



Pastor's Corner

After a forest fire in Yellowstone National Park, forest rangers began their trek up a mountain to assess the inferno's damage. One ranger found a bird literally petrified in ashes, perched statuesquely on the ground at the base of a tree. Somewhat sickened by the eerie sight, he knocked over the bird with a stick. When he gently struck it, three tiny chicks scurried from under their dead mother's wings. The loving mother, keenly aware of impending disaster, had taken her offspring to the base of the tree and had gathered them under her wings, instinctively knowing that the toxic smoke would rise. She could have flown to safety but had refused to abandon her babies. Then the blaze had arrived and the heat had scorched her small body, the mother had remained steadfast...because she had been willing to die, so those under the cover of her wings would live.

God's promise to us in Psalm 91 says: "He will cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you will find refuge." Entrusting ourselves to God's protection we begin a New Year. From our past experiences we know that next year will be filled with many challenges, sorrows and joys. But it is also my experience that God's protecting wings will shield me from all harm and danger and lead me onward. My prayer for the New Year is: God please give me the wisdom and courage to change adversity into opportunity.

The first issue of LINK Vol.16, No.01 heralds the beginning of the New Year 2012. This

LINK wishes
 all its Readers
 a Blessed and
 Joy filled New
 Year 2012

Developed by www.bayten

God's Wings

means we have entered the 16th year of our existence as a Diocese. It also means that 15 years of uninterrupted monthly issues of our humble Newsletter are behind us, bringing it to a total of 180 issues of LINK! Our Newsletter was meant to be (and still is) a humble media tool to keep us 'linked' with each other. I am ever grateful to those who help me in churning out an issue month after month not an easy task given the many constraints! I am also grateful to our Readers whose one-liners are a great encouragement for us to keep going.



The new issue comes in a new format for which I thank Fr. Prasad of our Diocese for his ingenuity in software skills and Fr. PJ Joseph, sdb, for his prolific writing talent, both of whom have offered their services to keep the modest Newsletter going. From my part I'm determined to reach you a copy of the LINK on the first day of every month of the coming year...and that's a promise!

Happy New Year 2012 and God bless.
 +Lumen, CSC



Editorial

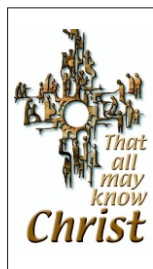
Tools and other Things!

As we step into another Year, we thank God for what has been and look to the future with trust in our hearts and a prayer on our lips that the New Year be a time of blessing for us.

The Diocese has decided that the year 2012 would be known and observed as the 'Year of the Mission' throughout the Diocese. It is an absolutely commendable step, no doubt, one that reflects the desire of the diocesan authorities, under the leadership of its Bishop, to find a matching response to the missionary nature of the Diocese. The 'Year of the Mission' could have twin objectives: catechizing the believers and evangelizing the others. This calls for 'tools' and 'platforms'. Things like books, songs, AV materials, catechism classes and other programs are needed 'tools' that help one better

grasp faith and organize its practice. These could prove invaluable props that aid our efforts to catechize believers and strengthen their faith in the year ahead.

Evangelizing those numerous pockets and patches across the State that still remain unreached calls for creating unthreatening 'platforms' on which we can first meet and share as friends. While broadening our circle of contact and concern, we also thereby recognize the role of friendship and love in evangelization.



Platforms like culture, critical issues, social occasions, and even political aspirations of the community are not mere entry points because they themselves stand to benefit immensely from coming into contact with Christ. "I have come that you may have life, life in its fullness." Happy New Year!

J. Pulinthanath, sdb

Tuikarmaw Parish

Charismatic Retreat and Church Blessing

After much preparation and planning the Charismatic Retreat got underway at Tuikarmaw Parish from 8th to 10th December. The Charismatic Team led by Vincentian Fr. George Arackal made a great impact on the



people through their Talks and other Spiritual Exercises.

December 11th was a

red letter day for the Parish community of Tuikarmaw, for they were blessed with a new Church building. Fr. Emmanuel, CSC, Provincial Superior of Holy Cross Fathers in NE inaugurated the Church building and Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC blessed and consecrated it. The Eucharistic celebration that followed was presided over by our Bishop with many Priests concelebrating. Many Religious and faithful joined in the celebration. A short felicitation program was organized to thank all our benefactors and those who worked hard to make this Church a reality.

Fr. Lancy D'Souza, CSC

Mandwi Parish

Showers of God's Blessings Three in one

Sinaikami Motha: God has been very kind and generous in giving His precious blessings on Mandwi Parish. It was witnessed and seen by many people on 27th of November in the poor and abandoned village called Sinaikami (a Rupini village). This is the place where people are very poor

and completely left out by everybody. But God found himself among these people when a small Church was built and blessed by Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC. The Bishop and other people who came for the occasion were overwhelmed by the love, care, interest, and above all the strong faith of these people. The Bishop blessed the new church and 55 people were given the Sacrament of Confirmation.



Mattam Motha: a small substation of Mandwi Parish celebrated its Silver Jubilee of the faith on 16th of December 2011. Bishop visited the Parish and celebrated the Eucharist for the People. It was a great sign that people are still having tremendous love for God and for His wonderful works. They expressed their sentiments of gratitude to God for His blessings. The Bishop was given a solemn welcome and given many gifts that his vehicle was full of vegetables and chickens and other gifts. He was overwhelmed by the love and care of the people!

Chakumapara Motha: The shepherd of the Diocese Bishop Lumen Monteiro found himself at home and felt as if he was in the presence of his own place and people when he met the people of Chakumapara. This growing substation of Mandwi Parish has seen the mighty power of God when Bishop visited the place and celebrated the Eucharist for the people during which several people received Confirmation.

God has always his own plans for the poor and needy people. They are His source of love and concern. Thanks for the great support and missionary work done by Rev. Fr. Thomas Lakra, sdb the Parish Priest. He has been with them in strengthening of their faith and making them to stand strong in their faith in God. Many of the children of the places are in our school studying freely with minimum boarding fees. May God bless them and the children may grow up and become great citizens of Tripura. *(Fr. Raj CH, sdb,)*

NEWS NOTES

4 new Districts in Tripura



On Statehood Day, January 21, Tripura will have 4 new Districts added, bringing the total to 8 Districts:

Tanusree Debbarma will be the District Magistrate of **Khowai District**

Soumitra Banerjee will be the District Magistrate of **Belonia District**

KD Chowdhury will be the District Magistrate of **Sipahijala District**

Soumya Gupta will be the District Magistrate of **Unokoti District**

Prashant Kumar will be the District Magistrate of former **North Tripura District**

Incumbent District Magistrates- Abhisekh Singh, ML Dey and Kiran Gitte will remain in their respective places- Dhalai, South and West Tripura.

(Courtesy tripurainfo.com)

Linkage Meeting with Government Officials:



Under Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction, JUST organized a Linkage Meeting with the

Kumarghat R.D. Block and

Water Resource Department at Kumarghat R.D Block on November 28. The BDO of Kumarghat Block and SDO Water Resource Department were present during the Meeting. 85 people from ten Panchayats were present for the Program. Representatives from different villages highlighted their issues related to Disaster, particularly of the riverbank erosion, loss of crop field, and houses. They further requested the concerned Departments to protect the loss made by the river erosion at the earliest.

Community Message Dissemination:

Eight Community Message Dissemination on Malaria have been

completed by Nov-Dec 2011. Community Message Dissemination is one of the BCC activities under the GFATM Round 9 IMCP-II. In Community Message Dissemination the Cluster Coordinator and Community Health Volunteer organized the programme in their Gaon Panchayat. Around 35-40 participants attended the



Community Message Dissemination. The Chief Guest of the program

was the Chairman of the Village. During the Community Message Dissemination the CC and CHV discussed on malaria situation in the village, the health facilities that are available in the village while they also gave the correct message on malaria diagnosis, treatment and prevention. They also spent time discussing about the Preventive Measures that have to be taken up in

their respective villages for malaria prevention.

Inter Diocese Cultural Exchange Program at Goa

An Inter-Diocesan Cultural Exchange Program was organized at Goa by the Peace Team of Agartala Diocese. 24 artists had participated in this program and they reached out to nearly 1,600 people through their presentation of the rich culture of Tripura by way of dance and song.

The Team started from Agartala on 15th Nov 2011 and returned on 24th Nov 2011. 8

different cultural dances like Reang, Garia, Hrangkhawl, Dailow Hozagiri, Kokborok and two Songs were performed during the 10-program. They had performed these events in three different places of Goa. The Team also had the chance to visit different beautiful tourist spots of



NEWS FROM THE DIOCESE

Annual Day at Auxilium, Nandanagar



December 2nd marked another historic event in the page of Auxilium Girls' School, Nandanagar's chronicle. The 9th

Annual Day was unique. A sparkle was added to the celebration by the esteemed presence of Prof. Dr. A. Saha, Vice Chancellor of Tripura University as the Chief Guest, Rt. Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC, DD, Bishop of Agartala and Rev. Sr. Rosa Pyngrope, FMA, our Provincial as Guests of Honour, a number of invited guests and parents. The mega event commenced at 5 pm and lasted more than two hours. The students' tribute to their parents through their spectacular performance was endearing and widely appreciated. "I find no words to express its eminence", said Prof. A.

Saha in his keynote address. Rt. Rev. Lumen Monteiro said in his speech, "It was incredible". Sr. Rosa thanked the parents for the trust they have in Auxilium School. What made the Annual Day a grand success and so special was undoubtedly expertise, grit and determination, boundless energy and enthusiasm, music and dance, relationships and togetherness.

(FMA-INS info)

Tripura Catholic Youth Association - Shillong

TCYA (Tripura Catholic Youth Association) is a group of Catholic students from Tripura studying in Shillong. It is established to furnish their spiritual needs as well as helping them to escort through a right path. Our spiritual growth is taken care every week in turn by Fr. Babu Stephen, SDB, Fr. Selvaraj, SDS, and Fr. K.O. Joseph,



CSC. We have the Holy Eucharist every Sunday at 9.30 am at the Don Bosco Youth Centre. Our annual gathering is celebrated as Pre-Christmas celebration. This was held on November 20, 2011 at

Holy Cross Hall, Shillong and presided over by Rev. Fr. Kuriakos, who in his homily invited the youth to take the Good news of Jesus to every corner of Tripura. After the Mass we had a cultural event with some colorful cultural dances and other exciting items. The Guest of Honor, Mr. Cyril Darlong, IAS, in his address to the youth invited them to get involved in civil service while keeping the values of the Gospel. The program ended with a festive meal.

Bro. Bennet (Coordinator)

- ❖ Fr. Klement Vaclav, sdb from Rome
- ❖ Fr. Ethelbert, sdb Vice Provincial from Guwahati
- ❖ Fr. Johnson Furtado, sdb from Mozambique
- ❖ Fr. Mathew T, sdb from Mumbai
- ❖ AC Sisters Marie-Fay and Agnelita from Kolkata
- ❖ Fr. Thaddeus de Deckere, MHM from England
- ❖ Sr. Ventura, FS, Regional Superior from Rangia

LINK MAIL BOX

Thanks a lot for sending me a copy of the LINK. Happy go through. Great work for the Lord and His people! *James, SG, Bangalore*

I am most surprised that a note on Sr. Valsa John's martyrdom did not elicit solidarity in the LINK, even though Sr. Goretti's achievement found ample space... Long live unsung Christian heroes and heroines... *CM Paul sdb, Rome*
I thank you very much again for your Link from December. I send it always to our Indian confrere who is studying at Benediktbeuern. *Rudolf Tengler sdb, Germany*

I have been reading your newsletters with great interest as it presents not only the happenings in the Diocese but also thought provoking ideas and challenging questions in today's context! I take this opportunity to thank you for the persistent endeavour. *Ajoy Kumar, Bangalore*

The photographs and the new look on the web site are simply great kudos to the team that had it done. *George Rodrigues, sdb, Rome*

Thanks for all your very inspirational messages and parish news that I'm always happy to download every month. *Sr. Visitation, rcgs, Bangalore*

I always wanted to tell you that the Agartala Diocesan Bulletin -Link- is very good. It gives all the important information around the diocese. The reflections you write and very good, thought-provoking and relevant. The editor's column is also good. Thank you for the trouble you people take to do this regularly. I read the Link regularly. *Sr. Santan, FS, Pune*

New Schools Opening in January 2012

St. Joseph School at Gokulnagar owned by the Diocese and Bethany Convent School at Purba Champamura owned by the Bethany Sisters will be inaugurated in January 2012. The two Schools are in the vicinity of Agartala Township.

New Salesian Province of Silchar

Fr. Almeida, sdb, the Provincial Superior of Guwahati Province writes: "Our Rector Major has bifurcated the territory of the Salesian Province of Guwahati and formed the new Salesian Province of Silchar, with Silchar as the province headquarters. The new Province of Silchar will consist of the Archdiocese of Shillong, and the Dioceses of Nongstoin, Jowai, Agartala and Aizawl as well as Dima Hasao district of the Diocese of Diphu. The patron of the new Salesian province is Bl. **John Paul II**, in memory of the Holy Father who visited Shillong in 1986.

Pope offers Holy Family as a model for household prayer

"The house of Nazareth is a school of prayer," Pope Benedict XVI remarked at his regular weekly public audience on December 28. Speaking to about 7,000 people in the Paul VI auditorium, the Holy Father continued his series of talks on prayer, with a focus on the Holy Family. "Mary is the peerless model for the contemplation of Christ," the Pope said, and her devotion is "contagious."

St. Joseph was infected by it, he continued, and in the household with Mary and Jesus he fills the father's role: "a silent but faithful presence, constant and active." It was under the guidance of St. Joseph, the Pope observed, that Jesus "learned to alternate work and prayer, also offering up to God the fatigue by which they earned the bread the family needed." (Source: *Catholic News.com*)



Complaint against Pope for not wearing seat belt

Charges have been filed against Pope Benedict XVI for not wearing a seat belt during his visit to Germany in September. An unnamed plaintiff from Dortmund in Germany, who filed the case, argued that the Pope was seen several times during the visit without a seat belt. The complaint offers several eyewitnesses, including archbishop of Freiburg, the head of the German Conference of Bishops and the premier of the state of Baden-Wuerttemberg. The complaint refers to a "Mr. Joseph Ratzinger" - the German-born pope's given name - and sightings of him on September 24 and 25 riding in a vehicle without a seat belt "for more than an hour." The pope's German citizenship has prompted some questions of whether he would be subject to German law or whether he enjoys diplomatic immunity as the head of a foreign state. If found guilty, he could face fines of 30 to 2,500 euros, depending on how many counts of which he was found guilty, the paper reported.

Source: *Washington Post*

Remains of Noah's Ark found?

A website is suggesting that the remains of the biblical Noah's Ark have been found near the summit of Mt. Ararat in Turkey. The finding concerns a large, wooden piece measuring 24 x 123 feet from the Ark, which has been located deep inside the glacial ice 350 feet from the top of Mt. Ararat. The area has historically been associated with the possible spot where the Ark hit land after the ocean waters dispersed during the biblical account of the Genesis flood. According to the website, which is named Noah's Ark Found, talk of the Ark has been swarming the mountain region for thousands of years, though science has never confirmed its existence or location.

Source: *The Christian Post*



BISHOP'S PROGRAM FOR JANUARY 2012

- 01: New Year Mass, Tuikarmaw Parish
- 03: Meet with CSC Sisters General Assistant
- 07-09: With Guests
- 08: Ranglong Sabah, Zoithang
- 09: Bethany Convent School Inaugural
- 14: SABS New Convent Blessing, Bodhjungnagar
- 14-15: NG Para Jubilee, Ambassa Parish
- 19-21: Caritas India Golden Jubilee, Delhi
- 24: St. Joseph School Inaugural
- 25: Luncahm Chapel Blessing, Khumlwng Parish
- 26: Republic Day celebrations
- 27-29: Parish Sabah, Kumarghat
- 30: CDC Meeting
Clergy Meeting & Recollection
- 31: To Bangalore for CBCI Meet

