

Driven by the Passion to Love

There's a lot of jubilation here in Rome and I'm just as excited as I await the canonization ceremony at St. Peter's Square on September 4th. The Angel of Mercy, the Saint of the Gutters, the Icon of Peace, the Smiling Nun, and the Compassionate one—the revered Mother has so many titles attributed to her! Most people remember Blessed Mother Teresa for her work with the poorest of the poor in Calcutta. But she was a pioneer in the implementation of peace and justice and also spoke openly about topics such as abortion and the importance of family life. In her no-nonsense, yet charitable manner, Mother Teresa delivered the truth in a palatable and achievable manner. We in Tripura are celebrating her canonization by focusing on her message of love, peace and compassion. At a time when we see so much of violence and hatred, Mother's image spells peace; peace much needed in our own city of Agartala! Isn't it true that despite millions spent on arms and ammunition it has not been able to lower



the levels of hatred? The scriptures of all religions have taught us that hate has never been able to banish hate. The saintly Mother showed us through her life that love is the answer. Jesus was her model. Driven by the passion to love Mother Teresa did her best to eliminate the ego sense and show that we can love humanity as our own family. Mother Teresa spoke love, gave love, lived love, and taught us to sow seeds of love. In Midrash literature we read: "A man is known by three names: The first is the name which his parents give him; the second is the name by which others call him; and the third is the name by which he is identified in the true record of his life." Mother Teresa belongs to the third category. Her name is synonymous with love. Let me close with a few Quotes from the saintly Mother:

- "Do not think that love in order to be genuine has to be extraordinary. What we need is to love without getting

tired."

- "Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love."
- "What can you do to promote world peace? Go home and love your family."
- "It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving."
- "The hunger for love is much more difficult to remove than the hunger for bread."
- "I have found the paradox, that if you love until it hurts, there can be no more hurt, only more love."

God bless. **+Lumen, CSC**



Pastor's Corner

LINK wishes all our dedicated teachers a HAPPY TEACHERS DAY on 5th September. Teachers need encouragement and support from the community to feel that their devotion to students is appreciated. Hence we have Teacher's Day!

Cry, the Beloved City!



Editorial

Yesterday, August 23rd should have been just another 'michiler din' (rally day) in Agartala, like numerous other 'michil' days, the city is used to from time immemorial. But it turned out to be different. So different that it's going to take awhile to stop remembering the horror it unleashed on a city that for about a decade prided itself as the most peaceful in the region. In a matter of hours the sociological contour of the city got starkly redefined as 'Bengali' and 'tribal', 'us' and 'them'. It threw to winds the decade-long veneer of cultural synthesis and camaraderie upon which an illusion called 'Peace' uneasily rested.



There are interesting asides to the event too. If one were to compare yesterday's incidents of stone pelting, arson and lethal assault on individuals with what daily happens in most of those oversized Indian cities, this was a mere skirmish, surely. Elsewhere it would take a couple of hours for the city to get back to normal and continue life as it were.

It's a different story here. As I write this, Agartala's nearly half a million population and more than three million spread across the State wait with bated breath to see if the 'communal polarization' that resurfaced yesterday is going to intensify or diminish in the coming days. In the meantime, they

continue to feed on rumors and horror posts readily available on the social media. Why doesn't it take much here to derail an entire population? Is it simply the sign of a small State with a small population or that of a people with a set of genuine grievances ignored for a very long time?

It is equally alarming to see how interpretations of the same incident by the two sides are diametrically opposed to each other. Both sides explain their actions as responses to violence from the other side. There is a great deal of fear in the tribal living in the towns and the Bengalis living in the rural areas. But so what? Who bothers really!

Tripura has been through this earlier, more than once. But the lessons seem to have evaded us.

J. Pulinthanath, SDB



Experiencing the Mercy of the Father

As various programs continue in the Parishes for the Year of Mercy, our people are looking forward to visiting Don Bosco Church at Nandannagar and entering through the Door of Mercy as part of the Pilgrimage. Many have expressed their intention to make it a beautiful experience.

During this month however, only two groups made it to the Door of Mercy-the Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity from Kumarghat came along with children, the sick and the inmates for a day of Prayer as pilgrims of Mercy on 22nd July. Fr. Lawrence Darlong was available for Animation, Confession and the Holy Eucharist. They had a good experience.

On 17th August a group of 34 people from Ambassa Parish had a wonderful experience at the Church. Vincentian Fathers Abraham and Xavier Dilip made the pilgrimage a day to remember with the beautiful animation, charismatic style prayer, adoration, confession and Holy Mass.

An invitation to all: the pilgrimage may be had on any day of the week. On Sundays since we have the regular Masses, the Church will be free after 11am. If information is given on time, animators and confessors can be arranged and the possibility for meals is always there. As we get into the last 75 days of the year, I am sure many of our people who have not made the pilgrimage will be able to do so. *Fr. Sunny, SDB*

GACHIRAMPARA PARISH Women empowerment program

On 17th of July more than 60 women from all the sub-centres gathered at



Khodungsei Village for the Women Empowerment programme conducted by Sr. Punita, SJA, the Women

Commission Secretary of the Diocese. The Resource Person enlightened the Women about their role in the family, in the Church and in the society at large. She stressed the need on being a participatory woman than just being a number and member in the church. Several group activities interspersed with Talks, Songs and Skits, enlightened the Women about their role in today's world. The Women were delighted to participate especially the host community felt it was a great opportunity for them. The program ended with a fellowship meal.

Fr. Prasanna, OFM Cap.

KHUMULWNG PARISH Parish Feast celebrated with pomp

The Feast Day celebration began with Novena at all the sub-stations simultaneously.



Throughout the Novena we reflected on the holy life of St. Alphonsa and prayed through her intercession.

The Novena united the parishioners and enveloped them with a spirit of harmony. The Parish Sabha included instruction on SCC by Fr. Arul CSC and Year of Mercy with special reference to sin and forgiveness by Fr. P.J. SDB. The *motha* reports and parish pastoral report followed with discussion and action plan for the coming years. The Feast Day Eucharist on 31st July began with entrance dance, Bible procession, prayer of the faithful and offertory representing all the sub-stations. The cultural felicitation witnessed community-based dances with such a lot of variety. Belbari Maria Sangh fetched the 1st prize for their unity and harmony and the students of the Diocesan Minor Seminarians grabbed the 2nd prize for their group

dance on vocation. The Parish Feast was celebrated with a spirit of unity, harmony and fellowship.

Fr. Arun Minj, SVD

KATHALCHERRA PARISH My soul glorifies the Lord

Word became flesh: On 24th of July the SCC core committee of the Parish supported and guided the KCYM under the initiative of Fr Ishwar, CSC and conducted a day of Bible Seminar for the



Youth, based on the above theme. There were more than 100 Youth who participated from different villages. The Resource Persons were Fr. Ishwar CSC, Sr. Prema BS and Mr. Lokhoram Reang. Introduction to Bible, importance of Bible, basic reading style, general knowledge of Bible, and group discussion, were the main topics dealt by the Seminar. Thanks to Fr Lancy CSC the Parish Priest for his encouragement and support.

Knowledge beyond Walls: On 6th July all the class XI students under the care of Mr John Darlong, accompanied by three other teaching Staff went to Agartala for their excursion. It was a learning and wonderful experience for the students.

Call to holiness: On 7th August Good Shepherd Parish organized a Seminar for the laity of the Parish. The Resource Person Mr Paul Sangma highlighted the role and importance of laity in the church. Many laity from different village attended the program. The Talk was thought provoking and enlightening.

My soul magnifies the Lord: On 15th August we had the twin celebration of the feast of Assumption and 70th Independence of our country. There was colorful and meaningful celebration of liturgy organized by Maria Songho in the Church. The country's flag was hoisted in Kahtalcherra, Dhumacherra and Chailengta Holy Cross Schools. At Holy Cross Higher Secondary School, Mr. Balram Singh, the OC of Nepaltila police station was the Chief Guest. *Fr. Ishwar, CSC*

GANDACHERRA PARISH Village Chapels at Saidanandapara & Bagirtah

Blessings were brought to our Parish with the coming of our dear Bishop



Lumen Monteiro, through the blessing of two new Village Chapels. In the evening of the 11th August, St. Mary's Catholic *mondoli* was inaugurated and the little Chapel was blessed by our dear

Bishop. A few people were administered the initial Sacraments of Baptism, Communion and Confirmation. The simple people in this remote village where there is not even electricity were overjoyed to meet our Bishop in their very own village. A few parishioners also accompanied the Bishop.

On the next day Bishop Lumen addressed the school community. It was a joyous occasion for many of the new students of St. Arnold's School to see Bishop Lumen after four long years.

On 12th August our Bishop went for another blessing in Bhagirat Para, a remote village, one of the areas worst affected by malaria in the whole Dhalai District of Tripura. St. Paul Catholic *mondoli* was inaugurated and a new little village Chapel was blessed. Many people were administered the



Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. It was really a joyful occasion for these extremely poor people to meet the Bishop and show him the bamboo structured chapel which was built by their hard work and money on the slope of a hill in the middle of the jungle. May Mother Mary and St. Paul guide and bless the people of these two new *mondolis*. **Fr. Bosco Lathees**

MANDWI PARISH

Bishop's Pastoral Visit



7 t h August 2016 will remain a s a memorable day for the

Catholic community of Matham village. Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro CSC, the Bishop of Agartala made a pastoral visit to Mandwi Parish and the holy Eucharist was offered in

Matham *motha*. He reached the Parish centre and went around the parish complex and assessed the situation and expressed his concern for the parish Church and its future development. Then we started moving towards Matham where the faithful were already waiting to welcome their pastor, which they did with bouquet of fresh flowers, song and dance. People from different *mothas* were present and took part actively praying together. The holy Eucharistic celebration was a joyful and meaningful celebration. After the Eucharist a short felicitation program was conducted and was concluded with a vote of thanks by Mr. Sambu Debbarma. This was followed by a fellowship meal. On the way back our Bishop visited the tomb of a prominent Catholic lady and prayed for the repose of her soul, followed by a visit to the family of Mr. Rabindra Debbarma, a lay leader of the Diocese who had a sudden death. **Fr. Remol, SDB**

News from the Diocese

Holy Cross College Graduation Day:

Holy Cross College celebrated the 5th Graduation Day on 30th July at Rabindra Satabarshiki Bhavan, Agartala. The official function began with a prayer song followed by a short Message and Benediction by Fr. K.J. Abraham, CSC. The welcome

address was given by the Principal Fr. Emmanuel, CSC. The Valedictorians Baishali Chanda and Anirban Lodh thanked the College principal, teaching staff and non-teaching staff for the great experience they had at Holy Cross College. Dr. Gautam Basu, the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of MBB University in his speech congratulated Holy Cross College for the beautiful graduation day program. He invited the graduates to be responsible citizens as they go out into the world where competition is highlighted, morality is ignored, corruption is rampant, protest against corruption is subverted, inequality is unbearable, poverty is increasing, justice is denied, knowledge is silenced and power is violently projected. The entire program was made colorful and enjoyable with dances and songs of the junior students, breaking the monotony of speeches and messages. The vote of thanks was proposed by Fr. Sijo CSC, the



Administrator of the College. A total of 105 students, the class of 2016, which is the fifth batch, graduated from the College with their BA, B.Sc, and BBA degrees. *College News Reporter*

Mother Teresa Celebrations Press Conference

On August 17th a Press Conference was held at Press Club Agartala, organized by the Committee for the "Celebration of Canonization of Mother Teresa" headed by Sr. Celine FMA. Correspondents from over 25 different print and electronic media groups attend the Conference. Bishop Lumen chaired the Conference in which he spoke about the canonization event in Rome on 4th September followed by a celebration in Agartala. He said "The State of Tripura will join the rest of the world in celebrating the Canonization of Mother Teresa. In Agartala we have organized a set of special



programs on 10th and 11th September." Bishop also informed that he will attend the Canonization event and will represent the church in Tripura at Rome. Sr. Celine FMA, informed the media persons about the events planned for the celebration viz., Peace Rally on 10th September, followed

by Mother Teresa International Film Festival. An Inter religious Prayer Meet and a Cultural Program will be on 11th September at Rabindra Satabarshiki Bahwan, where the Chief Minister will be the Chief Guest. A copy of the Press Release prepared by Fr. Joseph Pulinthanath, SDB, was distributed to the media persons.

Fr. Lawrence Darlong

Auxilium Girls School, Nandanagar

The 70th Independence Day was celebrated at Auxilium School with great solemnity, joy and happiness. All the Sisters, teaching and non-teaching staff along with students were involved in preparing for the entire celebration. The whole campus was magnificently decorated with tricolor flags, tricolor balloons, etc. A great feeling of patriotism filled the air! The most significant item of the whole celebration was the hoisting of India's Flag. A variety of beautiful and colorful patriotic items were then performed. The whole program was covered satisfactorily by a team from 'Agartala Doordarshan'.



Khumpiri Debbarma Class VIII →

Capacity Building of DPO's

In the month of July JUST conducted a Capacity Building and Strengthening trainings for the Panchayat level Disabled Peoples Organization (DPO's). The Trainings were conducted at Tuichindrai Gram Panchayat and Duski ADC Village Council. The PDPO Members, PRI Members and community stakeholders took part in the training. 44 participants took part in the training program. The Panchayat Chairman and Vice Chairman spoke on the process of preparing Panchayat level action plan, Steps required for approval, Implementation of action plan, available development schemes at PRI level and the process to avail them. The trainees benefited from the Input.



Mothers Day Celebrations

On 10th July JUST organized Mother's Day celebration at Ambassa in Dhalai District of Tripura, under Women Empowerment Project. 105 participants took part in the celebration. Fr. Ivan and Sr. Cecilia were the Resource Persons. The program started with a word of welcome from Sr. Punitha welcoming the Resource Persons and all the participants. The Resource Persons spoke on the theme "Mother the Co- Creator" where they explained about the importance of Women as Co-Creators and their role in the family and society. The Resource Persons also spoke on family and faith sharing that each one of us may belong to different religion but faith is fundamental as there is no life without God. *Mr. Vincent Debbarma*



Rio. Biles, a record-shattering gymnast with a sparkling smile and bubbly energy that shines through her routines is the U.S. gymnastics team. The Texas teenager is a four-time national champion and the first female gymnast in history to win three consecutive world championships. But behind her jaw-dropping performances is a strong family and faith life that Biles (literally) carries with her. In a recent interview with *US magazine*, the athlete unpacked her Olympic bag, explaining the significance of each item. Along with her bottled water, bobby pins, Beats headphones and cheetah-print umbrella, Biles carries a white rosary. "My mom, Nellie, got me a rosary at church," she told the magazine. "I don't use it to pray before a competition. I'll just pray normally to myself, but it's there just in case."



Katie Ledecky is also one of the top athletes. The 19-year-old swimmer is a two-time Olympic gold medalist and nine-time world champion. The Bethesda, MD, athlete like Biles, has shattered world records. She is the current world-record holder in the 400-, 800- and 1,500-meter freestyle (long course). She also holds the fastest times in the 500-, 1000- and 1,650-yard freestyle events. Also like Biles, Ledecky's Catholic faith is central to her identity. Ledecky attended Catholic school her whole life. "My Catholic faith is very important to me. It always has been, and it always will be. It is part of who I am, and I feel comfortable practicing my faith. It helps me put things in perspective," Ledecky told the *Catholic Standard*, the newspaper of the Archdiocese of Washington, in a recent interview. She also confirmed that she prays a Hail Mary before each event. *National Catholic Register*

St. Teresa of Kolkata stamp

The Vatican will anticipate the canonization of Blessed Teresa of Kolkata with a special postage stamp, to be released September 2nd, two days before Pope Francis officially declares her a saint. The 95-cent stamp features a wrinkled but radiant Mother Teresa smiling in her blue-trimmed, white sari. Overlaid on the design by Patrizio Daniele is another image of her holding the hand of a small child. "Frail but equally determined in her vocation,



Mother Teresa loved God and the church with great strength," said the brochure announcing the stamp's release. "She was a humble messenger of the Gospel and of Christ's love, known as 'a small pencil in the hands of the Lord,' doing her work quietly and always with great love," it said. "She assisted the poor, the sick and the abandoned with tireless dedication, offering smiles and simple gestures, finding strength to persevere with her vocation through prayer and trust in God." *CNS via CNUA*

The smiling Olympians are deeply spiritual too!

Simone Biles and Katie Ledecky are two of the names in this year's Olympics in

Our Distinguished Visitors

- Fr. Dolphy Pais, OFM Cap, Provincial from Bengaluru
- Sr. Pushpa, CSC, Area Coordinator from Bangladesh
- SSpS Sisters Nidhi from Delhi & Sophia from Odisha
- SVD Fathers Cherian from Odisha, Roy from Indore, Mathew from Mumbai, Alwyn from Hyderabad & Felix from Delhi
- Sr. Angela, FSM Provincial from Bengaluru
- Sr. Shiji, FSM Provincial Bursar from Bengaluru

Nun among women awardees for outstanding social service

A Catholic nun was among 20 women the Indian President honored for outstanding social service. Sr. Lucy Kurien, who has been working among the destitute for nearly 20 years, received the Nari Shakti Puraskar 2015 for her outstanding contribution to women's empowerment at a special function in Rashtrapati Bhawan on the International Women's Day. The awardhonors individual women for their exceptional achievement, recognizing the spirit of courage of a woman in difficult circumstances both in her personal and professional life. Sr Kurien was the only Catholic to receive the award this year. She started Maher (= Mother's Home) in 1997 at Pune to shelter abandoned children, women and those with mental problems. *CNUA*

Bishop's Program for September 2016

- 04: Canonization of Mother Teresa, Rome
- 07: All Diocese Parish Priests Meet, Agartala
- All Diocese Youth Leaders Meet, Agartala
- All Diocese Sister Nurses Meet, Agartala
- Thanksgiving Eucharist for St. Mother Teresa, SFX Cathedral
- 10-11: Civic Celebrations for St. Mother Teresa, Agartala
- 11: Parish Feast, Tuikarmaw Parish
- 12-17: NERPC&NE Bishops Meet, Guwahati
- 20-23: Standing Committee Meet, Bengaluru
- 24-25: Parish Feast, Kamaranga
- 26: St. Vincent De Paul Feast, Baijalbari
- 29-30: NESNIM, Holy Cross Agartala