



DIOCESE OF AGARTALA

Agartala Diocesan News Letter

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Pastor's Corner

Pick yourself and walk!

The path to our God-given destiny will have different challenges. So you must expect them or rather, you must prepare yourself to face them. Why does the Bible record the failures of great men like Abraham, Moses, Elijah and Peter? I think it is to give us hope; to let us know that nobody performs flawlessly; to help us believe that if they can do it, by God's grace I can too.

The road to success, even in ministry, has many potholes. You'll fall into some and they're messy. Not only will you have to climb back out, you'll have to dust yourself off, refocus, recommit, and keep going. As someone said, since failure is inevitable, why not make it your friend? That is so true! One way to do it is by examining each experience and growing stronger through it. Once we learn to do that, we won't keep repeating the same mistakes; and more importantly, we'll become more stable--emotionally and spiritually.

The Lenten Season is a good time to begin, to pick



oneself up anew. In fact, what defines us is how well we rise after falling! So let us pick ourselves up anew and keep going.

With the ADPC Meet just concluded and the upcoming Pastoral Meeting, we in the Diocese are busy evaluating our call to mission. I found this very interesting plan for Christian living by Fr. Greenfield **who calls it Algebra of Mission** and even has a formula: $CSM + CST = CSL$; that is, **Christian Scripture Meditating + Catholic Social Teaching = Church Social Living**. *This excerpt from his address to the religious in USA in 2014 clarifies the simple and clear road map: I develop three topics that constitute what I am calling an "algebra of mission;" namely, that meditating on and praying with Scripture, complemented by an understanding and personal integration of Catholic Social Teaching, give us a clear road map for living together as Church, a true People of God. Or, more simply, if you throw a Bible and the Church's Compendium of Social Teaching into a blender, out would pop a missioner with a game plan for Christian living.*

+Lumen, CSC



Editorial

Results of Education

The month of March always comes a bit too soon, especially for students who must encounter examinations of various sorts, and for many others too who ought to send in reports and wind up accounts on the last month of the financial year. For students especially, this is the month many have been eagerly waiting for, getting ready for.

In most cases major examinations also mark the end of something a semester, an year, a stage, a degree and so on. Having completed their study, many of our students will leave our schools and hostels at the end of this month's examinations. It is likely that some of them have been with us for many years. As they walk out of our safe campuses into the wide world, how prepared are they to face the challenges that await them out there?

Our institutions have the proud tradition of equipping our wards not only with book-knowledge, but other skills too. By and large they are a confident lot that march out of our campuses. They generally have more than a smattering of the



English language, an appreciable level of general knowledge as well as subject knowledge, and a good enough bearing and demeanor to be considered educated. It is never easy to instill anything in anyone these days and if we have succeeded in giving our students the above-mentioned qualities, we believe we have adequate reason to feel satisfied.

Without undermining the importance of any of the achievements mentioned above, it could be said that there's yet something else that should bother us as they pass out of our institutions. What are their attitudes to things, persons, and realities of life? What are the beliefs that give rise to their

attitudes? In other words, Have the years those young people stayed with us helped them to form beliefs and convictions, attitudes and behavior that are other-oriented and unselfish? Do they believe in values like sharing, compassion, kindness, gentleness, tolerance and forgiveness? Or are we only giving cosmetic touches to self-obsessed monsters with impressive knowledge of geography and mathematics, English and etiquette?

The month of March makes one think, indeed. In the meantime, good luck to our students who are appearing for examinations. **J. Pulinthanath, sdb**

Good Shepherd Parish, Kathalcherra

Pariah Sabha 2015, "Consecrate your families to God"

Good Shepherd Parish Kathalcherra celebrated their 24th Annual Parish Sabha on 30th Jan to 1st February 2015 at Dumacherra Village. 572 people attended



the Parish Sabha. They were filled with joy to come together and celebrate their faith. On the first day we discussed about Parish and the need to participate in the Parish Program. On the second day Fr. Cyprian, SVD highlighted the importance of making our family holy. Holiness is not a finished product which we can buy but it is the combination of many virtues that makes us holy. He spoke of the Holy Eucharist as the Source and Center of our life. In the afternoon Bishop Lumen Monteiro was ceremonially welcomed to the parish Sabha after which all the *mondolis* presented their reports. After supper the cultural program and various competitions were conducted. On the final day we were privileged to celebrate the Birthday of Bishop Lumen. It was a grace filled moment for all of us. Bishop offered the Holy Eucharist for us. After holy Mass the participants greeted him with flowers, song and cutting the cake. The finale was the Parish Report by Parish Priest Fr. Lancy CSC and Financial Report of the parish by Fr. Valerian CSC. The Parish Priest thanked everyone and especially the local faithful for their untiring work for the success of the Parish Sabha. Everyone appreciated the Parish Sabha.

Maria Sango Sabha:-Mother Mary a model for Catholic Women

Good Shepherd Parish, Kathalcherra, witnessed its 24th Maria Sango Sabha on 9th to 11th January 2015. It was a spectacular episode to see a large number of Women leaving their homes for three days and assembling together under one roof to report their yearly activities and to plan for the future. During the Sessions Fr. Ivan, SVD spoke on the importance of the Holy Eucharist and made them aware of the sacredness of the Sacrament, encounter with the Lord, and blessings on them to make their family holy. He



also insisted Women to remodel their lives according to

Mother Mary. Parish Priest Fr. Lancy threw light on the importance of Prayer with few simple questions on what is prayer, why to pray, and how we pray. He urged them to make their families praying families. Evening time was spent in various competitions, fun and frolic. Garo *kirtan* brought lots of joy to the people. The participants were grateful to God for all the blessings received through the intercession of Mother Mary. These were indeed days of sharing, of joy, of strengthening the faith and deepening the bond of Love. *Sr. Suman BS*

St. Alphonsa Parish Khumulwng Let's go elsewhere and Preach....

Inspired by Jesus' enthusiasm for mission (Mk. 1:38), St. Alphonsa parishioners decided to go to the neighbouring villages to preach the Word of God. They went to a non-



Christian Debbarma inhabited village called Subinpara about 15kms from Khumulwng Parish headquarters. They hired vehicles, bought new blankets, collected clothes on their own expense, and set to the village. On arrival, devotional singing began, the Gospel was read and preached by the parish priest followed by M.C. Sisters and different village leaders' address. At the end of the preaching new blankets and holy pictures were distributed to the poor villagers. It was a real Lenten sacrifice and contribution to the poor people by the parishioners who generously contributed in terms of time, energy, money and faith. Jesus sends you and me to go elsewhere to preach... are we ready and willing?

St. Andre Parish Bodhjungnagar Kids Mela

To mark the day of **HOLY CHILDHOOD DAY** we had a Kids Mela in Bodhjungnagar on February 08. Kids from different *mothas* came to participate in the *mela*. The day began with a special Holy Eucharist

after which there were many competitions. The whole crowd was divided into four groups. The *mela* came to an end with prize distribution and community meal. This was the first time kids from the villages got a chance to come and enjoy together with other children in the Parish.

Parish Day Celebrations and Nine Days Novena to St. Andre

In preparation for the Parish Day Celebration we had nine-day long Novena program in our Parish which began on January 24 and concluded on February 1, 2015. The first day and last three days the Novena were conducted in the Parish Church, while for the remaining days it was conducted in different villages. Thanks to Frs. Abraham K.J., Robert, Kanikai, Bosco, C.V. Jose, Suresh and Michael for their availability in conducting the Novena program. The Parish Day celebration on February 1 began with Eucharistic Procession to the neighboring villages, which was followed by Holy Eucharist and concluded with community meal for all the faithful. There were about 600 people who participated in the celebrations.

Blessing and Inauguration of a new Village Chapel at Radhanagar



It was a day of rejoicing for the people of Radhanagar *motha* not only because they were blessed

with the presence of our dear Bishop Lumen, but also because they have now a Chapel where all the 200 members can come together and pray. Thanks to the Sisters of Peter Claver, Italy, and the faithful of two parishes in Ireland for it was they who helped us financially to put up this Chapel.

There were 170 Confirmations on the same occasion and I think that was the biggest number in the Diocese so far! There were about 700 people from different *mothas* gathered at Radhanagar to be part of the celebrations. What was even more moving was that Radhanagar *motha* fed all those who were present for the program. It was indeed a beautiful day for all of us in the Parish.

Fr. Jilson Tom, CSC



Holy Spirit Parish, Ambassa Sacrament of Confirmation in Holy Spirit Parish, Ambassa

On 15th February, 102 parishioners from



Holy Spirit Parish received the Sacrament of

Confirmation from His Excellency, Lumen Monteiro, CSC, the Bishop of Agartala. People from different sub-stations came to the Parish centre at Ambassa to participate in the Holy Mass presided over by our dear Bishop Lumen and concelebrated by SVD Frs. Ivan and Cyprian. In his homily, Fr. Cyprian spoke of the power of the Holy Spirit and also how it is poured out abundantly upon the people during the 'Sacrament of Confirmation.' He also told that the gentle tap given by the Bishop on the cheek of the Confirmation receiver is a sign of asking him/her to be strong in life. Further, he concluded beautifully emphasizing the fact that having been bestowed with the gift of the Holy Spirit; we are called to march forward as soldiers of Christ facing and overcoming the struggles and difficulties that are strewn in the path of our lives. After the Eucharistic celebration, the parishioners shared their joy and love with each other by distributing sweets. Fr. Ivan along

with the Parish Council members had beautifully organized the day's event which was appreciated by all. *Fr. Miffline, svd*

Jeevadhara Minor Seminary 12 Seminarian Disciples on the Lake...



Damboor Dam, a Hydel project in Gomati District of Tripura, is about 100kms from the

Diocesan Minor Seminary, Champaknagar. As the young lads got holidays from School, they set out for the Dam as early as they could on 23rd January. The Dam is spread over 10kms from Tirthamukh Village in Depacherra to Gomati in Gandacherra, covering whole lot of hilly land. They boarded motor boat carrying food packets along, and went to the other side of the Dam journeying for an hour and half. A boat is the only means of transport to reach to different villages in that area, providing access to villages. The main occupation of the people is fishing for their livelihood reminding Seminarians of the occupation of the disciples of Jesus. Someone rightly

reflected: now on we have to fish men for the kingdom of God on the land. The journey on the lake was calm and peaceful, calming worries and anxieties of the Seminarians. They also visited some of the new mission stations equipping themselves with knowledge of the vast expanse of the Diocese.

Fr. Arun Minj, SVD

Christ the King Parish, Depacherra

Day of Old and Sick

On 7th February 2015, a special program was organized for the old and sick people of our Parish. About 35 people attended the program. During this program Parish council and the



Parish Priest extolled the great sacrifices that our elders

have made in sustaining the catholic faith in this area. Hostel children organized an entertainment program. All of them were given free medical checkup and were distributed warm cloths. On behalf the elders Mr. Thanda Uchoi thanked the Parish Priest and other members who were part of this program for remembering and showing concern and care for the old. It was followed by a sumptuous meal.

Mr. Ashim Uchoi

Glimpses from Tripura

Biggest solar plant in Northeast begins power generation

Northeast India's biggest solar power plant has generated optimum power on 8 February, after five days of commissioning. The plant at is situated at Monarchak in Tripura and is run by the Northeast Electric Power Corporation (NEEPCO). "The 5 MW solar would be feeding to the grid of Tripura State Electricity Corporation Ltd (TSECL) at the cost of Rs 7 per unit," said Monarchak project head S R Biswas. According to him, NEEPCO, under Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), is embarking a plan to generate at least 1500 MW power from non-conventional sources of energy, especially by tapping solar power and wind in the region by 2020. *mattersindia.com*

Tripura hosts Asia's largest theatre festival

The 17th edition of Bharat Rang Mahotsav, Asia's largest theatre festival, enthralled the people of Agartala. Tripura Chief Minister

Manik Sarkar inaugurated the six-day Mahotsav, organised by the National School of Drama (NSD). "This year the festival began its journey from New Delhi.



The 18-day-long festival started in the national capital from Feb 1,"

NSD society chairman Ratan Thiyam told reporters. He said: "This year, for the first time ever, the festival is travelling out of the national capital to other Indian cities, including Agartala, Jabalpur, Aurangabad and Panaji." The theme for this year's carnival is 'Breaking Borders'. "From 12 participating countries, 82 productions in 23 languages and performances by 125 groups, the 17th edition of the Mahotsav is all poised to be a colossal affair," he said.

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Holy Cross College concludes National Science Conference

The venue of the National Science Seminar was the new campus of Holy Cross College at Jubatara, Agartala. The response for the Seminar had been overwhelming from scholars, guests and participants of 65 abstracts from presenters for this Seminar can be considered as any criteria at all for judgment. Besides the guest participants from other Higher Educational Institutions in the State and other States of Northeast India, over 400 students and faculty members of Holy Cross College too participated in the Seminar. The National Seminar on the topic 'Biodiversity in the North East Indian Hotspot: Science and



Society Perspectives' was inaugurated on the 7th Feb by Prof. M. Premjit Singh, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of Central Agricultural University, Imphal. The dignitaries were welcomed by Dr. Fr. Emmanuel Kallarakal, CSC, Principal, Holy Cross College. A total of 65 participants from the Tripura, Bangladesh,

Bhutan, Vietnam and other NE states presented their scholarly papers in the seminar. The valedictory function was held in the evening hours of 08th Feb, 2015. The Chief Guest of the occasion was Sri Ashutosh Jindal, Secretary, Higher Education, Govt. of Tripura. The two days' Seminar generated many new ideas and was an enriching experience.

Press release

Glimpses from the Indian sub-Continent

Director of JRS held Hostage by Taliban in Afghanistan Released

Father Alexis Prem Kumar has been released from captivity as a hostage of the Taliban in Afghanistan. He had been in the hands of the Taliban for almost nine months. At the time of his kidnapping Father Kumar was the head of the Afghan section of the Jesuit Refugee Service. He belongs to the Jesuit Province of Madurai and has worked with the Jesuit Refugee Service for more than ten years. Father Kumar was abducted from a school for refugees that he was visiting in the village of Sohadat, about 25 km from the provincial capital city of Herat. According to press reports his release was the result of interventions by the Indian government. "Delighted at securing the release of Indian Jesuit priest Father Alexis Prem Kumar from captivity in Afghanistan," Indian

Our Distinguished Visitors

- Fr. Ronald Lobo, SVD Provincial from Curitiba, Brazil
- Fr. Joseph Paes, SVD from Bargarh, Odisha
- Bro. Subal and Fr. Epping from CSC General Team, USA
- Fr. George Maliekal, SDB Provincial from Shillong

Bishop's Program for March 2015

- 01: Parish Pastoral Program, Bishramganj
- 03: Clergy Meet & Recollection, Agartala
- 04-07: 10th Tsunami Remembrance, Pondicherry
- 08: Parish Pastoral Program, Amarapur
- 11-16: NE Bishops Meet, Miao
- 18: JUST GB Meet, Agartala
- 19: St. Joseph Hospital Blessing, Amtali
- 20: Holekhet Program, Tuikarmaw Parish
- 21: Sports Day, Depacherra School
- 22: Chellagam Confirmations, Depacherra Parish
- 23-28: Caritas India field visit, Jharkhand
- 29: Palm Sunday, Nandanagar Parish
- 31: Pastoral Meet & Chrism Mass,

JUST Programs

Training on Land Rights

Training on Land Rights and Land use was organized by JUST Agartala through ASHA under Peace project on 29th January 2015 at Sonkhala, Khowai Tripura. The Resource person for the training was Mr. Amit Debbarma, BA, LLB, Practicing lawyer, Agartala High Court. 45 participants (11 male and 34 female) took part in the training program. The Resource Person Mr. Amit Debbarma spoke on different types of land like; Khas land or forest land and Juth land. He also stressed the need for having proper land documents. The participants too clarified



Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted on Sunday February 22. Father Kumar thanked God and Prime Minister Modi. He said, "This is because of our Prime Minister. He saved me. He talked to me after I landed, and he arranged for my family to come here... I thank the people of Tamil Nadu and the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu as well." zenit.org

CCBI Bishops march to protest church attacks

Inaugurating the week-long Assembly of the Conference of the Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI) in Bengaluru on February 3, Archbishop Salvatore Pennacchio, Apostolic Nuncio to India and Nepal, exhorted the Church in India to promote harmony and to fight discrimination. The CCBI 27th Plenary



their doubts regarding land issue with the resource person. The training was concluded with vote of thanks by one of the SHG member.

JUST links SHGs with Spices Board

On 19th January 2015, JUST in association with Spices Board, Agartala, conducted a one day training on Turmeric processing at Baijalbari Resource Centre, Khowai. 60 JUST SHG members participated in the training program and learned about various processes of producing good quality turmeric powder. Dr. Manoj Oomen and Mr. Kumar from Spices Board were the Resource Persons for the training. The Women are confident of producing quality Turmeric powder.

Mr. Deepan Gurung

Assembly was attended by 130 Bishops at St John's National Academy of Health Sciences, Bengaluru. Cardinal Oswald Gracias, CCBI President in his Address, called for making the liturgy 'relevant, participative, inculturated and transformative rather than ritualistic and materialistic'.

On February 6 the 130 Bishops from across the country marched through the streets of Bengaluru chanting Hail Mary and carrying banners. Cardinal Oswald Gracias and Cardinal Telespore Toppo led the 'March for Peace and Harmony' along with nuns and priests. The Bishops said they are "distressed over divisive steps from passing of resolutions to ban Christian practices at village level to an aborted national level bid to keep educational institutions open even on Christmas Day." UCAN-India

Global News Tidbits

Tech-savvy Pope shares laughter, advice with special needs kids



Vatican City Pope Francis virtually joined seven young people with disabilities and special needs in his second Google Hangout as pontiff, sharing jokes, advice and encouragement. "Each one of us has a treasure inside," the Pope told the young people during his Feb. 5 Google Hangout. He said that when "we share our own treasure with others, it multiplies along with the treasures that come from the others we meet. What I want to say is don't hide the treasure that each one of you has. Sometimes we find it right away. Sometimes you have to do a little game of treasure hunt. But once you find it, share it, because when you share it you receive from others and it multiplies."

Mattersindia.com

Monk who designed bullet trains and motor cycle dies



Japanese industrial designer Kenji Ekuian, whose works ranged from a bullet train to the red-capped Kikkoman soy sauce dispenser as familiar as the classic Coca-Cola bottle, has died, his company said. He was 85. A former monk, Ekuian crafted a tabletop bottle for Kikkoman Corp. in 1961, winning international popularity both for the handy, flask-shaped dispenser and of course for the salty brown condiment flavoring many Asian cuisines. He had said he wanted to design a small bottle because of his childhood memory of his mother pouring soy sauce from a big half-gallon bottle to a tabletop dispenser, reported Hindustan times.

Other of his renowned works include the Yamaha VMAS motorcycle, the Komachi bullet train connecting Tokyo and northern Japan, the Narita Express airport liner, as well as audio equipment and company logos. Mattersindia.com