

## **The Role of the National Social Catechetical Training Centre in Bangladesh**

### **A) Short history.**

The history of the National Training Centre, began in the year 1937, as we found from the records of the Salesians (Krishnagar, India). “A permanent School for the New Catechists” was then opened in Jashore. The Xaverian Congregation was asked to work in the Jashore-Khulna area on January 3, 1952. Since 1953, Msgr. Battaglierin, sx., used to gather the Catechists for refresh courses and retreats, manly at Jashore.

In 1964, Fr. Marino Rigon, sx. Became the Director of the Diocesan Training Centre in Jashore. Fr. Marino Rigon graduated from the Antigonish University (1964), with a ‘Diploma in Social Leadership’. The courses organized by Fr. Marino Rigon, sx., were aiming for both religious and social formation of the Catechists and Leaders. There were also courses for Co-operative Leaders. He considered the Catechists, as a leader of the village, for both Christians, and in the social work, Muslims and Hindus.

The construction of the two storied building was completed in 1965-1966. In 1967, ‘Misereor’, sponsored the Social and Catechetical Centre for a ‘seven year’ plan of the ‘Formation Programs’, including salaries, building and all training expensive, insofar that it fostered ‘social development’. Most of the trainees were Catechists.

On September 9, 1969, at an ‘Interdiocesan Meeting of Catechists’, No.2 of the Agenda, considered how the so-called ‘Social Training Institute’, could be utilized for the services at ‘National Level’, with involvement of the 4 Dioceses as regards to both finances and staff-personal.

At the end of 1972, the Bishops’ Conference held discussions regarding the possibility of using the existing Centre at Jashore for Catechetical Training. The task to study this possibility and to make concrete proposals was entrusted to the then ‘Interdiocesan Catechetical Commission’.

In February 1973, Fr. Orlando Ghirardi, sx., who graduated at the EAPI, Manila, received the appointment as the Director of the (now) ‘National Social Catechetical Training Centre in Jashore.

### **B) People who worked at the NSCTC, Jashore.**

Directors who worked at the NSCTC, after Fr. Marino Rigon, sx.

- 1) Fr. Orlando Ghirardi, sx., from 1973 to 1981
- 2) Fr. James Rigali, sx., from 1982 to 1985
- 3) Fr. Marcello Storgato, sx., from 1986 to 1992
- 4) Fr. Pio Mattevi, sx., from 1993 to 1996
- 5) Fr. James Rigali, sx., from 1997 to 1998

- 6) Fr. Rinaldo Nava, sx., from 1999 to (4/7/2001)
- 7) Fr. John Gopal Biswas, Acting Director (5/7/2001)
- 8) Fr. Pio Mattevi, sx., from 2001 to 2014
- 9) Fr. Sergio Targa, sx., from 2014-1019
- 10) In 2020 Holy Cross Sisters in charge of the Centre
- 11) Fr. Melecio Cuevas sx., from 2021-

### Additional Staff

a) Mr. Dinobondhu Baroi, BA., ‘Diploma in Social Leadership’ (Antigonish), at the time of Fr. Marino Rigon, sx., (from 1966 to the end of 1969).

b) Those who worked after 1973: 1) Fr. Willi Slavin (1976-79); 2) Fr. Marcello Storgato, sx., (1978-82); 3) Sr. Teresina, S.C., (1978-80); 4) Mr. Samor (Catechist), (1981); 5) Fr. Gianni Martoccia, sx., (1984); 6) Sr. Lucie, csc., and Sr. Cecilia, RNDM, (1984); 7) Fr. Attilio Boscato, sx., (1985-1990); Fr. Albino Sarker (1991-1995); 9) Fr. Pio Mattevi, sx., (1992); 10) Sr. Bruno, csc and Sr. Agnes Rozario, csc, since May, 1993; 11) Fr. Jonh Gopal Biswas, since May, 1997. Other people who worked were: Fr. Lucidio Ceci, sx., Fr. Francis Zannini, Fr. Ernesto Luvie, sx., Fr. John Fagan, sx.

c) People who worked in the Office of the NSCTC: 1) Mr. Joseph Biswas, BA., (computer) Komol Costa, BA., (translations-accounting), Daud Mondol, IA., (library, mailing, accounting, Sontosh Mondol, BA., (translation).

### **C) Publications**

a) ‘Nutan Asha’ (1975-90) and ‘Mongol Barta’ (since June 1991). It is our Bangla teaching aid for Catechists and teachers and a means for Catechetical news of the NSCTC, Jashore.

b) Books: Over the years we had number of publications by Fr. Orlando Ghirardi, sx., (Biblical catechesis), Fr. Marcello Storgato, sx., (Catechisms and liturgy), Fr. James Rigali, sx., (morality, catechetics, liturgy), Fr. Gianni Martoccia, sx., (Old Testament commentary), Fr. Silvano Garello, sx., (Bible, life of saints, pastoral, studies, *Mongolbarta*, *catechetical* aids). The aim of our publications is to address our social and catechetical needs.

### **D) Trainings and Programs.**

A NSCTC programs has been available and circulated in Decembers of every year since 1988, so that the Parishes may plan to send participants for the various courses during the year. This yearly program varies according to the ‘catechetical news’, the pastoral programs and needs of the Catholic Church in Bangladesh.

- 1) Every year there is a Three-month' course for Catechists. The basic in catechesis are taught: Bible, Faith, Liturgy, and Sacraments, Commandments, Prayer, Liturgical songs, Harmonium, Tobla, Canon Law (marriage), Group Dynamics, Catechesis (methodology), History of the Church, Dialogue, Social Leadership, Biblical Ministry, Vatican II Documents, Dalits, ect.
- 2) There are special courses for the women in the yearly program, with Bible, OT, NT, Faith, Liturgy, Sacraments, Commandments, History of the Church, Biblical Spirituality, and Liturgical Songs, women environment etc.
- 3) The catechists have their 'Refresh Course', with a topic chosen by them, which is varying according to the needs. Catechists have also yearly 3 day retreat and Assembly.
- 4) Sisters have their yearly encounter on a chosen topic (3 days). The topic is for updating and for their special needs.
- 5) The NSCTC has also outreach programs in all the Parish of Dioceses, where the Bishops or Parish priests invite us.
- 6) There are various others retreats, encounters, studies and meetings, to answer the needs of the groups. For any program one needs to contact the *Centre* well ahead of time to be able to arrange for suitable date.

### **E) The Future of the NSCTC.**

No doubt that the National Social Catechetical Centre, had a great influence in updating the Church of the Vatican II, and it is due to have a positive influence in the work of formation of Lay people, Catechists and Sisters. Catechesis both for children and for adults is a priority. We are in a time of change. Over the years, we realized that people change. We need to be ready for the future. We should be zealous as Bishop Battaglierin, sx., who understood the importance of this institution and always wanted it with all his strength.

We are confident in the help of the Lord, in the collaboration of the CBCB, and of the Priests, Sisters, Brothers, Catechists, Lay Leaders, who are willing to work with us. We are also grateful to all those who have worked in the NSCTC in the pass and are working in the present. Thanks to all the Xaverians who shared with us around the world.

Melecio Cuevas sx  
NSCTC Director.