

Goa Anglican Centre News

(Winter 2022)

Dear Friends,

Welcome to this Winter 2022 edition of the Goa Anglican Centre News. The past three months have been a busy and a blessed time for our charity here in Goa and there is much good news to share with you. Once again, this includes the progress of the charity and of the Anglican Church here. There is a sense here that Our Lord is calling us to look beyond the limits of our existing charity and ministry both geographically and in an ecumenical sense. In our church progress report I am happy to share some of the exciting links developing with other church communities in Goa. It is also a great pleasure to welcome Fr Richard Dashwood as a guest writer this month to introduce us to some of the life of the church outside Goa. Fr Richard has been heavily involved in the work of the Goa Anglican Centre from the start but he also takes an interest in the Delhi Brotherhood Society (DBS) and the excellent work and mission that they bring to the church and to the city of Delhi. During the covid pandemic, members of the Goa Anglican Centre were kind enough to send significant donations to help in emergency appeals in India and part of this funding was sent to the DBS. I do hope that our charities may work together again in future.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and thank you as always for all your support and prayers.

With all best wishes,

Richard Lees

Richard Lees,
Development Officer
The Goa Anglican Centre

Charity progress

As reported in the last newsletter, most of the charity work this month has involved spending time with the leaders of the Konkan Development Society projects across Goa to work out where volunteers are needed and the practicalities of those placements. The result of these conversations is that we will be able to welcome volunteers in the following regular placements from 2023:

Charity School in Odxel: This is not a new project for us as Barry has been involved in football coaching here for the last few years before covid. The school specialises in teaching young people from nearby slums and migrant camps, offering the children and their families a more stable future and the pastoral support as well as education that they need. Supporting Odxel has always been difficult for us because a lack of accommodation on site meant a long and difficult commute for our volunteers from the main Goa Anglican Centre accommodation. I am pleased to see that the Konkan Development Society is building a new



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provincial house at Odxel and this will free up rooms for volunteers next to the school. When this is finished later in 2023, volunteers will be able to live on site and work as classroom assistants and help with sports, arts, music and language sessions.

Margaret Bosco Bal Sadan (MBBS): This home for boys in the nearby village of Palliem has been a regular placement for many years and I am delighted that Fr Jose is looking forward to hosting volunteers again. As a residential centre, volunteers here live on site and help with homework, sports, day trips and practical activities around the house. MBBS has a real home feel and volunteers always enjoy being part of a family with the boys, three fathers and a team of local volunteers and part-time staff. It is a real opportunity to make a difference with some young people who have been through a difficult start in life but look forward to a brighter future.

School and Agriculture College: The beautiful farm in Sulcorna is a world away from the business of central Goa and is a popular retreat for those of us living nearer the city. The project there includes a rural school and an agriculture college, where new and innovative organic farming techniques are developed and taught. The idea is to help local farmers and their staff to work with the land in a better way, increasing their income and the environmental sustainability of their practices at the same time. This should benefit the local ecosystems and food production as well as encouraging more people to stay in the local community rather than migrating to the cities for work. There is plenty of accommodation on site and volunteers will be able to be involved in the practicalities of running the farm while learning about the local environment and farming techniques alongside the students. This is a new project for us and I do hope we have volunteers for it in 2023.



Eco-tourism project in Cortalim: I am excited to be working with the Konkani Development Society on an entirely new project. This will be based on a beautiful plot of land donated to the society. It is a large area of hillside in central Goa with a beautiful river view and a wonderful sense of peace. We are hoping to work together to develop an eco-tourism project with tents and simple accommodation where visitors can stay in a working farm. The aim is to provide employment and vocational training opportunities for young people leaving the schools and residential homes, to help them develop their confidence and skills

and provide a bridge into the world of work. It is also hoped that surplus income from this centre will provide a sustainable source of funding for the other charitable projects locally. Construction here will take a year but we hope that volunteers will be able to use Cortalim as a base from 2024. They will be able to be involved in practical work around the farm as well as passing on practical and language skills to the young people working here.

Church Progress

Last time I was in Goa we had no idea that I would be ordained or that I would be given the responsibility of looking after St Christopher's, Anglican Church in Vasco. It was therefore with joy but some caution that I shared the news with our brother Christians of other denominations around Goa. I have always believed strongly in the importance of building the unity of the church and in Goa this has a practical dimension too. Anglicans are a tiny minority here and if we are to achieve anything it will need to be done in collaboration with the wider church.



My conversations over the last months have resulted in ever increasing joy and ever decreasing caution! Friends new and old from the Roman Catholic, Mar Thoma, Methodist and Pentecostal churches have been incredibly warm and supportive in their prayers and friendship. Here in the village of Porvorim, our Roman Catholic parish priest, Fr Caetano Fernandes has gone out of his way to help - from visiting our church himself to taking me for a cassock fitting. As area dean and also the diocesan priest responsible for ecumenical dialogue, Fr Caetano represents the Archdiocese and offers us his full support. As one of the organisers, he also invited me to an

ecumenical gospel meeting in the Methodist church in Panjim. The event was a great success, and it was wonderful to see members and leaders of many denominations meeting together in prayer for each other and for the nation of India. May it be a sign of things to come. At the meeting I was introduced to an influential group of protestant ministers and lay leaders who have been restoring the British cemetery in Panjim. This was originally the cemetery for St Christopher's so it is good to know that it is in safe hands and will be open when needed. These kind people also offered their support in the renovation and maintenance of our church, and I look forward to working with them over the coming months and years.

Meanwhile, within our own denomination, I have been able to visit Kolhapur area on two occasions, once for a large open air gospel event and again for a celebration at Miraj Christian Church. Both events were hugely well attended by clergy and laity from across the diocese as well as friends of other denominations. In particular, I am pleased to hear from the diocese that our friend Reverend Shrinivas Chopade is now the Moderators Commissary for Kolhapur Diocese. This gives him the same legal responsibilities as a diocesan bishop and the expectation is now that he is a future bishop of our diocese. Please do join me in praying for him and for his family as we look forward to working together for many years to come.

Sadly, I am still not able to bring you a report of my ordination but I expect to be a deacon within the coming weeks or even days! There will no doubt be pictures online and I hope to be able to bring you more news of that and the future shape of ministry at St Christopher's in the next newsletter.



The Delhi Brotherhood Society

Fr Richard Dashwood writes:

Dear Friends and Supporters of the Goa Anglican Centre,

I am most grateful to Richard for giving me the chance to write this letter. It is now ten years since I made the first of what is, to date, six trips to India. I have been to Goa and to the Centre twice. I very much hope that the third visit will happen soon enough. I've had the pleasure of seeing at first hand the marvellous work our charity does. I've also had the joyful and inspiring opportunity to meet, work with and form



what I hope will be a lasting association with certain other Christian charities in India. One of them is SEEDS India in Kerala which I don't think needs any further introduction to friends of the GAC. Another one, which may not be as familiar is the Delhi Brotherhood Society (DBS).

The DBS is an NGO based in Delhi which operates a number of schools, training projects, provision of food and other aid, medical support and work among Dalit communities. Remarkably their GHQ is in fact a monastery. For the purposes of charity law in India they are the DBS but long before the DBS was established (in 1973) they were an Anglican monastic community and before that a missionary society. Back in 1877 a group of clergy from Cambridge attached themselves to the SPG mission house in Delhi. The old Mughal capital was chosen because it was thought that, after the uprising of 1857, virtually no Christians remained alive. The group decided to form a society which they called the Brotherhood. It wasn't quite a monastic community but a clergy fraternity. Early on they established St Stephen's college which is now among the most prestigious of India's academic institutions. The education they provided was their principal focus but some of the brothers were inspired to do more. The most famous of the brethren was Charles Freer Andrews who became a political and social activist. His close friend Mahatma Gandhi said that his initials, CFA must surely stand for Christ's faithful apostle. He also named him Deenabandhu (friend of the poor) a title which the DBS uses to this day for the name of one of its schools.

After India's independence, the Brotherhood, which was down to just two members, decided after much prayer and reflection to commit themselves more fully to God's service and to India's. They stayed put when many were returning to Britain, admitted Indian members and gave themselves the name the Brotherhood of the Ascended Christ (which as a community within the church, is still their name.) When the Anglican, Methodist and Congregationalist churches merged to form the united Church of North India, the brethren involved themselves heartily and, realising that God's work in India must surely involve loving service among the poor, established the Delhi Brotherhood society as a charity so that they could fundraise more easily.

The work that they do is quite simply an inspiration, and I am honoured to be a member of their order of clergy associates. In three visits I have grown to love them very deeply and to care

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greatly for their work. I support them so far as I am able and it is for their sake that I write this letter. They are a small community. The pandemic took its toll. There are just four monks remaining and only three are based at the house in Delhi full time. They are middle-aged rather than old but nonetheless concerned for the future. Although their charity work employs staff to help, the fear is that without the monks to inspire progress, things may wither. So, in simple terms, they are looking to nurture fresh vocations and are asking for help. I asked Richard if I might alert the GAC network to this fact. We are after all a group of Christians, British and Indian who love India and who desire to see India and the Kingdom flourish. We're also mostly members of churches of the Anglican communion and for the most part subscribe to the sort of Anglicanism that doesn't need convincing of the beauty and significance of the religious life. I wonder if, somewhere among our network of churches, of friends, there might be one or two (or ten!) serious, gifted and compassionate young men who may just have a vocation dwelling within them that needs encouraging.

Needless to say, the Brotherhood would welcome any and all help. Please pray for them. Please spread the word. Please visit when you're next in India (or Delhi if you're already in India.) Please consider a donation if you can. Please consider how we might help find the next generation of brethren. Fr Monodeep, Fr Solomon, Fr Jaikumar and Fr Raju would gladly welcome young aspirants of any nationality to stay for a time and a season and get involved – and then see where the spirit is leading them. Were I not a married man, I rather think I would have joined them myself. This is a community of deep faith, generous service, good humour, loyal friendship and wise scholarship, centred on prayer and the sacraments and based in a house whose walls are steeped in prayer and history. You can find out more at www.delhibrotherhood.org and you are welcome to contact me at radashwood@hotmail.co.uk, by phone on 07950 763 155 or at St Michael's Vicarage, Church Street, Kirkham, Lancashire, PR4 2SE. I attach with this a copy of a letter which the brethren have themselves composed for this purpose.

May I wish you all a very happy and blessed Christmas celebration and a Happy New Year 2023. God bless you all and God bless India!

Fr Richard Dashwood



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The Friends of GAC

I am grateful for all those who can support us in prayer. We have a cycle of prayer for our work and surroundings (listed below) which you are more than welcome to join in with.

Please pray especially for the ministry of St Christopher's Church, Vasco, Goa.

Monday: People in need in Satari and Sanguem regions, for all who are hungry and starving and for the homeless

Tuesday: People in need in Quepem and Canacona regions and for peace between India and her neighbours

Wednesday: People in need in Mormugao region, for all visitors to Goa and for those who live and work at the Goa Anglican Centre

Thursday: People in need in Salcete region, for the unity of the church and for all visitors to the Goa Anglican Centre

Friday: People in need in Pernem and Bicholim regions, for the faithful departed and for all who are isolated or lonely

Saturday: People in need in Tiswade region and for all prisoners and those who are falsely accused

Sunday: People in need in Bardez region and that the churches in Goa may be an effective witness to God's love

Diary

I am so grateful to all those who continue to pray for us in these strange times. Many of you will know that there is a rosary offered every day for our charity and for you, our members. This is offered by different people on each day of the week. Please do email me if you have any particular prayer requests.

Four of our cells are now able to offer a monthly Mass for our work. Please do join them if you can but given the continuing uncertainty it would be wise to contact me or the local clergy in advance if you are planning on travelling a long way to attend. The regular cell Masses are:

1 st Thursday of the month 10:30am	Mass at St John's Church, St John's Road, Bathwick BA2 6PT	Tea/coffee and fellowship in the church hall
3 rd Tuesday of the month 7:30pm	Holy Communion service according to the Book of Common Prayer at St. Mary the Virgin Church, Churchgate, Waltham Cross, Cheshunt EN8 9NB	
4 th Tuesday of the month 7:30pm	Said Eucharist at St. Mark's Church, 56 Potters Road, Barnet EN5 5HY	
Last Wednesday of the month 7:30pm	Said Mass at St. Mary's Church, 16 Bishophill Junior, York YO1 6EN.	

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