



Pastor's Corner



India has entered the fourth phase of lockdown and all the healthcare workers, social workers, and frontline workers are zealously working to fight coronavirus. The COVID-19 pandemic has humbled and humiliated us as we stand bewildered, restless and helpless. While we strictly adhere to all health and social protocols and lockdowns, we must not panic and must steer clear of rumors. Experts say that the virus is not alive; it is programmed to proliferate; and as it infects more people, it disrupts our lives.



The Cockroach Conundrum may help to throw light on the problem. One hot afternoon, a cockroach crept into a cool, high-end restaurant. Horrified, a child screamed. The cockroach flew and clung on to the child's mother. She brushed it away and it jumped into the waiter's platter. He tossed the tray,

COVID-19: Reaction vs. Proaction!

and all food and silverware went up in the air. Within minutes, chaos and confusion reigned. But one wise person calmly cupped the cockroach and eased it out. It flew away and calmness returned. What worked was clear: calm, positive proaction; not reaction nor inaction.

Let us apply this to our situation today. Of course, the presence of the cockroach lit a fire; but the absence of patience and proaction fanned the flames. While not ignoring the gravity of COVID-19, uncontrolled reaction, rumors and fears may make us go haywire. God has given each one of us the stamina to accept a situation and rise beyond it. Many died because the government health systems around the world were unprepared. Our leaders should understand the danger and prepare a stockpile of protective gear. The simple truth is that this virus cannot be easily stopped, there is no cure and it kills. We need to press the reset button and refocus on the essentials of life! **+Lumen, CSC**

Editorial



The corona conundrum has brought into daily use a whole new set of vocabulary:

mask, migrant labor, sanitizer, quarantine, asymptomatic, positive, testing, tracking, route mapping, distancing, etc. Suddenly everyone, even those in remote villages, knows them and uses them.



There is yet another one: 'online'. Online classes, online meetings, online Mass...

It was in the season of Lent that we last gathered in the Church as a congregation. Since then, we have gone 'online'. We traversed through the remainder of Lent, Easter and the entire Easter season in the 'online' mode. As for liturgical celebrations, by the way, we are still 'online'!

Deep down we know 'online' is only second best. However technically perfect, as mere interplay of light, shadow and pixel, it can never substitute the real thing. That's not to say we should not make an attempt to participate in the Holy Mass that's beamed into our home through internet driven

Beyond Online

gadgets. Rather, we ought to make a serious attempt to make use of all such possibilities. The Holy Mass on Sundays is being live-streamed in at least three languages in the Diocese, which is an absolutely good thing, surely.

But perhaps the lockdown had much more to offer. Wasn't it a godsend opportunity to bring worship into the middle of our families? An opportunity for all in the family to gather and together engage in prayer, to sing hymns, to discuss and

meditate the Word of God, to instruct children on things of faith, and so on.

In Mathew 26:18 Jesus says, "I wish to celebrate the Passover in your house." Little wonder that Corona

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THE KOKBOROK LANGUAGE COURSE

The Kokborok Language Course for Priests and Religious scheduled to begin in the last week of May has been postponed. The new dates will be made known as soon as possible. In the meantime, interested candidates may please drop a line by WhatsApp or give a call to Fr. PJ Joseph, Don Bosco Peace Centre, Nandannagar, Agartala. 9436126649/8731032366.

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time coincided with the celebration of the most important mysteries of our faith the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus, his post resurrection appearances, his ascension into heaven and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. All these, we had an opportunity to 'celebrate' in the very private space we call 'home', with only our family members making up the entire congregation. But have we squandered it by being smug about a cell phone chattering away somewhere over there?

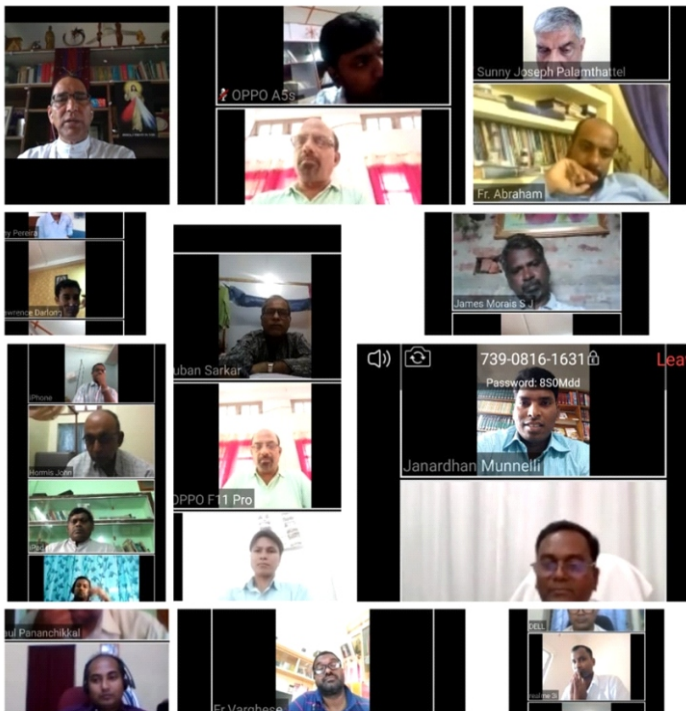
With numbers being far from encouraging as we bid goodbye to the month of May and step into June, who knows may be we got to be 'online' for some more time. As of now, the virus is having a field day in many parts of the country including our own little State of Tripura. Our awe of the scourge, however, seems to have lost much of its sheen, thanks to non-corona concerns, equally dangerous and urgent, which threaten to relegate corona matters to the sidelines. We have all seen the haunting images of multitudes on the move, trudging along the highways to nowhere, unsure of what awaits them yonder. No doubt, the scenario is getting murkier.

Online or no online, it is time for us to converge in the sacred-most space we own our family, and as a family, seek God's intervention and protection upon us and the whole world. **J. Pulinthanath, SDB**

attended a few virtual meetings held by our Congregation. Recently our Diocese's Clergy Meet with Bishop Lumen was on 2nd May 2020. I found it extremely useful to get connected with the Bishop and Priests of the Diocese online via Zoom or similar platforms of video conferencing. Here are a few thoughts on the virtual meeting with the Clergy of Agartala Diocese:

- It was an environmental friendly meeting because it doesn't require any travel causing pollution.
- It is time-saving too and helps to begin and end the meeting on time.
- It teaches everyone to make the best use of technology.
- Frequent virtual meetings will make us more familiar to use the technology.
- Everyone can interact from their own places. All that we need is good internet connection.
- Having the meeting in the morning is a good idea. Such online meetings need lot of mobile data. If the meeting is in the evening, there is a problem of not having sufficient data till the end of the meeting. Or it may be on a very slow connection.
- Just as in a face-to-face meeting, it offers an opportunity for everyone to speak.
- It is advisable for priests to hold such online meetings with the concerned people of their parishes or schools to maintain healthy communication during these days of lockdown.
- Negatively, it reduces the personal interaction with the Bishop and one another; but during these days of lockdown, it is the best way of being in contact with all.


COVID-19: Photo-Reports of Meetings & Programs in our Diocese



Education Commission online Meeting Issues related to lockdown COVID-19

Bro. Peter Vendanayagam SG scheduled a Zoom Meeting with all Heads of Institutionson 27 April 2020 from 9.30 to 11.00am. Many reported satisfaction and more such in the future.

St. Francis of Assisi School, Kanchanpur, had conducted an online Essay Competition on the Theme: MY FAMILY LIFE DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC LOCKDOWN". Given below are the Results:



ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI ENGLISH MEDIUM SCHOOL
URICHERRA, KANCHANPUR, N. TRIPURA 799270

RESULTS OF THE ONLINE ESSAY COMPETITION 2020

Theme: "MY FAMILY LIFE DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC LOCK-DOWN"

FIRST PRIZE: (Rs. 3,000/- with certificate): EKAPARNIKA BHOWMIK, Auxilium Girls' School, Class-V, Sec-B Roll no.15 Nandan Nagar, Agartala, West Tripura-799006

SECOND PRIZE: (Rs. 2,500/- with certificate): SNEHA PAUL, Holy Spirit School, Class VIII, Roll No. 39, Sukanta Nagar, Belonia, South Tripura.

THIRD PRIZE: (Rs. 2,250/- with certificate): PURBA NATIL, St. Francis of Assisi English Medium School, Class IX Roll No. 13, Uricherra, Kanchanpur, N. Tripura

BEST OF FIVE (Rs. 500/- each with certificate):

1. BRITNEY R RANGLONG, Holy Cross High School, Class-IX, Bagbassa
2. MONIKA LAIRU ATFFLA, St. Francis of Assisi English Medium School, Class V Roll No. 26, Uricherra, Kanchanpur, N. Tripura
3. SHIB SANKAR MAJUMDER, Holy Spirit School Sukanta Nagar, Class VII, Roll No. 37, Belonia, South Tripura
4. SAGNIK KUMAR SINHA, Holy Cross School Class VIII section A 20, Pabicherra Kintanghat, Unakoti Tripura
5. SOUMITRA DEBNATH, Holy Cross High School, Class 10 (A) Roll No. 50 Agnappa P.O. Daluhari Panisagar North Tripura, 799260

TOP 10 ESSAYS AFTER BEST OF FIVE (Students will be awarded with the certificate)

1. CHAYAN KANTI PAUL, St. Arnold's Higher Secondary School Class-8, Section-A Roll No. 11 Lakhari, Ambassa, Dhalai, Tripura, 799289
2. DIPANJITA SHRI SARKMA, Holy Spirit School Class-X Roll no. 10 Sukantaganj, Belonia, South Tripura
3. PARTH BARIK, St. Francis of Assisi English Medium School, Class VIII, Uricherra, Kanchanpur, N. Tripura
4. HELIUM DEBBARMA, Notre Dame Holy Cross High School Class-X, Section - B Roll no. 27 Molaipara, North Palaspa, Tripura, Khorai, Tripura - 799205
5. PRISHTA DAS, Holy Cross school Class IX Roll No. 39, Pabicherra Panisagar, Unakoti Tripura
6. K. LAUREN KIRMI, Sacred Heart Higher Secondary School, Class X, Sec 'D' Roll No. 19 Vongli, Langshi, Mizoram
7. SALMAN LAISANGLIANA, St. Pio School, Class VII, Roll No. 26, Sainag, Mizoram
8. RAHMA DEBBARMA, Auxilium Girls' school, Class V Section C, Roll no. 10 Nandanagar, Agartala
9. HANNAH LINGRENEUNG DOUNGEL, Mary Mount School, Class VII Hanganama, Aizawl, Mizoram
10. JERRY LAIJMANVELA, St. Francis of Assisi English Medium School Uricherra, Kanchanpur, N. Tripura Class VII, Roll No. 14

* Dear Students to claim your prizes you are requested to send your photo with your family through our school what's app no. +91 8738924222 by 6th of May 2020

We congratulate and thank 124 Students who have participated from 11 different schools of Tripura, Mizoram, Assam and Karnataka

Fr. George Godwin OFM Cap.
Principal

Fr. Kiran Monis OFM Cap.
Vice-Principal

Photo of first-ever virtual Clergy Meeting via Zoom by Fr. JanardhanMunnelli, CMF

Having virtual meetings has become almost normal, especially during these days of Covid-19. I

St. Francis of Assisi English Medium School Uricherra, Kanchanpur, North Tripura, organized an online Essay Competition for the students of Classes V-X on the above-mentioned theme during the lockdown period April-May. The primary purpose of this Competition was to keep the students creative, inventive and imaginative during these days of trial. Secondly, to motivate the students to spend quality time with their parents so as to avoid being lethargic before the T.V and modern gadgets.

There were 124 students from 11 different Schools of Tripura, Mizoram, Assam, and Karnataka who participated. The first, second and third prize was shared by EkaparnikaBhowmik from Auxilium School Agartala, Sneha Paul, Holy Spirit School, Belonia, and Purba Nath, St. Francis of Assisi School, Kanchanpur respectively. There were two other categories of winners like best of five and top ten. Along with the certificates, students were also awarded with cash prizes.

We are indebted to all the guardians and especially all the heads of the schools who have encouraged the students to participate in this online essay competition. *Fr. Kiran Monis, OFM Cap.*

Virtual Mass in the Diocese



The current pandemic has brutally raised our lives and exposed the vulnerability of our healthcare system. It also exposes the

flexibility or inflexibility of the church. In a pandemic, digitalizing Sunday worship and liturgical service is inevitable. Maybe this is not so debatable. In Indian context the novel coronavirus was already present in February, and then the lockdown was declared. The Christian community who were gathering regularly was stopped unexpectedly.

The Church must be alive and always alert to the needs of the broken world. When there is a new crisis, the church is called to be creative. The church institution and its traditions are there to serve the local community. In Agartala Diocese, under the direction of Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC, we thought of the spiritual needs of the faithful and connecting the community through media. Since our Diocese has multi linguistic groups His Excellency planned to promote online Eucharist in three Languages, namely Bengali, Kokborok and English, and the same time was kept for all. One problem was that online communion was not possible as the Catholic believers can only watch an online Mass but not receive Holy Communion. The Roman Catholic tradition calls this spiritual communion, in which a believer who cannot

participate in actual communion nevertheless prays and cultivates his/her desire for communion. But we really feel the vacuum of our community celebration of the Holy Eucharist in our Churches and pray that soon the church will gather as a community to celebrate 'live' the Sacraments.

Fr. P. Amalraj

Our Bishop's Visit to the Parishes in the time of pandemic

Depacherra: Though it is a time for lockdown all over India and not much movement across the State of Tripura, yet as a Good Shepherd, our dear Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, visited Depacherra Parish on 11/05/2020 and likewise most of the other Parishes in the Diocese in the days that followed. In Depacherra as in every other Parish there was no grand ecclesiastical function; yet he celebrated the Holy Mass on 12/05/2020 with the 'small community' and invited all to pray for the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. After the Holy Mass he made it a point to meet both the communities of the Fathers and Sisters of the Parish and thus manifested his love and concern for all of us. While meeting both the communities and listening to their pastoral outreach programs during the COVID-19 crisis, he also listened to their anxieties and counseled us with spiritual and psychological advice. He appreciated the good works done in different areas of the Parish and the time spent in Prayer, especially the Hour of Power. His pastoral visit ends with a fellowship meal in the presbytery.

Fr. BhuvanSarkar

Divine Mercy Prayers for Healing and Hope during COVID-19

The Diocese of Agartala assisted people to have faith in God during this coronavirus pandemic. One of them was



live-streaming of Holy Mass to pray and discern the word of God at this difficult time. In such moments people are in fear, anxiety, and even in despair. Some have lost their precious lives, some

have lost their loved ones, some have suffered through the debilitating effects of this illness, some have lost their jobs, their income, and most have encountered much disruption in the normal flow of their daily lives. Every crisis in life is also an opportunity to turn to our beloved Saviour in trust and complete abandonment so as to rest in His merciful hands. It means we raise our eyes to Heaven, rather than look down in fear.

The Divine Mercy Retreat Centre Mariamnagar along with Agartala Diocese encourages all the Catholics to pray Divine Mercy Chaplet which is a powerful prayer. So many people have sought the grace, healing, and blessing of Jesus through this prayer. This is the reason why we want to pray with you for your intercessions and help you to nourish your faith and feel the care of our

Lord Jesus through our daily prayer. I would like to thank all those who have contributed their time and talents to make this online Divine Chaplet successful during this time of pandemic COVID19. Let the spirit of God dwell in us always and keep us away from evils.

Fr. Abraham, VC

JUST News Briefs

COVID-19 Emergency Relief Work



Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) in collaboration with Caritas-India organized a series of Covid-19 Emergency Relief works at Jamircherra, Kathalcherra, Dharmanipara and Babusai Camp in Dhalai District, Damdamia and

Adharani Tea Garden in West District, and at Jamarai para in North District of Tripura in April/May 2020. Altogether 315 needy families were distributed dry ration such as Rice, Potatoes, Dal, Soyabean, Mustard Oil, Soap and Dry Fish. JUST also distributed dry rations to 1,022 families with the generous support from different NGOs like OishoBani, YuvaVikash Kendra (YVK) and National Integrated Forum of Artists and Activist (NIFFA), in different Districts of Tripura.

Adieu to JUST Director Fr. JeevanKennady



On 30th April 2020 we had a Thanksgiving Mass at Bishop House Agartala presided over by Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC, to give thanks to Fr. JeevanKennady, SVD, for his 8 years of service to JUST. The new Director Fr. John Bosco Lathees assumed the responsibility as the Director by making his Profession of Faith and taking the Oath of Office at the hands of Rev. Bishop. Later there was a Farewell program at JUST Hall for the outgoing Director Fr. Jeevan. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions only a very small group of people were asked to attend. During the farewell program Bishop Lumen Monteiro delivered a short Speech about the journey of Fr. JeevanKennady with JUST and thanked him for his 8 years of association with the Organization and bringing JUST to new heights. He also welcomed the new Director Fr. Bosco Lathees and wished him the very best as he assumed the responsibility of JUST as its new Director. While the outgoing Director narrated his beautiful memories with JUST the incoming Director said he would do his best to take the Organization forward. Both Directors thanked Rev. Bishop and the Staff of JUST. A family meal brought the program to a meaningful closure.

Mr. Cyril Darlong

Our Readers Write

Even 'locked-down' does not affect you when it comes to punctuality to send 'LINK'. I too congratulate you and join you to thank the lord for your Episcopal ministry and inspirational leadership at various levels. How time passes or rather runs. May God bless you to continue the good works. *Fr. Thomas Manjaly, Shillong*

Just amazing to see all what is done in different parishes and by the religious congregation to help people in the Diocese of Agartala for all people of all faiths in need. How I wish I would be a young kid and fly to help a bit. *Conrad, CSC, Montreal*

I congratulate you and other Fathers for extending help to the poor and marginalized. Also am really happy to see our faithful extending help and support to the poor. *Bro. Subrai Jamatia, Nagaon*

Thank you for keeping me updated with the diocesan activities and the death news of two prominent personalities through this LINK. Glad to note the immense work that is undertaken in your Diocese; tireless and sincere efforts to ease the pain of the suffering humanity.

Sr. Marina, BS, Siliguri

Thank you for the Link. Lockdown has not affected the Link. Congrats! *Simon, CSC, Agartala*

Thank you for the May Link reaching my inbox in the morning as usual. I expected this restriction from heaven, that is why I never attended Mass or other services online.

Bro. M.T. Varghese, SG, Guwahati

My sincere thanks for your inspiring message. The whole LINK is beautiful, full of deeds of sharing with people in need.

Charles Descary, CSC, Montreal

Thank you very much your Grace. We appreciate and enrich ourselves much with your message always.

Provincial Secretary, FMA Shillong

Thank you so much for Link magazine. *Bp. Victor Lyngdoh, Jowai*

Thanks a lot for your on-time LINK. Pastor's Corner was as usual inspiring and enlightening. The Editorial too has a unique feature to make every LINK vibrant and challenging. *Fr. Mariaraj, CSC*

Hit the target again! Thank you. Congratulations.

+P.K. Goerge, SDB, Miao

Thanks for sending the Link without fail for so many years. I in fact wait for it to get to know the news of Agartala. Thanks.

Fr. G.P. Amalraj

India News Tidbits

“The CBCI is with the suffering people of Odisha and West Bengal” Card. Oswald Gracias

The Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI) expresses its sincere prayers and sympathies at the loss of life and livestock caused by the Cyclone Amphan which over the past few days has hit parts of Odisha and West Bengal. The cyclone hit Bengal and Odisha at a time when it is already struggling to fight the transmission of the novel coronavirus and the return of the migrants to their homes in West Bengal. Timely intervention by the West Bengal Government in evacuating lakhs of people from low lying areas has resulted in the death of only 80 people. Over 60% of life has been affected in West Bengal with entire villages being devastated. Roads and electricity remain cut off in major parts of West Bengal and over 5,000 trees have fallen due gusty winds and heavy rains. A United Nations Country Team in India has termed Cyclone Amphan even more destructive than Cyclone Aila which caused widespread damage in the same region of Eastern India and Southern Bangladesh in 2009. The CBCI is one with the suffering people of Odisha and West Bengal. It calls upon all Civic and Church authorities to reach out to help bring relief to all those affected by this cyclone. In our prayers we remember all those affected by this cyclone, the COVID 19, and all those migrants who are still on their way home.

(CBCI via CNUA)