



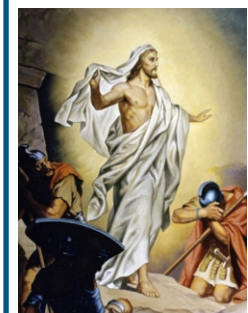
Pastor's Corner

Make A Difference (MAD) is an organization that started in 2006 by a group of students in a college in Kochi, Kerala, teaching the less fortunate. They were short of everything but not of enthusiasm. They believed they were MAD, that is, they could Make A Difference, even though naysayers described them as a bunch of immature youngsters. Their work was a mere drop in the ocean, yet they held on and today they have more than 900

volunteers in India, transforming the lives of more than 3,000 children. Each of us should ask ourselves, am I MAD, that is am I Making A Difference? If you think that everything has been taken care of by somebody and your contribution is not going to make much of a difference, then think again. History has it that the little sparks ignited by MAD people spread like fire and changed the course of history. Whoever thought that the man thrown out of the train (M. K. Gandhi) would lead the people of India against the mighty British Empire?

These lines speak of the power of one that can Make A Difference that one could be you or me!

- One song can spark a moment.
- One flower can wake the dream.
- One tree can start a forest.
- One bird can herald spring.
- One smile begins a friendship.

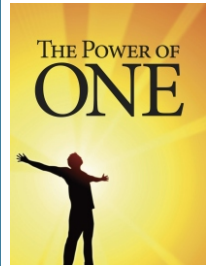


LINK wishes all our Readers a very Happy and Holy Easter.

The Power of One

- One handclasp lifts a soul.
- One star can guide a ship at sea.
- One word can frame the goal.
- One vote can change a nation.
- One sunbeam lights a room.
- One candle wipes out darkness.
- One laugh will conquer gloom.
- One step must start each journey.
- One word must start each prayer.
- One hope will raise our spirits.

One touch can show you care.
One voice can speak with wisdom.
One heart can know what's true.
One life can make the difference.
You see, it's all up to you! (*Anon*)
Easter, the upcoming great feast reminds us of the power of one man Jesus to overcome death. It was the power of one! Happy Easter to one and all. +*Lumen, CSC*



Editorial

Things 'Better and Bigger' than Money!



Is Tripura turning out to be a land without 'volunteers'?

The concept of volunteerism is gaining ground the world over. We can see them in Mother Teresa homes, in environment groups, literacy missions, and evangelical expeditions anywhere a 'cause' is served and promoted. Volunteers render service freely.

We are told in earlier times, marriages in Tripura villages were quite different from what they are today. Neighbors would come over days in advance and help with works pounding paddy, cleaning rice, voluntarily.

Today, in many places, the norm is to do it against money even if it's the neighbor's marriage.

Why, look at today's 'marriage' itself to see what 'money' has done to the tribe. The practice of giving dowry, which was non-existent among the tribal, is fast catching up and being taken to ridiculous extents. I know of a marriage where the boy went into a rage because 'motorcycle' was not part of the package offered by the girl's family. The male members of the girl's

family, however, solved the matter physically. Next morning at the altar, the groom not only had a black eye, but also a deep gash and a sober look on his face!

The bottom-line always seems to be there's nothing 'better or bigger than money'. It's a message our youth and children are quickly picking up. There are no takers for engagements that do not pay. I have celebrated Mass without servers despite many eligible candidates being present in the congregation. Of course, there is no pay for serving



Mass yet.

We see youth shy away from programs and projects that do not pay. In a convention or a spiritual retreat, a fee levied against food and accommodation is a dampener, and some even expect organizers to meet travel expenses.

It is not a question of poverty. It is a question of attitudes.

Along with geography and botany, we need to teach our children that there are occasions and 'causes' worth passionately engaging in, even if, they do not bring money. They bring things better and bigger; indeed, there are things 'better and bigger than money'!

J. Pulinthanath, sdb

Agartala Parish

Feast Day celebrations at Parish

Agartala Parish celebrated the Feast Day of its Patron Saint Joseph on 19th March 2012.

The Holy Eucharist was presided over by Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC, in the presence of Priests, Religious and faithful of the Parish. The homilist for the day was Fr. Cyprian Pinto, SVD. He exhorted everyone to model their life after St. Joseph especially focusing on the virtue of humility and trust in divine providence. Fr. Paul Pudussery, CSC, the Parish Priest thanked everyone in helping to organize the Feast in a meaningful manner.

Fr. George Jacob, CSC



Ambassa Parish

Women's Role in Building A better India

For building a better family, society, state, nation or world of tomorrow, humanity needs women's cooperation and involvement. Today, women are conscious of their rights and duties, in every sphere of society. Focusing on the theme "Women's Role in Building a Better India," Ambassa Parish celebrated International Women's Day at Parish level on 11th March 2012. International Women's Day celebration began with Holy Mass presided over by Parish Priest Fr. Jaibu Mathew, SVD. After the Holy Mass, there was a Seminar on "Women's Role in Building a Better India." Fr. Jaibu SVD, Sr. Susheela, SSpS and Mrs. Surabhi Sangma were the Resource Persons for the Seminar. After the Seminar, all the mothers came together and chalked out an Action Plan for the future. Over 70 mothers took part in this Seminar and had fruitful discussion. After the Seminar there was lunch served for all the participants. Every one left home expressing their joy, happiness and sense of satisfaction.

Fr. Nabin Lakra, SVD

Kathalcherra Parish

Sports Meet - 2012

Holy Cross High School, Kathalcherra organized its Annual Sports Meet 2012 on the 15th and 16th of March. Sri. Bimal Roy Reang, SDM of LTV



was the Chief Guest at the inaugural function. Citing the example of young icons of the State Somdev Dev Verma and Sourabhee Debbarma who have made the State proud in the recent past, he called on the HCHS students to overcome every odd and exhibit their inborn talents and gifts. The two days Sports Meet ended on 16th evening by honoring the medal winners. Sri. Subrato Roy, Commandant of Nalkatta was the Chief Guest for the closing ceremony. He awarded the winners and called upon the entire student assembly to contribute to the glory of the State in the field of Sports & Civil service. Fr. Agi Paul, former Principal was the Guest of Honor during the closing Ceremony of the Sports Meet.

Women's Day and Fathers Day Celebration

Maria Sangha organized International Women's day on Sunday 11th March. Representatives from all the *mondolis* gathered at the Parish premises after the Sunday liturgy and felicitated the members.

Fathers' Day Celebration: The Parish joined together to celebrate Fathers Day on the 25th March. After the Parish Mass *Maria Sangha* members organized a felicitation program for all the fathers' gathered from different *mondolis*. Both these celebrations helped to concientize the people on issues related to gender equality, equal opportunity and role of healthy parenting in a family.

Fr. Valerian Castelino, CSC

NEWS FROM THE PARISHES

Bagbasa Parish

Inauguration of the newly erected Holy Cross Parish

The newly erected Holy Cross Quasi Parish Bagbasa (bifurcated from Kumarghat Parish) was inaugurated and its first Parochial Administrator was installed in the presence



of Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Kallarackal, CSC Provincial Superior on 25th March 2012, during the Holy Eucharist presided over by Bishop Lumen Monteiro. The joyful ceremony was witnessed by 21 Priests, 20 Religious Sisters and Brothers and over 2,000 people both Catholics and non-Catholics. Before the Mass began Fr. Emmanuel the Provincial Superior cut the ribbon of the temporary structure made for the school and the Priests' Residence and Bishop Lumen blessed the Building and the new site. During the Mass the Decree of the Erection of Bagbasa Parish was read out and Fr. Paul was given the Key of the Tabernacle as a sign of entrusting to him the spiritual care of the faithful in the Parish. After Mass a short felicitation cum cultural program was held. Fr. Emmanuel the Provincial Superior recalled that the making of Bagbasa Parish was a decision of the Provincial Chapter 6 years ago and that has been materialized today through the hard work and instrumentality of many confreres. Bishop Lumen pointed out that Bagbasa was the 8th Parish after the erection of Agartala Diocese, bringing the total number of Parishes to 17, and this is indeed a sign of growth and pride for the Diocese! Fr. Cyprian Pinto, SVD, in his homily spoke of the development of Kumarghat Parish and how the new Parish should become a sign of unity while making Jesus known to people. Fr. Thomas Pereira, CSC, PP of the 'mother Parish' expressed his mixed sentiments of joy and sorrow to see yet another parish emerging out of Kumarghat. While it is a sign of growth "it is also sad to part with 11 *modolis* of my Parish," he said. Census 2012 of the newly erected Bagbasa Parish was prepared and handed over to the new Parish Priest. The day was filled with joyful celebration and end with a sharing of the fellowship meal.

Fr. Agi Paul, CSC

NEWS BRIEFS FROM JUST

Inauguration of SMILE Foundation Education Program

On 1st March the Inauguration of **SMILE FOUNDATION EDUCATION PROGRAM** was held at Damdamia, Lembuchera at 11:30am. The Inaugural function began with a prayer dance by Fatima Grihini girls. It was followed by Lighting of the Lamp by the Chief Guest Mr. Rabindra Reang, ADM, in the presence of Mr. Prakash Das, former Minister, Govt. of Tripura. Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC, Mr. Partho Roy Regional Head of Smile Foundation, Mr. Subhrangshu Senior Program Manager, Fr. Robert Mathias, CSC and other invited guests. This program would help the drop out children from nearby villages to study and do well in their lives. *Mr. Biswajit Debbarma*

Marxist Minister lauds Church's 'Touch of love'



According to Tripura's Marxist Minister for Rural Development,

Jitendra Choudhury, it is 'the healing touch of love' that distinguishes the Catholic Church's works of social development from that of the Government. Choudhury was speaking at the Diocese level celebrations of the Golden Jubilee of Caritas India, held at Agartala, on 29th Feb. 2012.

Impressed by the 'confidence and contentment' of a group of BRU beneficiaries from the Refugee Camps of Naisingpara in North Tripura that presented a couple of soul-stirring songs on the occasion, Choudhury said such transformation did not usually come about solely from receiving monetary help. He explained it as the result of "the healing touch of love that the Church is able to impart along with its humanitarian works" and called it "the Gospel" that makes Church's developmental works "stand apart from similar works performed by others

including the government." The welfare of the BRU camp dwellers is one of the many programs taken up Caritas India through its Diocesan counterpart, Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST).

Mr. Choudhury, the Chief Guest at the celebrations told the large gathering of invitees that thronged city's Nazrul Kalakshetra auditorium that there was need of more Caritas-like interventions in the State. He also expressed confidence that if all such benevolent organizations and government worked hand in hand, one could usher in "not only spiritual transformation but also the much-needed changes in the living conditions of the people of the State".

The Holy Cross prelate of Agartala Diocese, Lumen Monteiro CSC, who is also the new Chairman of Caritas India, described the occasion as a "celebration of 50 years of Church's engagement with the poor, the hungry, the illiterate and the powerless". While enumerating the activities of the vast Caritas network across the country and the world, Bishop Monteiro reiterated the determination of the Church to continue its commitment to the uplift of the poor and the powerless. Caritas, the social development wing of the Catholic Church today operates in 168 countries and is the largest humanitarian

network in the world after the Red Cross. Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura is the State counterpart of the agency which brings to the people of the State a variety of services for which Caritas is noted throughout the world.

Robert Mathias, the Holy Cross priest and Director of Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura, described the five decades of Caritas' intervention in the State, as 'fifty years of nation-building' a process that began even when Tripura was part of the erstwhile Diocese of Silchar.

Development sectors in which the Catholic Church in Tripura operates fall within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals and include poverty alleviation, livelihood, micro-credit and income-generation programs, peace building, repatriation and rehabilitation of BRU refugees, relief and disaster preparedness.

The celebrations that also featured select songs and dances were attended by a host of dignitaries from across the country including Fr. Emmanuel Kallarackal, CSC, the Provincial Superior of the Holy Cross North East Province, Dr. Joseph Sebastian the Executive Director of IGSSS Delhi, and Fr. Varghese Velickakam the Executive Director of NE Social Forum Guwahati.

Fr. J. Pulinthanath, sdb, Spokesperson of the Diocese

IX Signis National Assembly

SIGNIS INDIA organized the IX NATIONAL ASSEMBLY at Don Bosco Matunga, Mumbai, from February 24 to 28, 2012. SIGNIS is a nongovernmental organization that includes Catholic media members from hundred and forty countries. The theme of the Assembly was "Creating Images for a Better Tomorrow". As a Diocesan Secretary for Social Communications I had the privilege of attending the Assembly. The Assembly engaged SIGNIS Members in serious discussion on current topics and familiarized them with the latest happenings in the media, to share experiences, foster collaboration and co-

production and promote their work. The themes dealt by experts in the field were "Rich Media for Better Tomorrow", "New Media: Social Networking: a Bane or a Boon", "Creating Images for Family through the new media" and "Creating Images Fuelling Ambitions". Field trips were also organized to the famous media hubs in Mumbai. For me personally, it was a wonderful exposure to interact with people who are in this field and exchange ideas and experiences for better communication. It was truly a great learning experience.

Workshop for Website administrators

A three day Workshop was organized by the CBCI-Office for Social

Communication at Kolkata from 22nd to 24th February. This Seminar was mainly organized for the web administrators of the Dioceses, to assist them to establish websites, and to form policy for its effective use. Various topics were dealt with on how to make the best use of the Internet technology to proclaim the word of God. It also provided tips to work with the designer, making sure that website is technically sound, uncluttered, accessible, and has adequate scope for updates and reporting, and ensuring that it reflects the ethos of the Diocese and the Church at large. Fr. Prasad of our Diocese participated in the Workshop.

Fr. Arockiadoss, SVD, Secretary

Women's Commission

Women's Commission Agartala Diocese organized Women's Annual Gathering at Holy Spirit Convent Nandan Nagar from 13th to 15th March. The theme of the annual gathering was "Role of Women in Building a Better India". 130 Women leaders from the Parishes across Tripura participated in the



gathering. Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC inaugurated the event in the presence of Fr. Robert Mathias, CSC, Sr. Ventura Fernandes and other invited guests. In his address to the Women,

Bishop dealt on the history of Women's day celebration and the relevance of the theme. The various Input Sessions given

by Resource Persons - Dr. Tapoti Chakarwari from Tripura State Women Commission, Sr. Marcelina Sangma, FMA, Principal Auxilium School, Dr. Ashok - helped the Women leaders to understand their role in the family and society. Bible quiz, Dance and Singing competitions during the course of the day.

Sr. Susheela Xess, SSps, Secretary

- ▲ Fr. Joseph Almeida, SDB, Provincial from Guwahati
- ▲ Mr. Joseph Sebastian, IGSSS Director from Delhi
- ▲ Mr. Jose P, SIB Manager from Kolkata
- ▲ Mr. Jonas Lakra, Zonal Officer Caritas from Guwahati
- ▲ Fr. Vincent Furtado, OFM. Cap., Provincial from Bangalore
- ▲ Fr. Joel, OFM. Cap., Regional from Mizoram
- ▲ Fr. A. Jesu, SVD Provincial from Hyderabad
- ▲ Fr. Bob Dowd, Tony Polan and Tamo from Notre Dame, USA
- ▲ Sr. Isabella, BS, from Silchar
- ▲ Mr. Rajkumar, Director of HCDCI, from Pune
- ▲ Mr. Kiran Babu, Dept of HCDCI, Pune

Indians join Church leaders for Mass in Israel

Nearly 150 Indian Catholics braved rain and freezing temperature to attend a thanksgiving Mass by visiting Cardinals and Prelates from India at Jerusalem's St. Saviour Church. "It is very special to have our cardinals and priests here and be able to attend a Mass with them," said Aloysius Leone, a Catholic from southern India. Leone and women in traditional Indian dress gathered around Archbishop Mari Soosa Pakiam of Trivandrum to ask his blessing and kiss his ring. Trivandrum's Latin-rite archbishop was part of an ecumenical delegation of church leaders that visited Israel at the invitation of its ministry of tourism. The delegation was led by Cardinal Oswald Gracias and Cardinal George Alencherry. Courtesy: US Catholic

LINK MAIL BOX

I appreciate your determination to publish LINK on the first of every month. Congrats for keeping it up for so many years and publishing it REGULARLY on the first of every month. Very often I realize it is the first of the month when I receive the LINK in my mail box. **Fr. Emmanuel CSC, Agartala** LINK is my waking call on the first of the month... and the first reading of the month! **Conrad, CSC, Montreal** Fantastic newsletter! Congrats and prayers. **+PK George, sdb, Arunachal Pradesh** MANY THANKS for LINK, which certainly "links" me to your faithful diocese and works! My greetings and prayers for all of you! **Rev. David Schlaver, CSC, Maine, USA** Thank you for the March LINK which arrived promptly. I guess you have an efficient team of workers on Media. Congratulations on your new appointment as National Chairman, Caritas India. **+Evarist, Karachi**

ASHA Holy Cross Community College Day & Inauguration of newly furnished mechanical lab

ASHA Community College, a part of ASHA Holy Cross celebrated its day on 18th February. The chief Guest for the program was Shri. Jitendra Choudhury, Minister for Forest, Rural Development, Industries & Commerce. The presence of Fr. Emmanuel, CSC, Provincial Superior, Shri. Rana Dey, Community College In-charge, IGNOU Agartala, Parents and local people added more joy to the celebration. On the occasion the newly furnished mechanical lab was inaugurated and blessed by Fr. Emmanuel, CSC. Shri. Jitendra Choudhury lauded the contribution of Holy Cross and the religious in the State of Tripura towards the uplift of the downtrodden. True its motto, ASHA community College enlightens and sharpens the skills, especially of the dropouts, who have little or no opportunities to expose their skills to acquire their educational and vocational development and then to



achieve their goal. **Leadership and Personality Development Seminar**

ASHA Holy Cross organized a Seminar on Leadership and Personality Development for the newly elected leaders of the Catholic Schools of Tripura from 23rd to 26th February. The 40 participants who came from across the State were fully occupied with different topics focusing towards the development of the leadership qualities, stage management skills and personality development skills. The Resource Persons were Fr. Theophilus CSC, Sr. Veronica BS, Fr. Paul Pudusery CSC, Fr. Abraham CSC and Mr. Arul Selvan. The Interactive sessions, group and descriptive slides presentations, games, etc, had enveloped different skills among the participants. The young leaders of today were given ample opportunities to analyze the need for being effective leaders in the society. The two-day Workshop came to an end with a campfire and a symbolic candle march with a promise that each of them becomes effective leaders in their milieu.

Mr. Arul Selvan

SCCs an answer to threats from sects

The best way to meet the challenges from neo-Christian sects is to promote Small Christian Communities more vigorously, an Indian Catholic bishop says. "SCCs are not just optional but pastorally obligatory to make the Church more effective, pastorally fruitful and more visible," Bishop Gerald Mathias of Lucknow told a regional meeting of the grassroots Catholic communities in Kolkata, eastern India. Some 90 delegates, including 12 bishops, from SCC communities in West

NEWS NOTES

Bengal and northeastern India attended the March 9-12 meeting that sought ways to present "a new face" for the Church in India. Bishop Mathias says the Church has to promote SCC more seriously to provide its member fellowship and bonding and a deeper love for the Word of God that these new sects apparently offer. Bishop Lumen, Fr. Lancy and Mr. Oshim Uchoi represented Agartala.

Archbishop Tutu hails Bihar Chief Minister

Nobel Laureate and anti-apartheid icon Archbishop Desmond Tutu has praised Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's steps to end child marriage. Archbishop Tutu said, "I am impressed by the political will being shown by the Chief Minister to end discrimination prevalent in the society against the girl child." He told a press conference that Kumar has set himself "certain benchmarks, and is looking to achieve certain goals". "Political will to fight the ills of child marriage is very important. It is not only a human rights issue. It is also a development issue." Nearly ten million girls are married out each year before the age of 18 across the world. India stands 14th on the list.

Courtesy: Hindustan Times

BISHOP'S PROGRAM FOR APRIL 2012

- 01: New Parish & Pastor Installation at Nandan Nagar
- 02-03: Pastoral Meet & Chrism Mass, Agartala
- 05-08: Holy Week & Easter, Bodhjunnagar Parish
- 15-16: Diamond Jubilee & NE Bishops Meet, Aizawl
- 23-25: Caritas GB Meet, Bangalore
- 25-28: CBCI Standing Committee, Bangalore
- 29-30: Caritas India Program, Delhi