A true witness of the Gospel.

I don't know who else did and opened the homes for the only Hindu community children in Bangladesh except for the late Bishop B D Mondal and set an example to love the neighbor as himself! Bishop Mondal had been always a pioneer and philanthropic doing some extraordinary love and concern for the children and other faith. He not only brought first the KNH, Germany, and the CMD, Germany in this country to serve and love the poor and the disadvantaged children in Bangladesh but also he opened and brought two projects through CMS, Switzerland for the Hindu community by the help of Late Shri Sunil Gupta MP in the village called " Oicharmath", Agoiljhara, Barishal. Although it is not breaking news that I have been sharing with you for the first time I visited the two

projects recently which are "Shapla" for the boy's hostel and "Doel" for the girl's hostel and where around 110 community children have been getting all the facilities for the holistic development/education and having all the rights according to the SDG. I was so moved and encouraged to see the two projects for the other faith children and the result-oriented ministry going on through the COB, CMCY (Christian Ministry to the Children and Youth).By doing that ministry for the other faith conversely the COB never converted into Christianity some of the Christian families also have been surviving their existence in the village and living peaceful lives among the other faiths. This is obviously a small effort but a beautiful Christian witness for Jesus that the late Bishop B D Mondal pioneered. Meantime

many hundreds of children have been educated and enlightened and serving the community and the country. Among those Mr.Sottyeen Halder has become a BCS VAT and Customs officer from that home and village and it was possible only he got the opportunity to educate himself through the project! Isn't that a true and successful story of the Gospel/Merry Christmas that the late Bishop B D Mondal had made in his life setting an example of loving the other faith children and starting to bring them into the light of Jesus Christ out of darkness? He not only opened two hostels for the Hindu poor children but bought lands and distributed some of those and made flood shelters in disaster-prone areas like Bhola Chor Fashion and Banshkhali, Chittagong. Mr. Francis Bala a well-known artist and song composer of COB said in his hymn that " *E jogote chilo joto lanchito, nipirito, bonchito, ashahoto, onadrito jon; tader jibon dete, chalate neyer pothe mukti datar holo agomon. Timirpunje chilo koto shoto jon,jishur jonome tara pelo jibon; alor moshal hate dete alo, tini sobar majhe achen amoron. (Translation:* As many disgraced, oppressed, deprived, hopeless, insulted people were in this world, to give them lives and lead them on the path of justice, the savior came.)

What is the Gospel or the message of Jesus' born as humanity on this earth? Was it only for the followers of Jesus Christ? Was it only for the Christians? Obviously not. The true Gospel and the message of Jesus' born are for all who are the poor, disadvantaged, suffering-struggling people of communities and were waiting for their freedom from the earthly sins, bondage, and challenges. We are so grateful that the CMS, Switzerland, and CMD, Germany have been supporting the COB through the CMCY to follow in the footsteps of the Late Bishop B D Mondal in Bangladesh as one of the ministries of the COB. `*Je Jati ondhokare bhromon*

korito, thahara moha alo dekhite pelo'/ " The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. They lived in a land of shadows but now is shining on them "(Isaiah 9:2).

We the COB have received enormous support and many blessings from mission and donor partners and friends for which we are so grateful. I am also so thankful to the Bishops, clergy colleagues, and staff, all for their tremendous efforts, support, and contribution to the journey of the COB.

May I heartily convey to you all "A Merry Christmas and A Blessed New Year 2023 "!