

# **Salesian Education Seminar at Salesian College**

The Province of Kolkata in preparation for the Bi-Centenary of Don Bosco's Birth brought together 220 Technical and Regular Teachers and professors of the Schools and Colleges of North Bengal, Sikkim and Nepal on 26 September 2013 at Salesian College Siliguri Campus for a One Day Seminar on the theme "Don Bosco's System of Education based on Reason, Religion and Loving Kindness".

The Resource Person for the first part of the Day was Fr Dr Jerry Thomas, Founder Director, Bosco Institute, Jorhat, Assam, who delivered two very stimulating lectures on 'Salesian Educational System' and 'Salesian Educational Response to Indian Youth Situation'. Dr Jerry Tom, through his personal and experiential anecdotal presentation challenged the audience to dare to think differently and to be passionate about Don Bosco as to recreate his own strategies of transforming the young people in their care as Teachers.

The latter part of the day saw the presentation of study conducted among the Don Bosco Institutions on the impact the practice of preventive System by the salesians and their lay collaborators is having on the young people in terms of perceiving the core components of Reason, Religion and Loving Kindness. The study was conducted in two parts through questionnaires on how young people experience the preventive system in various settings, and on how 'the emotional wellbeing' of young people is nurtured. It was the result of a joint venture of the Education Department of Salesian College and the Child Care Research Institute of Ashalayam, Howrah. The presentation was coordinated by Fr George Chempakathinal, Fr Saju PT and Mr Alok Chowdhury.

The day's proceedings began with an inaugural session at which Fr Thomas Ellicherail sdb, the provincial addressed the gathering elaborating the background to the event and connected it with the visit of the relic of Don Bosco to the region and the preparation that continues to celebrate his 200th birth anniversary. He appreciated the first time ever large gathering of salesian teachers in the region and the service each one was rendering in their respective places.

The programme concluded with reflections on the 'way forward' by each group of participants sharing their 'take aways' in terms of significant learning about salesian strategy of generating trust among the youngsters through a 'word in the ear' to 'nurturing the inner space'. Each group also shared what they would implement in the coming six months in their own settings in Kalimpong, Malbassey, Mirik, Jaigaon, New Chumta, Chkkraghati, Nepal and Sonada and Siliguri. The days programme was coordinated and made in itself a salesian experience and a stimulating one with the interventions of Fr Nirmol Gomes and Fr Shaji Joseph, rectors of Salesian College, Fr James Chacko, the vice principal and Fr George Thadathil the Principal. The food and local arrangements were seen to by Fr Mathew George, the Bursar and outreach programme coordinator.

