



## Pastor's Corner

## International Women's Day

On 8 March we celebrate International Women's Day. It is a day for us to join voices with people around the world and shout our message for equal rights loud and clear: *"Women's rights are human rights!"* We celebrate all women, in all their diversities. It's a time to celebrate the achievements of women, whether social, political, economic or cultural.

"DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality" is the theme for the International Women's Day 2023. According to the United Nations the theme presents a few broader perspectives. Primarily it celebrates the women and girls who are championing the advancement of transformative technology and digital education. Secondly, it reflects the importance of protecting the rights of women and girls in digital spaces and addressing the gender-based violence against women and girls facilitated by information and communication technology. Thirdly, it is to explore the impact of the digital gender gap on widening economic and social inequalities. Over the years, the number of women entering India's technology sector remains only 33 to 34%. (*Report by 451 research*)

This International Women's Day invites us to focus on bringing women and other marginalized groups into technology so that they may engage in creative solutions and have greater potential for innovations that meet women's needs and promote gender equality. A gender-responsive approach to



innovation, technology and digital education can increase the awareness of women and girls regarding their rights and civic engagement.

The positive effects of the Digital world are that the internet represents the possibility of access to knowledge in an extraordinary way. Pope Francis who is with almost 40 million twitter followers and the first

pontiff to capitalize on the potential of social media as a means of evangelization describes the internet "as a gift from God". However, while extolling its potential as a force for good in the world, Pope Francis also speaks at length of the internet's inherent dangers. It is also true that technology has proven to be one of the most exposed to disinformation and targets distortion of facts and interpersonal relationships, the 'fake news' deploy the advance specific goals, very often children and women are the one

who become vulnerable to the exploitation and cyber bullying.

In the present scenario of India, the modern woman has started caring for her social, emotional, cultural, religious, and economic needs. She has now become a tool for social change in India. It can be said that women have more freedom than earlier however not true in many respects because prejudice still remains in society. The consciousness has not only made all of us more sensitive to the situation of half the country's population but has also awakened our mind and heart to respond to the situations urgently and save the dignity of every woman as she too is in the image and likeness of God. *"Women are the largest untapped reservoir of talent in the world."* -Hillary Clinton

**Happy Women's Day. +Lumen, CSC**



## Editorial

## Examination Blues...

The result of the State Assembly elections is the big thing on everyone's minds these days. But let us keep that aside and consider something else that thousands of young people are equally tense about: the exams. In comparison to earlier times, today's students should be better off, preparing for exams. With better facilities, tuition, tons of material on the net, and the possibility of studying from the mobile phone rather than a notebook, (this is not imagination, one young



person told me he can study only from the mobile phone!), they should really be better off. And more relaxed, really.

But we know that is not the case. Despite having parents whom we would like to think are better aware and more educated, and even rightly insist that grades aren't everything, things aren't any better for the youngsters. None of these makes it a bit easier for the students to approach the nightmare called exams relaxed

and calm.

"I just want a quiet place where I can sit and study in

peace.” was all that a young person preparing for board exams asked of his parents. A 'quiet place' has become an unaffordable luxury in today's noisy world. Interacting with that young person, it became clear he was not talking about someplace somewhere. He was talking about the impossibility of finding some measure of inner quietness which is so essential to focus on his notes.

The truth is, the pace has increased, and things have become quicker, bigger, and even better. But it has not become any easier for them. In fact, it has become much harder for the young people of today to get ready for exams or anything that resembles exams. When faced with the serious matter that exams are it takes more than simple

courage to resist being crushed under the weight of pressure and the thousand distractions that have become an integral part of one's life.

As parents, guardians, and youth carers, providing our young people with a 'quiet place' where they can 'sit and study in peace' should be high on our agenda. The hardest and most vital part of that endeavour is to shield them from themselves – from that ominous mix of expectations, fears, complexes, and compulsions they seem to be victims of.

Our presumed support to our wards – given in the form of more tuition and more pressure may be pathetically misplaced and cause harm rather than help. **J. Pulinthanath, SDB**

## Parish News Briefs

### TUIKARMAW PARISH

#### 1st Women Convention under Tuikarmaw Parish



The first Convention of Maria Sangha under St. Mary's Parish, Tuikarmaw, was held from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> February 2023. Nearly 120 Women from 12 *mondolis* participated in the Convention. The Theme of the Convention was, "To Live and to Light our Faith". Fr. Amalraj, Fr. Ivan SVD and Mr. Mosiram Reang were the Resource Persons. Besides the spiritual nourishment given to them, two competitions were held, namely Singing Competition and 'Breaking the word of God' Competition to boost their spirit and teamwork. It was a well-attended program and was much appreciated.

*Sr. Christina UFS, Maria Sangha Advisor*

### KUMARGHAT PARISH

#### Free Medical Check-up Camp



A free medical health check-up camp for the parishioners and local people was organized on 11<sup>th</sup> February at Holy Cross School campus, Kumarghat.

The Camp was organized in association with CBCS Cancer Centre- and St. Joseph Hospital, Agartala. A Team of 8 people consisting of 2 business personnel, 3 Doctors and 3 Nurses arrived at 10 A.M. The Team was welcomed by Fr. Lancy CSC, Sr. Bernadette F.S the Head Mistress of the School and Teachers present. Mr. Raman addressed the students about the cancer caused by junk food, pollution and over use of mobile phones. Free physical examination along with free blood sugar, blood pressure and medicines were provided by the Hospital. Sr. Prasanti SJA and Sr. Swathi SJA being in the Team contributed their services to the people. As the Camp was to be Cancer Awareness Camp many turned up. Approximately 80 people from different substations came for the health checkup. Doctors advised them various medicines and consultation during the Camp. The Camp was successful and the people expressed their gratitude for the free medical Camp. Fr. Lancy thanked the Team of Doctors, Sisters and Nurses for their service.

*Bro. Jojappa*

### MOHARPARA PARISH

#### Marriage Preparation Course Women



Immaculate Conception Parish Moharpara conducted the Marriage Preparation Course for three days from 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> of February 2023. Six couples from different places took part in the training led by Fr. Amalraj Diocesan Family Commission Secretary, Dr. Aroino Jamatia MBBS and our Catechist Thomas Hrangkhawl. The Resource Persons motivated the participants

through their innovative idea of animation. Topics such as sacredness of marriage, marriage as a sacrament, sinfulness of abortion and marital commitment were dealt at great length. After the Sessions the couples were given an opportunity to clarify their doubts. Many expressed their joy and happiness about the program as a whole, and wished that it be continued in the future.

### Formation of St. Joseph Bodol

The menfolk of Moharpara Parish gathered together at the Center for a Seminar on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2023. The Seminar commenced with opening prayer by Catechist Thomas Hrangkhawl and a welcome note from the Parish Priest Fr. Arbok CSC. The Seminar focused mainly on the role of men in the family and in the church. The Parish Priest exhorted the 'fathers' to spend quality time with their children as the word of God says in (Deut 6:6-9). After a short Session, the Committee Members for St. Joseph Bodol were inducted for the Parish level Office Bearers, who were elected through common understanding and agreement. The Seminar concluded with the Holy Eucharist and a common meal shared by all. *Fr. Arbok, CSC*



### PASTORAL CENTRE CHAMPAKNAGAR

#### Catechists Renewal Program



Renewal program for the Catechists of Agartala Diocese was conducted in Diocesan Pastoral Centre at Champaknagar, from 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> February. Fr. Valentine Dungdung SVD and Fr. Davis SDB, were the animators for the program. They highlighted the theme of Holy Eucharist as our Diocese celebrates the "Year of the Holy Eucharist" this year and its importance in the Catholic life and the transformation it brings when one participates fully in it. They also spoke on the Sacrament of Reconciliation and on the three pillars of the Lenten Season, namely, Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving. They were exhorted to go to the villages in their parishes and encourage the faithful to spend time in prayer and to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The Catechists spent some time in

prayer and reflection and the Sacrament of Reconciliation was arranged for them. The Catechists from 12 Parishes numbering 19 have actively participated in the renewal program. They were given the opportunity to share their experiences of the village ministry and to motivate others through their sharing. *Fr. Valentine, SVD*

### MANDWI PARISH

#### Inauguration of the Year of the Holy Eucharist in the Parish

On 5<sup>th</sup> February 2023 the whole Parish came together to celebrate the Holy Mass followed by the Eucharistic procession in the Parish level. The Holy Eucharist was presided over by Fr. Jeevan SVD. The Holy Eucharist and Adoration was enriched by a choir with their melodious hymns animated by Bro Antony Kharbuki SDB. Our FMA Sisters got the youth and hostellers involved in decorating the church. Once the date for Eucharistic procession was decided, the Parish went into a preparation mode. We had daily 7 hours of intercessory Eucharistic adoration. The visit of Sr. Delna MSMI and Sr. Maria MSMI from Shillong who are



gifted counselors enabled us to give an immediate preparation for this great event. This program helped many people to get back to the parish after many years of wandering. The huge number of people who turned up for this event in spite being election time and the decorum of the procession were very impressive.

After the Holy Mass, the Eucharistic Procession started. About 600 people with their banners, drums and other instruments from the various villages walked devoutly, singing hymns and praying, as they witnessed their love for Jesus walking through the Mandwi Bazar. As the holy Eucharist reached back to the Church the congregation entered into Praise, Worship and Adoration of the Holy Eucharist for an hour. Fr. Jeevan then gave a very meaningful message on the value of the Holy Eucharist and how our life is transformed by the Holy Eucharist. Finally the Parish Priest gave the Benediction and thus concluded the Eucharistic procession. Many had come from far and near to witness Christ, including Fr. Rabindra Debbarma the first priest from Mandwi who is now serving in Miao Diocese. At the end as a sign of unity and joy all shared a fellowship meal, well organized and served by the Parish Council.

*Fr Hubert Thyrianiang, SDB*

## Health Commission of Agartala Diocese Annual General Body Meet



The Health Commission of Agartala Diocese had the Annual General Body Meeting on 23/02/2023 at Cathedral Hall. The theme for the Meeting was Healing Ministry; The Magnetic presence of the Lord. The Meeting started a prayer by Sr. Swathi, SJA. At the very outset, Sr. Prasanthi, SJA, the President, welcomed the dignitaries Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro CSC, Fr. Essack Rayappan the Director of NECHA, and Fr. Jeevan SVD the Director of OBS and honored them with a *risha*. She then welcomed everyone. This was followed by the lighting of the lamp. Bishop Lumen addressed the gathering and appreciated the health caregivers. Then Fr. Eassack vividly spoke about the existence

of NECHA and its function, vision, mission, goal and objectives, and membership. He was here to strengthen and encourage all the Institutions to register under CHAI to avail benefits and to work together for promoting holistic health. He invited us to focus more on preventive healthcare rather than curative healthcare.

The next session was by Fr. Jeevan SVD the resource person. He gave a new impetus by pressing the need for health and education and connecting it with the spirituality of Jesus. Jesus demonstrated the will of God in the healing ministry. It is the urgent thrust to extend the healing ministry of Jesus by putting on compassion. He gave us the scope to render the possible healthcare to the people of Tripura.

Sr. Prasanthi SJA gave a brief introduction about the Health Commission and the functioning units followed by the minutes of last AGBM. Healthcare personnel from different Institutions then presented their Reports. This was followed by the election of new Office Bearers. Fr. Jeevan moderated the business session and the following members were elected unanimously.

Sr. Prasanthi SJA, was re-elected the president of CHAT. Fr. Bosco- Vice President, Sr. Veronica B.S. - the Secretary and Sr. Annie Joseph SJA - the Treasurer.

At the end, Sr. Juby SJA proposed the vote of thanks. A sumptuous meal was served for all. *Sr. Prasanthi, SJA*

## News Briefs from all Over

### One Year On – the Invasion of Ukraine



Courtney Mares reports: Father Vyacheslav Grynevych vividly remembers the first day of the

full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine one year ago. The Catholic priest woke up to a phone call: "Father, wake up because the war has started." "I understood that my life would never be the same as before," Grynevych said. As the executive director of the Catholic charity Caritas-Spes, Grynevych soon found himself coordinating humanitarian efforts from a basement bomb shelter in Kyiv, also taking in 36 other people, mostly children, and their pets within the first week of the war.

In the past year, Grynevych and his team at Caritas Internationalis have worked tirelessly to provide food, shelter, protection, and health and psychological support to 3 million people within war-torn Ukraine. A few days ahead of the Ukraine war anniversary, the Catholic priest was able to speak one on one with Pope Francis at his Vatican residence to share with the pope updates on the Church's humanitarian efforts on the ground. Grynevych presented Pope Francis with a cross

made out of broken glass and rubble from destroyed buildings in Kyiv in an emotional moment during their meeting. "I wanted to share with him the stories, the places that we see, the eyes of people," Grynevych said. In an interview with CNA in Rome on Feb. 22, the priest shared that he saw how much the pope was pained to hear about the experience of Ukrainians during the last year of war. (*Courtesy CNA*)

## Earthquake in Turkey and Syria



The Vicar Apostolic of Anatolia in eastern Turkey reflects on the devastation caused by the February 6 earthquakes, talks about his audience with Pope Francis and the pontiff's constant support, and begs that the quake-struck peoples' plight may not

fall into oblivion.

As the death toll from the Turkey-Syria earthquakes exceeds 49,000, a humanitarian catastrophe is unfolding, with millions of people forced to leave their homes and depend on aid for survival. The Jesuit community is on the ground in both Turkey and Syria organizing relief and coordinating with humanitarian agencies. Jesuit Bishop Paolo Bizzeti, Vicar Apostolic of Anatolia, is coordinating aid response to the region. He says Pope Francis' constant appeals for prayers and support for the quake-struck people are a source of great fortitude.

Bishop Bizzeti recounts that he was in Italy the day the earthquake struck, for meetings with seminarians. "A providential coincidence", he said, "both because it may have saved his life, and because he feels that he is much more useful here, liaising with his community and the people it serves, coordinating with humanitarian organizations to be able to provide the most needed support and aid in the best possible way." Bizzeti who is also president of Caritas Turkey is preparing to go back to Anatolia, one of Turkey's most devastated regions, in the coming days. In an interview with Vatican Radio, he said the situation in the quake-struck regions remains fluid and is constantly updated. Expressing gratitude and feeling fortified and supported by the Pope, Bishop Bizzeti noted that the earthquake is a great tragedy; but, he said, "it is also a great opportunity to stop" and reflect on what war-ravaged humanity wants.

*By Antonella Palermo and Linda Bordoni (Vatican News)*

## Bishop's Program for March 2023

- 05: Confirmations, Ambassa
- 08: ADPC Meet, Agartala
- 09-10: CHAI GB Meet, Guwahati
- 10: Meet SAC Provincial Sr. Helen
- 11-12: Parish Sabah, Tuikarmaw
- 15: Presbytery Blessing, Karbook
- 18-19: Parish Sabah, Chailengta
- 20-22: St. John's GB Meet, Bengaluru
- 23: Meet Fr. Biju, SDB Asia Regional Superior
- 25: SCC Zonal Meet, Kumarghat
- 26: Parish Pastoral Visit, Gachirampara
- 28: Meet OLG Provincial Superior
- 29: Meet SCCG Provincial Superior

## Our Distinguished Guests

- Fr. Willy Raymond, CSC, Family Ministry USA
- Fr. Pinto Paul, CSC, Family Ministry International, USA
- Mr. Adam and Mrs. Andrea, USA
- Fr. Jinto Mathew, CSC, Canada
- Fr. Shekar Das, SFX
- Sr. Rose and Sr. Grace, Provincial-NE, Little Workers of the Sacred Heart
- Fr. Sahayaraj, CSC (Vice-Provincial-TN), Fr. Richard, CSC (TN), Bro. James CSC, Fr. Roque CSC (Provincial-SI), Fr. Jijo, CSC, and Fr. Chinnaiyah CSC.

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