

BETHANY VEDAVIJNANA PEETH

INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL THEOLOGY

An Extension Centre of Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth



**Bethany Vedavijnana Peeth
P.B. No. 3018
Ramwadi
Pune-411 014
INDIA**

Tel: Office : 020 - 27031794
Director : 020 - 27033856
E - mail: BVP : bvppune25@gmail.com
Director : g.kallunkal@gmail.com
Website: : www.bvppune.org

General Information

The Congregation of the Order of the Imitation of Christ (OIC) which is also known as Bethany Ashram, was founded by the late Archbishop Mar Ivanios OIC on 15th August 1919. The Congregation aims at *following Jesus Christ in his life of prayer and action, realized in Oriental monastic tradition and Indian sanyasa which are aimed at the evangelization of India through the spiritual renewal of the Malankara Catholic Church* (Holy Rule of OIC Ch.1:4).

In order to train its priestly candidates effectively and to expose them to the multicultural context of India, Bethany Fathers with the help of Cardinal Eugene Tisserant established Bethany Ashram in Pune on 1st May 1955. It was officially christened as St. Mary's Bethany Scholasticate.

Bethany Ashram was an integral part of the Pontifical Athenaeum, the forerunner of today's JDV. Though one with JDV in all academic matters, the members of the Ashram always felt the need of preserving their identity in matters of ecclesial and spiritual traditions and religious charism, and of cultivating them. Such values were zealously preserved in our religious and ecclesial life, and cultivated through a vital link between the Bethany Ashram and the Malankara community in Pune.

Gradually, as the concept of the Church as a living communion of individual Churches emerged in the ecclesial horizon of the Church in India, the members of OIC were urged to act as the thinking cell of the Malankara Church. Priestly formation had to be adapted to the exigencies of an emerging and expanding Malankara Church. When it comes to the formation of religious priests the charism of each religious community needs to be taken seriously. Thus it became a felt need to give due importance to the Oriental ecclesial genius and the Indian religious tradition in the formation process of the Bethanians.

To respond positively to this demand, a study programme was finalized by the General Council of the congregation and was submitted to the

JDV for approval. Fr. Lionel Mascarenhas, the then Rector of JDV, by his letter of 25th June 1983, communicated the approval of the programme to the then Superior General, Rev. Fr. John Berchmans OIC. The programme was accredited to the B Th. degree of JDV. Thus began the OIC extension centre. This regional theology centre for Oriental and Indian studies was named Bethany Vedavijnana Peeth (BVP) by the General Council of the Congregation on 22nd July, 1992.

Vision Statement

We aim at an integral understanding of God, world and human being as presented in Christian tradition from an Oriental Christian perspective, rooted in the West Syrian tradition and Indian religious heritage, contextualising in the life of the Malankara Catholic Church.

Objectives

- We give stress to the Oriental ways of theologizing. The Liturgy, the *locus theologicus* of theologizing in the Orient is its functional foundation. The West Syrian liturgy is this *locus* for us. We also aim at harmonizing Oriental Christian theology to the Indian spiritual traditions.
- Our context of theologising is the Malankara Catholic Church. It undertakes the research and development of its history and patrimony—liturgical, theological, spiritual, disciplinary and cultural. Called to be a sign of communion, we involve in research and study that caters communion with our non-Catholic Sister Churches.
- Study in Bethanian spirituality, the source of monastic spirituality in the Malankara Church is our cherished goal.
- An interdisciplinary approach to translate theologizing into the multifaceted socio-cultural realities and plurireligious and multicclesial situations help us to respond effectively to the situation of our country.

Approaches

We integrate theory with praxis, theology for the pastoral exigencies of the Church and of the Congregation. The catechetical programmes of Sundays

in parishes, Bethany Bible Studies, Teens Orientation Course, field work programmes in the realm of Contextual Theology programme, etc. are some of the means to articulate this. The publication of a periodical, conducting national and international seminars, sermon practice under the guidance of the BVP Resident Staff are some of the means to keep us abreast with the day-to-day dynamics of theology.

FUNCTIONING OF BVP

1. Chancellor

The Superior General of the Order of the Imitation of Christ is the Chancellor of BVP.

It is his responsibility and privilege to animate and guide the BVP according to its vision and objectives and to keep up its academic excellence.

The Chancellor does all appointments/confirmation/termination of the office bearers and the staff of BVP

2. Director

The Director of BVP is appointed by the Chancellor, for 3 years, from among the members of the resident staff.

The Director, besides the duties mentioned herein, should be the co-ordinator of studies. As such he will be responsible for the academic functioning of the institution and acts as the liaison person between BVP and JDV. The Director is the convener of the Academic Senate, the Faculty Council and Staff Convention. It is his responsibility to execute the decisions of the BVP Academic Councils.

3. Staff

The Chancellor in accordance with Holy Rule no.255 and the norms for JDV extension centres appoints the members of the staff.

There should be resident staff of at least 3 regular teachers. To be a member of the resident staff a person must reside at Bethany Ashram, Pune or in

the city of Pune. He will be deemed regular teacher if he holds a doctorate in Theology; or a doctorate in Indology or in one of the human sciences, with at least a Master's degree in Christian Theology, from a recognized university.

The Director submits all appointments of the resident staff to JDV Theology Faculty Council Meeting for its approval.

Besides the resident staff the Chancellor appoints associate staff members who are competent to teach the subjects assigned to them. They are usually members of the Order of the Imitation of Christ.

For the smooth academic functioning of the BVP, in accordance with the syllabus prepared for each year the Director invites other competent teachers to teach in BVP with the consent of the academic senate and in consultation with the Chancellor.

The service of a member of the staff of BVP is terminated by the Chancellor by recall or transfer of the member that takes place in accordance with the Holy Rule.

The services of the staff members are evaluated from time to time in the competent forum. The results are communicated to the Chancellor in due time. It is the right of the Chancellor to take a final decision on such matters.

The Academic Councils

For the efficient functioning of BVP there are academic councils working at the different levels of its administration.

1. The Academic Senate

The Academic Senate is the highest academic administrative body of BVP without prejudice to the powers of the Chancellor. It is convened and presided over by the Director. It consists of two elected members of the resident staff, if there are more than three members on the resident staff, besides the Director. It meets at least thrice in a year .

The Academic Senate is the competent body in all matter concerning the general academic policies of the BVP. It is the serious responsibility of the Academic Senate to see that through the theologizing process in BVP an earnest effort is made to develop a theology in accordance with the vision of BVP. It recommends members to the Chancellor for appointment as staff, with due consideration of the provisions of the Holy Rule.

2. The Faculty Council

The Faculty Council is the meeting of the entire resident staff. The Superior of Bethany Ashram, Pune, is an ex-officio member of this Council. To this, associate staffs' of the BVP may be invited. A student representative is called to this council. It is convened and presided over by the Director. It meets at least thrice in a year.

It is the competent body in academic matters such as fixing up the yearly syllabus, evaluation of the courses offered in BVP, evaluation of the staff, etc. They can also suggest the names of future staff members to be trained and appointed in BVP . The academic senate executes decisions and recommendations of the Faculty Council.

3. Staff Convention

The entire staff -resident, associate and visiting teachers of BVP are called to a meeting once in a year. The Chancellor, Provincial Superiors, the General Formation Co-ordinator and the Provincial Formation Coordinators are invited to the convention. The Director convenes the Staff Convention. He organises the meeting in consultation with the Chancellor and fixes the topic, date, time and place of the meeting.

This meeting is aimed at fostering better understanding and communication, of the theologizing process in BVP, through a seminar organised for this purpose. The convention ends with a business meeting to evaluate the overall functioning of the BVP in accordance with the vision of BVP.

The Chancellor presides over the business meeting. In his absence the Director chairs it.