

Prelates vow to work for good of all



Spokesman for northeast

India bishops Salesian Archbishop Thomas Menampampil of Guwahati has delivered a message to Pope Benedict XVI that his community stands ready to help the universal Church in any way that it can.

The archbishop is one of 18 Indian prelates on an ad limina visit to Vatican.

“The young church of northeast India is ready and happy to contribute its mite to the universal Church,” he told the pope.

All three archbishops of the region – Guwahati, Imphal and Shillong – met the pope separately, last Thursday, while this week the remaining bishops of the 15 dioceses of the seven states of northeast India are scheduled to report on their dioceses.

“Some years ago we could never think of such a gathering in Rome,” said Archbishop Menampampil, addressing a gathering of 60 priests and religious of northeast India studying or working in Rome.

“Today, we no more feel isolation, but are able to contribute in many ways,” he said while presiding at a solemn Eucharistic celebration yesterday, at St Peter’s College Chapel near the Vatican.

From a single diocese in 1934, the Church in the region has grown to 15 dioceses today and is making an impact around the world. Besides sending out missionaries, both priests and religious, some clergy from the area hold leadership positions as general councillors of religious congregations and one is coordinator for United Nations missions.

There is a Franciscan from Garo Hills of Meghalaya serving as provincial superior in South America. Dozens of religious belonging to Bodos, Khasis, Garo, Adivasis and other tribes from northeast India have joined the Missionaries of Charity sisters. Sister Agnes FMA from Khopum Valley, Manipur, is

currently studying Missiology at the Urban University Rome in preparation to become a missionary in Mongolia.

“It is because of their cheerful nature, ability to adapt to people, culture and social situations that northeast people are able to succeed in foreign missions,” Archbishop Menampampil told ucanews.com.

“We may seem to be far more successful than the pioneer missionaries, but that external success could make us think ‘that is everything’ to the detriment of inner success which is far more important.”

He encouraged all to prepare themselves well to carry out “our responsibility towards the people of northeast India who are endowed with very rich cultural heritage.”

ZY14127

UCA News