



Agartala Diocesan Newsletter

DIOCESE OF AGARTALA

Lead Us Onward



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Pastor's Corner

Celebrating Hope at Easter

For forty days we have followed Jesus through the days of penance. We have fasted, prayed and given alms to the poor. We have carried our tears, fears and anxieties through the way of the cross and followed Jesus up to Calvary. As Easter dawns, we are sure our hope did not disappoint us by the grace which flows from it. The gospels present us with the story of how hopelessness was destroyed by hope. Hope is much harder to come by. The women did not go to the tomb looking for hope. They were searching for a place to grieve. They wanted to be left alone in despair. But the terrifying prospect of Easter is that God called these women to return to the same world that crucified Jesus with a very dangerous gift: hope in the power of God, the unending reservoir of forgiveness and an abundance of love. The resurrection of Jesus offers hope to a world in the grave of misery, especially when there seems to be no hope of a new beginning. With hope we know that light will outshine darkness,



truth will conquer falsehood, goodwill will triumph over evil, and life will exceed death.

In his Lenten Message this year, Pope Francis had invited us to "ascend a high mountain in the company of Jesus and to live a particular experience of spiritual discipline – *ascesis* – as God's holy people." He encouraged us to 'listen to Jesus' by dutifully attending the liturgy and studying the Bible. Tabor experiences are few and far between. But they prepare us to face the passion and death of our daily lives, and stand by those who experience it as well.

Soon we will be commemorating Holy Week and participating in the Paschal Mystery of the death and Resurrection of Jesus and relive his agony on the Cross to Calvary. But the Paschal Mystery does not stop with Good Friday. There is Easter Sunday, the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead. For the Christian it is death to sin and resurrection to new life from the very springs of divine life given to us by the Risen Lord. St. Augustine rightly says, "We do not abandon ourselves to despair. We are an Easter people and hallelujah is our song." This Easter, let us see and believe in the tomb's convincing witness to the message of Easter: we have a path to holiness, life, and a new beginning. HAPPY EASTER.

+Lumen, CSC



EDITORIAL

A Week to Remember

The opportunity to celebrate year after year Holy Week is among the greatest privileges we get as Catholics. Often, the weeklong celebration, culminating in Easter is also the most memorable time of our parish liturgical calendar. As the season of Lent draws near to its conclusion, the clarion call to 'return to the Lord' reverberates within us. And we respond to the call of grace by making amends and starting afresh. The fervor with which our faithful generally take part in the Holy Week services is but an indication of the result of this transforming movement of grace in the depths of their hearts. The many parish level programs that characterize this season exude the spirit of the season – one of reconciliation and returning to the Lord. Despite it

being also the examination season, the Lenten season is marked by better church attendance and frequent reception of the Sacraments. The pastors in the parishes who are aware of this 'interior movement of grace' in the faithful generally make the best of this blessed season.



Holy Week

As the Holy Week approaches, there is the need to intensify our efforts to celebrate worthily the rich liturgy of the season which has many annually recurring rituals and symbols like the washing of the feet, passion narrative, veneration of the cross, blessing the new fire and water, etc. Our faithful who are relatively new to faith can be helped to participate in these and experience their rich significance and meaning only with some extra efforts on the part of the pastors. These 'extra efforts' not only relate to explanations given, but also

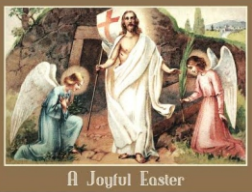
to the manner in which they are celebrated. We would do well to ensure that the overall decorum of the liturgy is maintained and that these mysteries are celebrated with the dignity and devotion they deserve.

May the Holy Week celebrations help us to immerse ourselves with Christ and rise again to new life in him. Happy Easter. May the peace of the Risen Lord be ours this blessed Season. **J. Pulinthanath, SDB**

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

- ❖ Bishop - Elect Wilbert Marwein, on his appointment as the Bishop of Nongstoin. His Episcopal Ordination will take place at Nongstoin on 16th April 2023.
- ❖ Bishop-Elect Joachim Walder, on his appointment as the Auxiliary Bishop of Aizawl.
- ❖ Ms. Elisha Kalai, from Montfort School Champaknagar, the newly elected Regional President of YCS/YSM.

Easter Greetings



A Joyful Easter

As Easter approaches, LINK extend warmest wishes to all our Readers. May this Easter fill your hearts with Peace, joy and love.

Parish News Briefs

DEPACHERRA PARISH

Foundation Blessing of Higher Secondary Block



On 15th March 2023, Bishop Lumen Monteiro, C.S.C. blessed and laid the foundation of a new Higher Secondary Block at Holy Cross Higher Secondary School, Depacherra, in the presence of Fr. Thomas Pereira, C.S.C. (Dean of Depacherra Deanery), Fr. Lawrence Darlong (Principal & Parish Priest), Fr. Francis Xavier, C.S.C. (Financial Administrator), Mr. Rajib Debbarma (Engineer & Contractor), Diocesan Fathers, Sisters, Brothers, Parishioners, Teachers, Students and construction laborers. Fr. Lawrence in his introduction said that this new building is an initiative to cater to the growing needs of the school which will benefit thousands of students. Bishop Lumen in his address said that this new School Block should be a place of wisdom, where knowledge is pursued with diligence and truth is sought with passion. He added that young minds and hearts must be formed here and prepared to face the challenges of the world. Bishop Lumen also fondly remembered and prayed for the benefactors because of whom this project saw the light of day. The Birthday of our dear Fr. Lawrence was an auspicious day to begin a new work.

Bishop's Pastoral Visit to Nabinpara motha

On 26th February 2023 Bishop Lumen Monteiro, made his pastoral visit to Nabinpara Motha under

Depacherra Parish. On his arrival, Bishop was warmly welcomed by the people of the Nabinpara, Paishoa



Para, Twikrakmaw (A), Tayankhu Para, and Parua Para. Bishop Lumen then offered the Holy Eucharist. During the homily, Bishop said that Lent should lead us to resist temptation, bring conversion of heart and celebrate our resurrection into new life. After Holy Mass, Fr. Lawrence and the people expressed their heartfelt gratitude to Bishop for this pastoral visit. This was followed by a short felicitation program. This Pastoral Visit was a moment of joy for the local *mothas* to express their unity and faith.

Blessing Foundation of a new Primary School at Duluma (Paharpur)



On 25th February 2023, Bishop Lumen Monteiro, C.S.C. blessed and laid the foundation of a new primary school at Duluma under Depacherra Parish. Bishop Lumen in his address to the people of the locality said that the mission of the church is to make education available and accessible to all. This was an initiative taken for the upliftment of the society in the surrounding vicinity. Fr. Lawrence Darlong, the Parish Priest and Principal thanked the Bishop for blessing the foundation and for granting permission for the pressing need of a School in this locality. The local leaders thanked Bishop Lumen and Fr. Lawrence and were excited with this new School coming up in the neighborhood.

Bro. Derrick Augustine

AMBASSA PARISH

Sacrament of Confirmation administered



Ambassa (Tripura) 05 March, 2023: Holy Spirit Catholic Church organized a day for the Sacrament of Confirmation administered by Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC. There were 92 Candidates who received the Confirmation. On the previous day they had the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and were given a rehearsal. The Parish Priest Fr. Ivan welcomed Bishop the main celebrant and the Candidates for the Mass. During the sermon Bishop called to the attention of the faithful about the Lent and the meaning of Sacrament of Confirmation.

International Women's Day Celebration



Ambassa (Tripura) 19 March, 2023: To commemorate the International Women's Day Holy Spirit Ambassa Deanery organized a one day Seminar. Women from 3 Parishes under Dhalai District, 94 of them in all, gathered in the Church for the Mass at 9:30 am offered by Fr. Maxim Rodrigues the Regional Superior of SVD ING. In his homily he praised the contribution of Women in the families, the Church and in the Society. After the

Mass the Session was organized by Sr. Sushila SSps from Gandacherra on 'Gender Equality' followed by Sr. Rita SSps on 'Eucharist' being the Year of the Holy Eucharist. Mrs. Kimi Halam, the President of the Ambassa Deanery, called on Women to make an Action Plan for this year. Fr. Ivan D'Silva the PP gave a Talk in which he said, "When you are more spiritually oriented, you also need to be action oriented." Towards the end, there was singing competition. With lunch the gathering was concluded. *Ivan D'Silva, SVD*

KARBOOK PARISH

Blessing and Inauguration of new Presbytery



15th March, 2023: With gratitude to God we celebrated the oneness and unity of the parish as we gathered for the blessing of the new parish house. our dear Bishop Lumen then cut the ribbon, lit the lamp, and led the blessing prayers. A new presbytery came into existence. In his address our Bishop especially thanked the generous donors from Bamberg, Germany. The melodious singing by our hostel children led the congregation into a prayerful atmosphere. Fr. Thomas Pereira, CSC, Depacherra Dean, and Fathers from Diocesan Fraternity were present for the function. Our Hostel children and people too participated in this venture of love. After a short felicitation program, Fr. K.M. Allwin, the Parish Priest, proposed the vote of thanks and thanked Bishop, the Engineer, and everyone for their presence. The program concluded with fellowship meal. *Fr. S. George*

MOHARPARA PARISH

Leadership Training



Moharpara Parish gathered its Leaders for one day training on 11th March, 2023. The event commenced by

invoking the Holy Spirit followed by words of welcome by Fr. Arbok CSC. Fr. Ivan D'Silva SVD, Parish Priest of St. Arnold Parish Ambassa, initiated the training program by showing a video clip. During the session, he discussed topics such as: leadership in the church, role of local *motha* President and Secretary, different rubrics in the liturgy, and so on. He also exhorted the leaders to have daily family prayer as to set an example for others. Fr. Ivan dealt in great detail on the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), and celebration of the Sacraments and their rubrics. He also gave them hints on how to preach and give homily in the absence of a priest and in any occasion. The participants were given an opportunity to clarify their doubts through question hour and many took an active part in it. The event concluded with a short evaluation and common meal shared by all.

Youth Leaders Meet



The Youth Leaders of the Parish gathered for one day Seminar on 19th March in Khakchangni Isiri Church, Twichakma. The Seminar commenced with the Holy Eucharist presided over by Fr. Arbok CSC. During homily the Parish Priest exhorted the Leaders to be the light and to walk in the way of the light by living a true Christian life. After Mass a session was animated by part time Catechist Sukanta Debbarma from Mandwi Parish. He shared his life experience how he encountered Christ and suffered many consequence because of his faith in Jesus. He encouraged the Leaders to stay away from addictions and to stay committed to Christ. The program concluded with small meeting and a common meal shared by all.

Fr. Arbok Lyngdoh, CSC

KAMARANGA PARISH

SCC Introductory Workshop



SCC is one of the important faith exercises that brings unity and oneness in village community and the Church. It strengthens and sustains the faith. It is one of the best medium of reflecting and praying together. It gives the faith experience of early Christian community. We organized SCC Introductory Workshop to bring awareness and involvement of all on 26th February 2023. There were about 200 men, women, youth and children participated in the workshop. Fr. Lancy D'Souza CSC, (SCC Secretary of the Diocese) Sr. Bastian D'Silva F.S. explained the origin and development of the Catholic faith and growth of the Church. They emphasized the importance and urgency of SCC in the Church community today. The workshop on SCC has brought awareness and interest in the parishioners.

Youth in Action



An "iron can cut an iron". Youth involvement is one of the powerful means to bring the confused and disinterested youth to the Church community. The Parish Youth decided to have a 'Youth Awareness & Animation Program' on 19th February by visiting every village twice a month to inspire and bring the Youth to the Church. Accordingly, they visited Srirampur village sub-Centre on 5th March and encouraged the Youth to take an active role in the Church activities. The Parish Youth returned happy and excited exactly like "the seventy-two who returned with joy and said, Lord even the demons obey us..." *Fr. Arun Minj SVD*

TUIKARMAW PARISH

Annual Parish Sabha



The Annual Parish Sabha was held from 11th-12th March in St. Mary's Parish Tuikarmaw. The Theme of the Parish Sabha was Marriage and Family Life. Fr. Jeevan SVD was the Resource Person on the first day. Some of the highlights of the Parish Sabha were the Presentation of the *mondali* reports, discussion on the pastoral concerns

of the Parish, and election of the Parish Secretary and Asst. Parish Secretary. Bishop Lumen gave a Talk on the Holy Eucharist and Family Life. On 12th the Holy Eucharist began at 9.30 am, presided over by Bishop Lumen. During the Mass newly elected Parish Secretary Mr. Jagdish Uchoi, Asst. Secretary Mr. Paban Chiran and some of the *mondali* Leaders were sworn in. After the Eucharist Fr. Thomas Pereira, CSC, the Parish Priest gave a Talk on 'Being a contributing church'. He emphasised on giving tithes. Fr. Thomas also presented a brief Pastoral Report and detailed financial report of the Parish. The Sabha ended with Bishop's final blessing and a fellowship meal.

Mr. Jagdish Uchoi, Parish Secretary

CHALENGTA PARISH

Parish Sabha

A memorable trio event took place to light up the year with the most waited Annual Maria Sangha, Parish Sabha, and St. Joseph Feast Day celebration. It was a great blessing to have our dear Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC for these 3 level programs. A true zealous Shepherd, he was an immense encouragement for our parishioners and also for us religious men and women with his presence for two consecutive days, viz., on 18th and 19th March 2023. The theme for the programs



was "Behold your mother" (John 19:27). On 18th March Fr. Bosco Lathees (Director of JUST & Advisor of CLT) dwelt on "The Family, Faith and the holy Rosary". Bishop Lumen Monteiro spoke "On the Year of the Eucharist". Sr. Roshni SRA presented on the "Life of St. Joseph" our Parton—both of the Universal Church and our fledgling (2 year old) Parish. The holy Eucharist with Confirmations and First Holy Communion was presided over by our dear Bishop. Besides the Input Sessions we also had Group singing competition, Dance competition, and Election of the new Maria Sangha President and Secretary. The Sabha came to an end with the presentation of reports by all the *mondolis* and our Parish Priest Fr. Harry D'Silva CSC. This was followed by the action plan and giving away of prizes. The festive agape concluded the trio event.

Fr. Ruwnglal Friny Peter, CSC

News Briefs from JUST

Training on Conflict Resolution Skills



Conflict Resolution Skills trainings were conducted with the SHGs at Twikarmaw, Belbari and Burburia on 14th, 15th and 18th March 2023 consecutively. There were 56 SHG Women who participated in the trainings. The trainings were conducted to provide the SHGs with the necessary skills needed in an organizational setting to achieve a stronger and better relationship with each other where everyone can live in harmony. The Peace Team explained some of the necessary skills required in conflict resolution, like Communication Skills, Active Listening Skills and Empathy. During

the trainings one of the Women SHG from Twikarmaw shared by quoting an example of a conflict in her family, saying that conflict is due to misunderstanding, lack of communication and absence of discussion in the family. She said that to avoid conflict within a family, understanding one another and communicating with each other is very important. The Women SHG participants then said that they would be sharing what they have learned with their family, friends, and neighbors.

Health Camps by JUST



Health Camps were organized at Chandiram Para and Janakya Para on 25th February and 13th March 2023 under Karbook R.D Block in Gomati District. From 2 villages about 300 people benefited from the Health camps. Doctors from Karbook and Natun Bazaar PHCs came for the Health camps. The objective of conducting the Health camp was to create awareness of general health among the people, provide general health care services and counseling them on basic healthcare and hygiene. Majority of the people who attended the camp were suffering due to lack of proper drinking water. People were diagnosed with various common but seriously neglected problems such as acute fever, gastric,

loose motion and mal-nourished. All the children were provided with medicines and vitamin tonics and those suffering from loose motion were given ORS.

Mr. Robert Lushai

Bishop's Program for April 2023

- 01: Grandparents Day, Holy Cross School Agartala
- 02: Palm Sunday, Dupcherra under Mariamnagar
- 03: Meet AC Provincial Sr. Diksha
- 04: Pastoral Meet, Agartala
Chrism Mass, Cathedral
- 06-07: Holy Week, Depacherra Parish
- 08-09: Easter Services, Kumarghat Parish
- 11-13: NERBC Meet, Bongaigaon
- 14: NEDSSS GB Meet, Guwahati
- 16: Episcopal Ordination, Nongstoin
- 20: SDB Pre -Novices Day, Herma
- 23: Chapel Blessing & Jubilee, Khumulwng *motha*
- 24: DM Sisters Convent Blessing, Burakha
- 30: Confirmations, Burburia under Amarpur Parish

Our Distinguished Guests

- CSC Frs. Chellapandey & Simon Paul from Bengaluru
- Sr. Helen, SAC Provincial Superior, from Bengaluru
- Thomas Mar Anthonios, Syro Malankara Bishop of Gurgoan, Delhi
- Benedictine Srs. Sylvia & Alicia, from Punjab
- Fr. Maxim, SVD Regional Superior from Guwahati
- Fr. Biju Micheal, SDB S.Asia Regional Superior from Rome
- PSDP Frs. Christopher, Tomy & Binoy from Guwahati
- Sr. Grace OLG Provincial & OLG Srs. Jessy & Jency from MP
- Sr. Mary Pothempally, SCCG Provincial from Guwahati
- Sr. Rosetta, SCCG Councilor from Silchar

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