, festive joy, and meaningful community engagement marking the conclusion of an eventful year. It was a time of preparation, celebration, and gratitude, as we came together to embrace the spirit of Christmas and reflect on God's abundant blessings.

The most significant event of the month was the preparation for perpetual profession. This milestone was a deeply spiritual and transformative moment in our life. I was humbled by the love and dedication of my community, as every member contributed wholeheartedly to the arrangements. Their support, encouragement, and prayers made this occasion not only special but also a profound experience of God's grace working through our shared life and mission.

The Christmas season brought with it opportunities for outreach and connection. A notable activity was our carol singing in various religious communities, where we shared the message of love and peace with people of diverse faiths and backgrounds. These visits fostered harmony and unity, demonstrating the power of music and the spirit of Christmas to bring people together. It was a joy to witness the smiles and warmth our carols brought to those we visited.

Within our community, we embraced the tradition of "Christmas friends." Each of us drew a name and began praying for that individual confrere throughout the season. This activity encouraged reflection and prayerful support, fostering stronger bonds among us. Due to our Christmas ministries in different places, we decided to reveal our Christmas friends and exchange of gifts on January 3, when we would all be reunited. This tradition added a layer of excitement and anticipation to our celebrations, reminding us of the joy of giving and receiving in simple, heartfelt ways.

Preparations for Christmas were the shared efforts that brought us closer together. We decorated our house with creativity and care, transforming it into a welcoming and festive space. The crib we prepared was a focal point, beautifully crafted. Extending our celebration beyond the community, we distributed cakes to our neighbours, sharing the joy of the season with those around us. These acts of outreach were small yet meaningful expressions of the Christmas spirit, reflecting the values of love and generosity that lie at the heart of our faith.

To conclude the month and the year, we gathered for a thanksgiving adoration. This was a moment to reflect on the blessings and challenges of 2024, offering our gratitude to God for His guidance and grace. It was a fitting way to end the year, centring ourselves in prayer and preparing to embrace the opportunities and responsibilities of the year ahead.

December was a month filled with grace, unity, and joy. From the perpetual profession to the shared celebration of Christmas and the year-end adoration, every moment strengthened our bonds as a community and deepened our relationship with God. It was a month to cherish and a beautiful way to transition into the New Year.

CDN FAMILY



*Formed in love and
Transformed to give*





Celebration of Christmas and the Priestly Ordinations in the Mission Land

During the month of December, we were blessed with lot of celebrations namely Christmas, New Year and Ordination of our two confreres. We thank Our little Baby Jesus of Nazareth who came down and lived among us by granting full of happiness and joy to the Odisha Community, especially He has given two New Priests namely, Rev. Fr. Sagar Nayak SCJ and Rev. Fr. Sawan Nayak SCJ to our Congregation and to the Church.

For Christmas, Brothers came from Theology and Bangalore to do the Christmas Ministry and to have mission experience. They were Br. Sajeevan, Br. Amos, Br. Matthew and Br. Nirmal in Odisha Mission community for the Christmas celebration. People came from different villages and different places to celebrate Christmas. There were good number of people gathered for the Christmas and we could celebrate with joy and happiness. Everyone could experience the joy of the Babe of Bethlehem.

Priestly Ordination of Dn. Sawan Nayak SCJ and Dn. Sagar Nayak SCJ took place on 27th December 2024 in St. Peter's Church, Mohana in the Diocese of Berhampur. They were Ordained by Most Rev. Dr. Sarat Chandra Nayak, Bishop of Berhampur Diocese. The celebration was graced by our confreres namely, Fr. Michael Augustine SCJ, Fr. Matthew SCJ, Fr. Kishore Cheli SCJ and Fr. Asit Lima SCJ, along with Br. Sajeevan, Br. Matthew, Br. Amos and Br. Nirmal. There were also some of our brothers who came for holidays and some religious Sisters, Diocesan Priests gathered for the Ordination. After their Ordination they celebrated their thanksgiving Masses in their respective Villages. We all joined for their thanksgiving Masses. It was a grand and great celebration.

Fr. Ashit Lima SCJ





Carols & Cribs: Christmas with the parishioners

May the gift of LOVE, the gift of HOPE, the gift of JOY, the gift of PEACE, the gift of HAPPINESS be ours during this Christmas & always in the NEW YEAR as **Pilgrims of Hope in the Jubilee year 2025.**

The month of December for the Divine Mercy Parish Community with its Parishioners was to witness the **Episcopal Ordination of Bp. Thomas D'Souza** the newly ordained Bishop of the Diocese of Vasai which took place on 15th December 2024. It was also the month to prepare ourselves to celebrate meaningfully the Solemnity of the Nativity of our Lord. The spiritual preparation was done by providing the time for confessions for the Parishioners. We had the **centralized Christmas Carol** on 22nd December accompanied by Fr. Ajit Baxla scj and in Nayabasti (our substation) by Bro. Biren Ranasing scj.

Depending on the availability we also shared the joy of Christmas by distributing Christmas cakes to our neighbors. We also organized the Christmas **Carol singing competition** and the **Crib making competition**. The Christmas Vigil Mass witnessed the highest number of the faithful participating than the previous years. After the Christmas there was the celebration of the Feast of Mary the Mother of God. The last day of the year ended in thanksgiving starting with an hour of Adoration led by the Parish youth and the New Year Vigil Mass celebrated by Fr. Sajith Pillai scj.

- Fr. Ajit Baxla scj





Redefine the unity and brotherhood

The Month of December is always deemed to be the month of celebrations of joy and happiness. Our community has explored through a packed programs; on the one side we had the regular classes and at the same time we were involved in many of the creative and innovative works such as **crib preparation, carol singing, gloria competition and participation in Magnificat in Christ University. In Gloria competition our community has won the first prize of the competition conducted by Dharmaram.** During our carol journey, we had visited nearby communities. We too had celebrated the semi-Christmas before we left for holidays. However, the month of December has been the best point of reference to find the joy among us, **to redefine the unity and brotherhood**, and to enjoy the Christmas eve meaningfully and fruitfully.

Br. Nirmal Uppati SCJ



My experience in Manila: Masters in Consecrated Life

Joy of Christmas and blessings of the Child Jesus be with all of us as in this Christmas season. This year I had a chance to celebrate Christmas in Philippines in our scholasticate in Manila. In the community of scholasticate, we have priests from various entities from Asia and we have 13 scholastics from Vietnam who are doing theology in Loyola school of theology. In July 2024, Fr. Showe Reddy was appointed as the superior of the community.

Last June, I arrived in Philippines and enrolled myself in the ICLA (**Institute for Consecrated Life in Asia**). I am doing my masters in Consecrated life, and we are hailing from various countries in Asian zone, consisting of India, Indonesia, Vietnam, Bangladesh, China, Myanmar, Laos and Philippines. So, it is **blend of different languages, cultures, traditions and lifestyles**.

I had started my first semester in the month of August, and we had semester break in December. I had the privilege to participate in **Christmas novena (Simbang Gabi** is a devotional nine-day series of masses by Philippine Catholics in anticipation of Christmas). It was very beautiful to see and to witness the faith of all, irrespective of age group. Some chose to attend the mass in the early morning around 3:30 am or 4:00 am or 4:30 am depending on parish schedules and some attend in the evening around 6:30 pm or 7:00 pm or 8:30 pm. They would attend all nine days of novena without fail, that's why this tradition is very special and particular to Filipino Catholics.

On January 13, 2025, we will be starting our second semester and I am making all the arrangements to get the **missionary visa** to continue my stay here for studies. In the Month of January Fr.Hruday will be visiting with **His Excellency Archbishop Giovanni Cesare Pagazzi**, Secretary of the Dicastery for Culture and Education for the celebration of the 25 years of Ecclesiastical Faculty, Loyola School of Theology, to visit Catholic University of Santo Tomaso and other Ecclesiastical Higher Educational Institutions approved by the Dicastery. On 31 January along with Archbishop Pagazzi will be visiting, and Archbishop celebrates the HolyMass in our Community.

I wish you all prosperous New Year 2025 and God's blessings for all the upcoming activities in this new year. Let us unite ourselves in spirit and in prayer for the glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.



Dehonian Perpetual Commitment

The congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (SCJ) in India witnessed a moment of profound grace and joy on December 8, 2024, as we the 5 Brothers of SCJ (Br. Satish, Br. Manuel, Br. Mathew, Br. Arun & Br. Ashwin) made our Perpetual Profession during the solemn Eucharistic celebration at Christu Dehon Nivas - SCJ Theologate, Eluru, Andhra Pradesh, South India. This moment marked the culmination of our journey of discernment, dedication, and formation in religious life.

The ceremony began with a warm welcome by the CDN community, attended by fellow religious, priests, seminarians, family members, and well-wishers. The surrounding was beautifully decorated to reflect the sacredness of the day, with the theme "In His Heart Forever" beautifully expressed in every detail with floral arrangements and the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus prominently placed as a reminder of the congregation's charism.

The Eucharistic celebration, presided over by our District Superior Rev. Fr. Michael Augustine SCJ was filled with deep spirituality and solemnity. The liturgy began with a heartfelt entrance hymn, sung by the choir, setting a tone of reverence and joy. In his homily, Fr. Michael thoughtfully reflected on the significance of perpetual profession, highlighting it as a vocation to live out the love of Christ in the world. Drawing a comparison to the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, he beautifully connected this calling with the example of Mother Mary, whose life embodies total devotion to God with 5 salient features of the Consecrated: Gracefulness, Gratefulness, Graciousness, Giftedness & Gentleness.

The highlight of the day was the Rite of Perpetual Profession. We were kneeling before our district Superior, publicly declared our commitment to live the evangelical counsels for the rest of our life. Our hearts were filled with trust in God's grace, we recited the formula of profession, offering our self entirely to the service of the Church and the people of God in the Dehonian spirit. The congregation of the faithful responded with a period of silence and prayer, offering their heartfelt support. As a sign of our perpetual commitment, we received the Dehonian cross. Bro. Satish SCJ on behalf of all of us, graciously expressed our heartfelt gratitude to God, as well as to our congregation, our families, formators, and the community for their unwavering support throughout our vocational journey.

After the celebration of the Mass, we were warmly congratulated and blessed by our beloved community, family, and friends. Their inspiring words filled with encouragement, highlighted the dedication, humility, and zeal we strive to embody in our religious vocation. The moment was made even sweeter with the cutting of a beautifully crafted cake, as a symbol of this joyous milestone. We then gathered for a photo session to capture the memories before moving on to a festive meal, sharing laughter and fellowship in the spirit of this special occasion.

The day concluded with a fellowship meal, where all present shared in the joy of our perpetual “Yes” to God. This moment of fellowship further deepened the bonds of love and unity among the SCJ family and the extended community.

As we the brothers of the Congregation of the Priest of the Sacred Heart of Jesus embark on this new chapter, our perpetual profession stands as a testament to the faithfulness of God and the call to serve others through the charism of the Priests of the Sacred Heart. The SCJ community and all present were reminded that every vocation is a gift not just for the individual but for the entire Church.

We thank God for the gift of our life and pray that we continue to radiate the love of the Sacred Heart in our ministry, drawing many more to encounter the boundless mercy of God. “He loved us first” (1 John 4:19)—this love now shines through our life, as a light to the world.

Br. Ashwin Joseph SCJ



Proclaiming Christ & Practicing Compassion

Odisha has served to be a useful landscape to explore and introduce myself into various cultures, traditions, and people. A few days of experience in Odisha especially in our mission stations (Kundra Bloc) as the part of my Christmas ministry have taught me the priceless lessons that leave the impact over my religious life. The service that is done by Fr. Mathew Lalan SCJ and his community is unrepayable.

One of the effective lessons I have learned from Fr Mathew is the spirit of proclaiming Christ through a very act of being a model, practicing compassion and love to the unreachable. His zeal for mission has ignited in me the spirit of a true missionary in obscure placements seeing Christ in all. I had also the opportunity to attend the ordinations and thanksgiving masses of Fr. Sawon and Fr. Sagar in their own villages. However, my Christmas holidays have been given a concrete point of unique and meaningful experience in my life. I really enjoyed the days while being in Odisha and this absolutely has marked an unforgettable memory to cherish always in my life.

Br. Nirmal Uppati SCJ





