



DIOCESE OF AGARTALA

Agartala Diocesan News Letter

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Pastor's Corner

Independent India's Realities
The new data released recently showed that more than 70 percent of people in India live in villages, with the majority extremely poor and dependent on manual labour. The data from India's socio-economic and caste census was collected between 2011 and 2013. It's the first time India has studied caste data since 1932. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said the data was provisional and the final data would be updated over the next few months to help the government to properly channel its welfare spending to benefit those who needed help the most.

India conducts a national census every 10 years and that document delves into the wealth, living conditions and other personal details of the country's 1.2 billion people. The previous government initiated a separate process of studying caste and analyzing socio-economic progress based on those divisions. Caste, the Hindu custom that for millennia has divided people in a strict social hierarchy based on their family's traditional livelihood and ethnicity, is deeply sensitive in India. The practice



was outlawed when India gained freedom from Britain in 1947, but is still pervasive. Studies show low-caste Indians and *dalits* face daily challenges for decent schools, medical care and jobs. While the data shows how low-caste Indians fare overall on various economic indicators, the government has said that the final data would not show specific caste details.

The data released recently revealed that of India's nearly 244 million households, more than 179 million are rural. At least 56 percent of those rural households do not own any land and depend on manual labor. Nearly 107 million rural households are what the government terms as "deprived",

meaning they either live in a single room made of mud and straw, have no earning adult male, or no literate adult member.

This staggering data preceding our country's independence day should make us think. In 1947 India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had announced India's independence with his speech: "Long years ago, we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom." We are far from that reality! **+Lumen, CSC**



Editorial

The Sound of our Music
Jaduni is the traditional music form of the Kokborok speakers, particularly the Debbarma community of Tripura. It stands out as something exceptional by the complex nature of its form (tune) and the depth of its content (lyrics). Its arresting nature is often lost on the younger generation who don't seem to care much about the gradual disappearance of *Jaduni*. There is hardly anything sacred about *Jaduni*, however. At times, one gets to see elderly members of the Kokborok community sing in unison *kirtan*, one form of Hindu sacred music. Although not an indigenous form of music, they have mastered the art of *kirtan* and display a rare abandon and passion when singing it.

It makes one think why such wholehearted involvement in singing is not forthcoming in our worship gatherings. Even a layperson can see that our songs and our singing need improvement. At times, one even comes across compositions that not only lack



melody and meaning, but are a positive affront on our senses. When the song ends there is a feeling of relief, as if one has survived some sort of circus. Official Church instructions regarding sacred singing insist that through our singing minds must be "*more easily raised to heavenly things.*" Honestly, that's the last thing some of our *tedious* songs do. The Communion Song particularly needs attention. At times it makes the reception of the Holy Communion look like an afterthought. As if keeping the song going, even as a duet or a solo, is all that matters. Forget about the demeanor and the hurry in which Communion is received! There is no doubt, 'silence' sometimes is less distracting and helpful.

It's a community that has in the past produced at least two illustrious sons who mesmerized the country with their music - RD and SD Burman. It's sad today we have to make do with cacophonies of all sorts, some of which don't even deserve the name 'music' in our effort to worship God. The irrepressible feelings of praise, worship, thankfulness and contrition that well up in our hearts await the true tunes and rhythms of this land, to ascend to God.

J. Pulinthanath, SDB

St. Paul's Parish, Kumarghat

Parish Feast Day

Our Parish Feast was celebrated on 28th June 2015. The parishioners were



prepared for the feast spiritually by having 9 days of Novena in their own villages. The feast day program

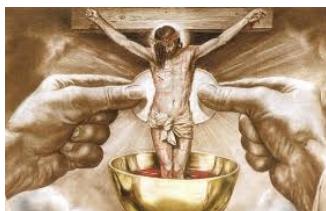
began by hosting the Parish flag. Our dear bishop Lumen presided over the Holy Eucharist which is concelebrated by many priests. After the Eucharistic celebration the faithful devotionally joined for the Eucharistic procession. Fr. Jeevan, SVD, led the people in prayer with the Eucharistic Jesus. After the Adoration followed a short Cultural program. Fr. Arul the Parish Priest welcomed the guests, which was followed by various cultural dances by parishioners. On this occasion the parish bid farewell to Fr. Alfred, CSC, for his 5 months of service to the parish. Bishop Lumen appreciated and encouraged the parishioners for their activities to deepen the faith. The feast day came to an end with a fellowship meal.

Regent Lawrence, CSC

Don Bosco Parish, Nandannagar

Corpus Christi Feast Day

There was a special significance in the



celebration of the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ this year as it was a

new start for five children who received the Lord in communion for the first time and for 13 others who received the Sacrament of Confirmation. After a sufficiently long preparation for the reception of the sacraments, on 7th June Bishop Lumen Monteiro administered the sacrament of Confirmation and gave them First Holy Communion. It was a solemn occasion as the parents and relatives who were all present prepared themselves and the children spiritually. The common meal after the celebrations brought about a great feeling of togetherness as well as a day to remember for all. *Fr. Sunny, SDB*

St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Gachirampara

SCC Program in the Parish



On 20th and 21st of June Fr. Lancy visited the parish along with his SCC Team. The Meet which was supposed to start on 20th evening got postponed due to heavy rains. But next day morning on Sunday people gathered together in good number from all substations. It was very good and enriching experience for our people. I thank Fr. Lancy and his Team for their visit to our Parish and for introducing our people to SCC.

Fr. Prasanna, OFM, Cap.

St. Andre Parish, Bodhjungnagar

Maria Sangho Core Committee Leadership Seminar

On request of the Maria Sangho Leaders from different *mothas*, St. Andre Parish gathered at the Parish centre for a one-day Core Team

Leadership Seminar on June 28, 2015. The day began with Holy Eucharist followed by Sessions on Leadership. Mr. Tarun Kanti was the main Resource Person for the day. He emphasized on the need to think 'out of the box' and create a new world based on Christian value system and improved standard of living. The Sessions were made interesting with out-door leadership activities. As part of the follow-up plan the group decided to visit all the *mothas* and revive the Maria Sangho where it is not active and begin in places where it does not exist. After have achieved that goal they will gather in October for further follow ups. *Fr. Jilson, CSC*

Immaculate Conception Parish, Moharpura

Thank You... Welcome

After serving Notre Dame Holy Cross School as Principal and Asst. Priest successfully for six years, Fr. Binoy John, csc was given a warm sendoff at the School and Parish. On 3rd July the



School bid farewell while on the 12th the Parish said goodbye. Fr. Agi Paul csc was welcomed

as the new Principal. On 12th July Fr. Ishwar, csc, also received a sendoff during the Thanksgiving Holy Mass. People, students and teachers appreciated Fr. Binoy's contribution to the School and thanked him profusely for his planning, execution of the plans and training of teachers. The Parish Priest Fr. Hormis John, csc, also thanked him for his contribution to this mission especially for the infrastructures he has left behind. Fr. Hormis also thanked Fr. Ishwar for his short stay and for his contribution to this mission. In spite of these departures Moharpura Parish is blessed with two new members--Fr. Agi Paul, csc is the new principal and Bro. Edwin, csc is the new regent. We welcome both of them.

Global Teachers' Training

Notre Dame Holy Cross School conducted Global Teachers' Training from 6th to 30th July 2015. 25 Teachers attended the Course from different villages and schools.

The Course is meant to qualify the Teachers and make them eligible and competent to teach anywhere in the world. The training program is undertaken by the Irish tutors. At the end of the course they will receive a Diploma the equivalent of a B.Ed. degree.

Parish Council Meet

On July 12 there was a Parish Council meeting attended by the representatives of many local *mondolis*. Many important issues were discussed. They were encouraged to send youngsters for the marriage preparation course to be held in October 2015. Arrangements will be made to have a family card for each family of the Parish. Parish Retreat will be organized in five centres in the months of January-February 2016.

Regent Edwin, CSC



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Tripura West Zone SCC - Parish Animation Teams Gathering

The SCC Parish Animation Teams of the eight Parishes of Tripura WEST Zone (Agartala, Baijalbari, Bodhjungnagar, Khumulwng, Mandwi, Mariamnagar, Moharpa and Nandannagar) gathered together at JUST Hall on 11th July 2015. There were 25 participants including Fr. Lancy csc the Diocesan SCC Coordinator. Fr. Lancy initiated the Meeting by enabling the participants to focus on the principal aim of SCCs which is "establish the Kingdom of God in our neighbourhood" and not merely the "7-steps Bible Sharing".

The Reports from the 8 Parishes of West Zone revealed that: (1) there are 99 SCC Units; (2) the number of families in a Unit ranges from 7 to 14; (3)



the Parishes of Bodhjungnagar, Moharpa and Khumulwng have the larger number of Units 52, 20 and 15 respectively; (4) Fr. Lancy to inaugurate the SCC program in Baijalbari Parish on 12th July; (5) all local animators of Moharpa Parish meet together once in a month; (6) the Church communities become strengthened and revitalized; (7) some of the difficulties faced are: all villagers

that gather for the Bible sharing cannot read; shyness on the part of the Unit members in sharing; men folk in general do not participate in the SCC Bible sharing. The last 30 minutes were used for making SMART Action Plans for the coming 3 months. The next PAT gathering will be on 10th October at Pastoral Centre Khumulwng.

Fr. Ronald, SDB, Coordinator

JUST Programs

Farmers Day Celebration and Seed Fair



Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) celebrated Farmer's Day and Seed Fair at Yesrai Community Hall, on 12th June 2015. 246 farmers took part in the program. The Chief Guest was Most Rev.

Lumen Monteiro, while Mr. R.K Debbarmen, General Manager of NABARD, Agartala was the Guest of Honor. Other Guests included Fr. Jeevan, SVD, Fr. Jilson, Parish Priest of Bodhjungnagar, and the Officer In-Charge of Mohanpur Police station. The program began with cutting of ribbon and inaugurating the seed fair by Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro. The Farmer's Day Celebration was inaugurated by lighting the lamp. The dignitaries delivered inspiring and encouraging speeches during the program. After the cultural program, the

distinguished Guests went around to see the seed fair. The Farmer's Day celebration and Seed Fair was a grand and successful program.

JUST conducts Medical Camps

JUST conducted a series of Medical Camp in the remote villages like Dharmani Para, Dhanuram



Para, Udasing Para and Kola bari, under Ganganagar R.D. Block in Dhalai District during this last Quarter. Dr. Arup Das and Dr. Philip Reang, from

Ganganagar PHC were the Medical Officers who examined the patients and prescribed necessary medicines. About 380 people mostly women and children attended the Medical Camps and got much benefit. They were distributed medicines free of cost after diagnosis. 10 malaria cases were also detected during the Medical Camps and were referred to hospital.

Vincent DebBurma

Indian News - Tidbits

Stop violence against women



A silent march and a prayer vigil to express solidarity with the Salesian Missionary Sisters of Mary Immaculate (SMMI) and to ask for justice were organized. More than 2,000 people gathered near the Cathedral of St. Francis de Sales in Nagpur, a city in the

State of Maharashtra on 1 July, 15 days after a nun

was attacked. The initiative was also attended by the Archbishop of Nagpur, Abraham Viruthakulangara who strongly condemned the attack on a 43-year old nun which took place on the night between June 19 and 20.

Agenzia Fides



Link wishes its readers on the occasion of 69th Independence Day of India!



Thanks. Not only do we put UP with your musings, but we cheer UP every time we hear from you! Thanks for the update on Sr. Nirmala. **Tony Krisak, USA**

Thank you Bishop Lumen for the latest LINK. Always up-to-date. Congrats. **Fr. Manjaly, Shillong** Thanks for the Link, went on reading all the UPS. **Sr Clara, BS, Silchar**

I received your email and the attached LINK JULY 2015. Thank you very much. +**Andrew Marak, Tura** Thank you so very much for the continuing news that comes in LINK. I deeply appreciate and am inspired by how our fellow believers in the Gospel are doing marvelous works in the Diocese of Agartala! **Fr. Tom O'Hara, CSC, USA**

Thanks for the monthly newsletter. **Sr. Vinaya - Secretary, S.H. Provincial House, Kerala**

Linked so well. +**George, SDB, Miao**

Thank you for the monthly Link newsletter. It makes very interesting reading and keeping everyone abreast of the activities in the Diocese. **Lauro Braganza, USA**

Wonderful!! The first day of every month, the LINK welcomes us with a lot of good news and we are able to understand the situations and your dedicated work over there for the poor and the needy. I am sure that you will have special heart to feel others problems and difficulties. **O.J. Varghese, Tamilnadu**

Thanks a lot for the UPdate on Agartala Diocese with Link! With it no one misses the first of the month... Cheer UP! Hope the cathedral will be UP and complete. And keep UP with good health! **Conrad, Canada**

Congrats for the great new look website... cheers. **C. M. Paul, SDB, Guwahati**

Thank you for your Magazine Link. It is wonderful effort. +**Victor Lyngdoh, Nongstoin**

Enjoyed your dictionary excursion and JP's editorial as always. And reading about the amazing vibrancy of the Diocese in the many activities and programs. Courage and blessings as you "lead us onward" and UPward. **David Schlaver, CSC, USA**

Thank you so much Bishop for the Link. **Sr. Rihun, FMA, Agartala**

Global News - Tidbits

Fazle Hasan Abed, Poverty group Founder wins World Food Prize



A man who created a Bangladesh-based nonprofit organization credited with helping more than 150 million people out of poverty was named the winner of the 2015 World Food Prize. Abed created BRAC, originally known as Bangladesh Rural Advancement

Committee, as a temporary relief organization to help with recovery from the 1970 typhoon that killed about 500,000 people and the subsequent war fought in 1971 to win independence from Pakistan. The World Food Prize, based in Des Moines, Iowa, United States, was created by Nobel laureate Norman Borlaug in 1986 to recognize scientists and others who have improved the quality, quantity, or availability of food in the world. Abed will be awarded the \$250,000 prize at a ceremony in October 2015. World Food Prize President Kenneth Quinn said the ability of Abed, who was knighted in London in 2010, to successfully transition BRAC into a global relief organization was the key to his win. With more than 100,000 employees today, BRAC has grown into one of the world's largest nongovernmental organizations focused on alleviating poverty.

AP/VR via CNUA

Our Distinguished Visitors

Sr. Mirabelle, AC Provincial from Kolkata
 Sr. Agnelita, AC Economer from Kolkata
 Fr. Shaji Joseph, SDB, from Salesian College, Sonada
 Sr. Lincy Cherian, Provincial of Holy Cross Sisters from Bengaluru
 Sr. Flory D'Souza, Holy Cross Vice Provincial from Bengaluru
 Sr. Arul Mary, Holy Cross Councilor from Bengaluru

Patriarch of Baghdad awarded Internal 'La Traglia' Prize



His Beatitude Louis Raphael I Sako, Patriarch of Babylon of the Chaldeans, Baghdad, Iraq, received the international "La Traglia Ethnic Groups and Communities" award from the Italian city of Jelsi on 27 July. The prize, in its eighth edition this year, is awarded to those who played a distinguished role in the promotion and attention to tradition, the environment, the defence of human rights and the cultural and religious identity of small communities and ethnic groups.

Previous winners include the Sioux-Lakota chief Birgil Kills Straight, Tara Gandhi, the Dalai Lama and Gino Strada (founder of Emergency). In 2015, a year after Pope Francis' visit to the Italian region of Molise, where Jelsi is located, and reflecting his concern over the conflicts in the Middle East, the organisers of "La Traglia" wished to draw attention to the contemporary martyrdom of Christians in Iraq, Libya, Syria and Egypt, by presenting the award to Patriarch Sako, for his commitment to interreligious dialogue in favour of unity with the other Churches present in Iraq and with the Christians of the Middle East.

VIS - Vatican Information Service

Bishop's Program for August 2015

05:	Return to India
06-07:	CBCI-CARD Meeting, Delhi
08-09:	Kedernal Confirmations, Depacherra Parish
15-16:	Don Bosco Bicentenary, Nandannagar Parish
17-25:	Caritas India Field Visit to T.N. & Kerala South
27-30:	SABS Profession, Dimapur