

***Subject: Financial help for the Construction of a Church for the spiritual growth of the Santhal Tribal Community at Bara Durgapur.***

Dear Respected President/Director,

Greetings of peace and joy from Fr. John Britto Muthuswamy MSFS, Provincial Superior of the Nagpur Province of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales.

I am writing these few lines to your highly regarded organization for financial help to construct a Church for the spiritual growth of the Santhal Tribal Community in Bara Durgapur, in Dumka Diocese in Jharkhand. The poor tribal people over there are to be formed strong in faith and love of God. We the Missionaries of St Francis De Sales took up this mission for the Evangelization 7 years back. Fr. Joseph Kailamangalam, the Mission. in charge has clearly explained in the project about the economical salutation of the people and the need for a place of worship for them in Bara Durgapur. I am sure that your esteemed organization will be happy to assist us in constructing the Church, through which may the faithful over there be brought up in true Christian life based on Faith, Conviction and Ethics

I whole-heartedly recommend this project for your kind consideration and urgent help. do the needful. Kindly

Thanking you in anticipation Yours sincerely in Christ

Fr. John Britto Muthuswamy MSFS Provincial Superior  
PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR MAGPUI PROVINCE



**Project location and Background**

Baradurgapur mission is situated in a village under Tinpahar Post office, in Taljhari block in Sahibganj district which is in Jharkhand State. This area comes under Dhumka Diocese. Jharkhand is a state in eastern India. It was carved out of the southern part of Bihar in the year 2000. The state of Jharkhand consists of 24 districts. It is considered as one of the most backward, underdeveloped and poor state in India. The literacy rate of the state is only 54%. The recent report issued by the World Bank has identified Jharkhand as one of the most poverty-stricken state in India. Adding to this fact Jharkhand state has very poor communication, connectivity and transportation facility. This state is fully occupied by the tribal consisting of 32 tribal groups and it is the only state predominantly inhabited by the tribal of India. They earn their livelihood through farming and by the sale of firewood. Many of them migrate into cities and become the unskilled labor force due to fear and exploitation of the land lords and money lenders. Tribal villagers are also exploited by the Maoist armed groups, taking advantage of their poverty; they are enrolled as members of their groups by promise of food and security.

**Sahibganj the nearest district town of Bara Durgapur Mission**

Sahibganj district is one of the 24 districts of Jharkhand state, India. The Raajmahal and Pakur subdivisions of old Santhal Pargana district were carved out on 17th May 1983 to form Sahibganj district. The district Sahibganj comprises of two sub-divisions: Sahibganj and Raajmahal. Sahibganj sub-division consists 4 blocks and Raajmahal sub-division consists five blocks. The total distance between Dumka and Sahibganj is 115km. However, it is four hours journey by four-wheeler and the distance between capital city Ranchi to Sahibganj is 445Km and the train journey takes 12 hours to reach Ranchi from Sahibganj. In 2006 the Ministry of Panchayat Raj named Sahibganj as one of the country's 250 most backward districts (out of a total of 640). According to the 2011 census Sahibganj district has a population of 11,50,567. The district has a population density of 719 inhabitants per square kilometer and the literacy rate is 53.73%. But the Santhal Tribes' literacy is very poor as they all stay in the remotest areas and in the forests. It is in this district, Bara Durgapur mission station has its existence about 58 kilometers away, very close to the forests and bit far from Tinpahar mini town.

**History of Dumka Diocese:** The diocese of Dumka in Chhattisgarh state India was established by Pope John XXIII by the Apostolic Bull, "Exultet Sancta Mater Ecclesia" of August 8, 1962. The diocese was formed by fusing together the area of Santal tribal mission, then till part of Calcutta Archdiocese and then the prefecture Apostolic of Malda. The real history of Santal mission began in 1924. At the invitation of their Fr. General, the Jesuit of Sicilian province, then including the Island of Malta arrived in Calcutta to help their Belgium confreres and to take up the evangelization of Santal Tribe. Since the Diocese was formed, many missions were established for pastoral and educational needs of interior villages of backward districts. One such place was Mundli in Sahibganj.

**Short History of Mundli Parish:** Fr. Grech Cumbo S.J. moved from Manglapara to northwards towards Tinpahar where, for some time he lived in a rented house near the railway station. From there he explored the possibilities and came to know of property for sale in Murlipahar village, later known as Mundli. Fr. acquired the land and set about building a permanent residence for the Fathers. The bungalow was completed in 1936, the first permanent residence for the missionaries since their arrival in Santal Parganas. The Church was built and dedicated to the Immaculate Conception and blessed on 8<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1939. The Church had vast area to cover. Boarding established started getting over crowded with students and the division of the Mission was mooted by the Bishop for the benefit of larger population.

**Short History of New Bara Durgapur Parish:** Bara Durgapur is one of the 40<sup>th</sup> mission stations of Dumka Diocese under Mundli Parish in the District of Sahibganj, Jharkhand State, India. Bara Durgapur was the sub-center of Mundli Mission, 10 kilometers away. It was difficult to render mission work at Bara Durgapur from 'Mundli' mission center because of the distance and vast area. As the people live in faraway places the missionaries find it difficult to reach out to them as often as possible because of improper road and inadequate transport facilities. Therefore, reaching out to them was very difficult for the missionaries. There used to be celebration of the Holy Masses only special occasions like Christmas, Holy Week, the feast of the Christ the King..etc. That too under the temporarily made sheds.

**Bara Durgapur handed over to MSFS Congregation.** The Bishop of Dumka has offered this Centre to MSFS congregation particularly to us, the Fathers of the Nagpur Province, for better development and effective evangelization. Accepting the invitation missionaries of the MSFS of Nagpur province reached the Bara Durgapur Mission on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2014. The Bara Durgapur mission covers 34 villages spread out over an area of 102 square kms. The main inhabitants of this place are the tribal communities of Santhals and Paharias. They believe in God the creator whom they call "Cando Baba" They believe in good and evil spirits. The good spirits do not give any trouble. But according to their belief all the sickness in men or beasts or any other evil in general comes from the evil spirits. Hence in times of sickness or any other evil, the evil spirits must be appeased by offering them sacrifices. This kind of superstitious believes exists even now. Only faith formation and education can bring about spiritual- social -economical- transformation in our Parish families. As we have been entrusted with this Spiritually Ethically Socially Economically Backward Mission, we have to do a lot of committed pastoral service to give a bright future to the people specially the youths & kids. So that may they be able to live a meaningful life with strong faith in God.

#### **The Vast area under the care of MSFS Congregation**

MSFS Congregation is a missionary congregation founded by Fr. Peter Mermier in Annecy, France in 1838 for renewal of parish missions, education of youth, mission overseas and pioneering evangelization. In the year 1845, the first batch of MSFS landed in India at the request of the Holy See and started missionary activities in India. The congregation is instrumental in establishing the church in Central India and from it the local churches like the diocese of Visakhapatnam, Nagpur, Aurangabad, Amravati... etc. As a whole, the MSFS have 13 provinces in the world and among which all 7 Indian provinces have taken up mission territories in Africa. Our history of African mission is 30 years old and has an African Province. We are known for taking up very interior and difficult missions for Evangelization, Faith Formation, Education and Social work.

**CSC congregation to collaborate with MSFS in Bara Durgapur Mission.** The presence of Religious Sisters in the mission will always make a big difference in the ministries that we take care. We are blessed with a team of 3 sisters belonging to the **Congregation of the Sisters of Charity**, which was formed on 21<sup>st</sup> November 1944 at Chowannur, Trissur dist, Kerala State by Servant of God Fr Augustian John Ukken 1880- 1956. The Appostolic see approved the status and raised the congregation to the status of Pontifical Right on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1995. Now it has three provinces. The Charism of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Charity is to identify with the Crucified Christ and share His

compassionate love with the poor and needy for their integral liberation. To fulfill this, they are reaching out to the remotest villages to uplift the poorest of the poor. They help us in the Pastoral Care, Educational Ministry and Social Activities. They are very committed and always ready to do anything for the growth of the Mission. With their committed collaboration we are sure to bring transformation in the lives of our people who are under our care.

### **The present set up of the Catholic Parish at Bara Durgapur**

The Parish is under the patronage of **OUR LADY OF COMPASSION**. There are around 514 families under the pastoral care of our parish. They are spread out around 120 Sq kms. Hence village and sub-village vice, we have formed 6 sub centers. Hence the families which are in the sub centers come only for the main feasts and celebrations in the main parish [Christmas, New year, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter, Mission Sunday, Christ the King Feast, Navai Porab (*Thanks giving mass for the new agriculture products*) Annual retreat etc. For this we have to put up a big *panthol* in front of the School to accommodate 2500 to 3000 people. Catechists are appointed in all the centers to conduct prayer services and to give them information about parish upcoming spiritual program. We, the Priests go once a month to celebrate the Holy Eucharist and to administer other sacraments for them. Certain months we need to go every day for the Eucharistic Celebration to the sub centers. One mass in the sub center is one full day programme for the priest concerned as the faithful take their own time to reach the center and participate in the Eucharist. People are ready to sit longer time for mass and other activities in the sub-centers as well in the parish. The entire parish is divided in to 42 units. Out of which 10 units are within the main parish locality. 32 units are in the sub centers. Each center has 4 to 8 units. Each unit has a coordinator. All the units are to have the recitation of rosary in each family during the months of May and October in front of the decorated statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This spiritual exercise will help each and every family to have the other families of the same unit under their roof and to conduct the prayer service and to have some interaction. This will strengthen their relationship. The faithful from neighboring 8 units come only for Sunday mass in the main parish. The adoration with rosary takes one hour prior to the Mass. And the catechism classes are held immediately after the mass. There is mainly only Gogo Dhol (Moms group) active in the parish. Baba Dhol (Pops group) are very irregular for the sacraments and other activities, except a handful faithful Babas. It may take few years to change their attitude.

The School going children are regular for Sunday School and Sunday Mass. But the youths are not that regular. If we organize any program for them, then turn up. New activities are being planned to get them organized. The tradition of these particular tribal people is different from other tribal groups. The children after completing 12 to 16 years of age, find their life partners from other villages and they start living together. Very few used to get through arranged marriages. Now there is some changes after we have taken up the Mission. A lot of faith formation specially for the growing children are being done to give them a better future. We send the youths for different arranged activities of the Cluster, Diocese etc. We have to increase the taste in them to have the follow up of the completed programme.

### **An urgent need for a place of worship / CHURCH in our Mission campus**

Right now, there is no proper church infrastructure for the faithful to attend the sacraments. We have made two class rooms of our School in to a hall where just 300 people can sit, squatting down on the ground. Hence many people wait outside the hall and just listen to the mass without seeing the celebrants of the mass or sacraments. Since the hall is made combining of two class rooms, it does not give always the feeling to the congregation that they are in a holy place. Once we have a proper church, we can give a conducive atmosphere to the people for a better participation. The growing children also can be molded in a very proper way if we are blessed with a Proper Church which can contain at least 1000 faithful from our 10 units. Hence it is proposed to construct a Church in the land that is given by the Diocese for the Pastoral Care.

### **Objectives of the Project:**

The Sacraments administered in a Proper Church will give meaning in the lives of both the Minister and the Faithful. A place of Worship/the Church will always provide a pleasing atmosphere for the faithful to come and pray, to take part in the daily sacraments to be ideal Catholics. A proper place of worship/A Church will strengthen the feeble faith of our parish family members and they will be motivated to lead a holy life to enter the Holy Place. Various pious organizations as per the age group of our Parishioners from small to the grown up can be formed through Devotion if we have a Proper Church. The superstitious beliefs and evil practices among our faithful can be eradicated. A just, Faithful and Peace Loving Santhal Community could be formed in and around Mission- Bara Durgapur

**The Beneficiaries**

The Santhal Tribal Catholics in the Mission who are under our care

The Santhal Tribal Sunday School going Children who are also our Schoolstudents.

All the Catholics from the other 5 sub-centers, belonging to our Parish.

The Villagers in and around our Mission, irrespective of cast and religion

We, the Priests and Religious, as we can celebrate the sacraments, feasts and solemnities more meaningful for all the people, children who are under our care.

All the accounts of the project will be properly maintained and after auditing by our internal auditor as well as the Government authorized auditor, the auditor's statement of accounts will be sent the office with the report of mine.

Assuring you of our continued commitment in the Mission of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Yours Sincerely in Christ

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Fr. Joseph Kailamangalam" with "msfs" written in smaller letters below the name.

Fr Joseph Kailamangalam msfs Priest-in- charge  
Bara Durgapur Mission

