



DIOCESE OF AGARTALA

Lead Us Onward



Agartala Diocesan Newsletter

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Pastor's Corner



On August 15, 1947, India got independence from the British Empire and this day is celebrated as our Independence Day. On that day in 1947, Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru,

who became the first Prime Minister of India, raised the Indian national flag above the Lahori Gate of the Red Fort in Delhi. On each subsequent Independence Day, the Prime Minister of India has raised the flag and given a speech from the same podium. The day is celebrated with much fanfare and gaiety across the country; but this year the celebrations are expected to be muted because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Fewer VIPs are likely to attend the event at Delhi's Red Fort while schoolchildren will skip it altogether. However, Corona Winners, or people who have recovered from the disease, will be the highlight at the celebrations this year and the Winners will include around 500 local policemen. Our country is also beset with major issues concerning its future wellbeing. From COVID-19 to economy, migrants, recession, terrorism and hostile neighbors, the list goes on.



As though India and the world did not have enough troubles of their own, out of nowhere came a microbe of a virus called COVID-19, which today is the "centre stage" of our troubles. Ms. Sagarika Kamath explains, "India faces multiple major challenges on the COVID-19 front. It is densely populated: 464 people/km² compared with Italy's 206, Spain's 91, Iran's 52 and the USA's 36. It has a huge population: 1380 million (USA 330 million, Iran 83 million, Italy 60 million, and Spain 46 million). Social distancing without total shutdowns is unthinkable, especially in the big cities with crowded streets, trains, buses and offices. Cough hygiene is largely absent. Hand hygiene is equally suspect." And the series of lock downs has put more strain on an economy that was already experiencing declining growth and increased joblessness. More than 75% of India's substantial 100 million migrant workers have lost their jobs overnight. The retail industry is expected to lose 10 million jobs, the restaurant industry 1.5 million jobs and the transport industry 5 million jobs. There is no doubt that with falling incomes, this economic pandemic will increase the proportion of health expenditure that is catastrophic, thereby pushing more people below

India's Independence Day, COVID-19, & Assumption of Mother Mary

the poverty line. As the world stares at the impending global recession period, what are the options that we are left with? These are areas for introspection.

On 15th August the Catholic Church celebrates the Feast of the **Assumption of Mary into Heaven**, the bodily taking up of Mary into Heaven at the end of her earthly life. On November 1, 1950, addressing a jubilant crowd of over 500,000 people packed into St. Peter's Square, Pope Pius XII solemnly defined in *Munificentissimus Deus* that "the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever-virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory." This Feast gives each of us great hope as we contemplate the beautiful woman of faith, our Blessed Mother. Mary moves us by example and prayer to grow in God's grace, to be receptive to His will, to convert our lives through sacrifice and penance, and seek that everlasting union in the Heavenly Kingdom.

+Lumen, CSC

Editorial



FADING GRADES...Board Results and all

The results of the Board Examinations were declared a few days ago. Most of the Schools in our State run by Church and religious Congregations have done exceptionally well. The Board results are a 'finale' of sorts both for the individual student and the Institution 'the crowning moment' that sums up years of hard work by students and the entire educative team. It's a moment that calls for 'celebration' indeed, except that in the middle of battling a pandemic, a celebration could appear a trifle indecent. In fact, it's been a while since we celebrated anything. With so much suffering, anxiety and fear all over, the heart to celebrate anything is simply not there.

Result time is perhaps an apt occasion to consider the great service the Church is rendering to society through its educational institutions. In Tripura, like elsewhere, the Church run Schools, which are spread across the length



of and breadth of the State, even in very interior areas, form the backbone of the State's educative endeavor. Compare them with the State run Schools and one easily sees why. The Church run Schools, by catering to all sections of people and by not making distinctions on the basis of religion or caste or anything, make it possible, year after year, for thousands of students to pass out from our Schools with flying colors to pursue their long-cherished dreams.

Contd. on page 2

Editorial contd.from page 1

This yearly feat also begs the question, why does so little come back? Why don't those 'flying colors' in most cases fail to translate into something that tangibly contributes to the bigger mission of the Church? Well, forget the bigger mission, forget evangelization, why doesn't it at least coagulate into a good will gesture for what one's alma mater stood for and believed in? Truth be told, after the post-result break up party, many will not step into their *alma mater* even once. That being the case, making them folks tangibly enhance the mission of the Church, is understandably, a tall order to fill. They are at best wishful thinking.

The result time elation and exuberance over a flurry of A+ grades then are meant to be a standalone high point that repeats year after year, with no reverberations beyond the patties and the cookies, the hugs (at non-corona times) and the autographs. And as a Church, are we unwittingly relishing the meek and miniscule 'little flock' tag that seem to kind of absolve us from going the whole hog many a time?

Corona is raging with unprecedented fury...not in a far away Wuhan or Milan this time... but right here, around us, about us... It's frightful trail hurriedly teaching us to revise preferences, and reconsider priorities... Those very things that I didn't give a dime about... or wouldn't budge an inch come what may... well... Well, indeed! **J. Pulinthanath, SDB**

BODHJUNGNAGAR PARISH

Installation of new Parish Priest



The 5th of July 2020 was a historical day for Saint Andre Parish Bodhjunnagar, when they welcomed the new Parish Priest in the person of Rev. Fr. Packya Jayaseelan CSC. Most Rev. Bp. Lumen Monteiro, CSC, presided over the Holy Eucharist and introduced him to the possession of this Parish and installed him as the new Pastor. Fr. Simon Fernandis, CSC, the Provincial Superior

of Northeast Province and several other Fathers and Sisters and lay faithful of the Parish witnessed the ceremony. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic regulations which has made it impossible for many of us to gather to celebrate, we join with you in prayer and support as we hear that you are committed to serve the Parish with one mind and heart.

We also take this opportunity to thank God for all the good work done by Fr. Binoy John, CSC, for the past five years in Saint Andre Parish community. We wish him all the best for his future ministry. **Parish Secretary**

AMBASSA PARISH

Green Sunday

Ambassa Parish in collaboration with Oisho Bani Registered Society (NGO) observed Environment Day on Sunday, prior to Green Sunday. 800 saplings were brought from Ambassa Forest Nursery for the distribution to the people. Though the situation due to Covid-19 was not so conducive for the gathering and celebration, yet few representatives from the sub-stations gathered for the Holy Mass after which Fr. Ivan D'Silva the Parish Priest spoke on the Environment. He said, "Planting saplings are easy but taking care



of them is difficult". He requested everyone to plant one or the other plant and nurture it during the rainy season. Few weeks earlier the Parish Priest requested all the parishioners through the video about the importance of farming and animal husbandry. To get saplings and transport them to villages is not easy though; but it is worth doing and creating awareness about the environment.

News Bureau, Ambassa

KUMARGHAT PARISH

Parish Patronal Feast

On 28th June 2020 the Parish Feast of St. Paul Catholic Church was celebrated amidst few faithful of the Parish due to the lockdown norms. Even though the Church was opened for the first time after the lockdown, unlike other years, this year the celebration of the Parish Feast was simple and yet unique. Our dear Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, was the main celebrant for the Holy Eucharist.



Fr. Lancy D'Souza CSC the Parish Priest, Fr. Lourdu Sahaya Raj CSC, and Fr. James SJ, were the concelebrants. During the welcome and introduction, the Parish Priest highlighted the situation in the Parish before and after COVID-19. Before the Mass Fr. Lourdu presented a video recalling the initial stages of the Parish and finally the events of last year's Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Parish. At the end of the Mass, there was a little felicitation ceremony organized by the Parish Council Members for Bishop, and a welcome for the three new Fatima Sisters and Deacon Shaker of Pilar Congregation. Green Sunday was also observed wherein saplings were distributed to the respective villages. Throughout the Holy Mass and the sapling distribution program, COVID-19 protocols were strictly followed. After the program snacks were given to all. **Dn. Robin Sekhar Das SFX**

KAMARANGA PARISH

St. Augustine Chapel at Panbua blessed

3rd July the Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle was a memorable day for the Panbua Catholic community under Kamaranga Parish. On this day Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, blessed and inaugurated St. Augustine's Village Chapel, the first place of worship for the Catholic community of Panbua. Fr. Ivan D'Silva SVD District



Superior of SVDs in Tripura unveiled the memorial plaque and Fr. Anthony, SVD, unveiled the Benefactors list in the presence of the Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Jomon, SVD, Fr. P.J Joseph SDB, Fr. Amalraj, SJA Sisters and selected representatives of the laity. After the Holy Eucharist which was presided over by our beloved Bishop, there was a felicitation program. Bishop Lumen thanked Fr. Jomon, SVD, very profusely for his hard work in building the new Catholic community and now constructing a Chapel in such a short time in spite of so many odds. He too thanked Mr. Suresh Debbarma for generously donating the land. Because of COVID-19 participants were limited and the function was short. With an agape meal the program came to an end. **Fr. Jomon, SVD**

BODHJUNGNAGAR PARISH

Remembering Sr. Lucy Lalsangzuali, CSC

On July 4, 2020 in Our Lady of Holy Cross Convent Barakathal under Saint Andre Parish, the month's mind Mass for Sr. Lucy Lalsangzuali CSC was held. Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC presided over a meaningful liturgy in memory of Sr. Lucy Lalsangzuali CSC. Fr. Simon Fernandis CSC, Provincial Superior of the Fathers of Holy



CrossNorth-East India, shared his insightful and touching reflections. Furthermore, in that memorial Mass there were present many invited guests especially Fathers, Sisters from different Parishes and mission centers, several parishioners' from different *mothas* (village Church) including some

Seminarians, Catechists, Youth members and students, who had come to support and pray with the Sisters of the Holy Cross for our dear Sister Lucy.

After the Holy Mass, in the presence of many priests, religious, and parishioners' the Sisters of the Holy Cross took the opportunity to wish and congratulate Bishop Lumen on his Silver Jubilee Year with a song and bouquet of flowers. The Sisters thanked God and everyone for their prayerful presence for the profound and momentous celebration.

Sr. Meri Halam, CSC

CATHEDRAL PARISH

Bethany Stepping into the Centenary Year of the Foundation

"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall exult in my God" Is 61:10. This is the song of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany as they step into the 100th year of their Foundation. Today we gather to thank the Lord for His 99 years of celestial blessings and graces poured on Bethany. It was in St. Sebastian's Church Bendor in the year 1921 that Fr. Raymond

Mascarenhas, the then Parish Priest, entrusted the first four of Bethany at the feet of Mother Mary. The Lord fulfilled the earnest desires of these valiant women to become religious, by inspiring Fr. Raymond Mascarenhas to start a new Congregation. Numerous vocations came to Bethany from all cultures right from its inception and presently today we have 1,381 Sisters to see the starting of the Centenary Year. On this occasion we thank God for all the support Bethany has received from the ecclesiastical authorities of the 61 Dioceses in India and abroad that we serve in, especially the Diocese of Mangaluru, in serving the church by living our charism and spirituality through various apostolic activities. We gratefully bring to the Lord all the Superiors General and their Councilors, Leaders at different levels, Bethany lay associates, our religious and lay collaborators in mission, our benefactors, well-wishers, the family members of the Sisters and people we serve, and the whole world caught up in the turmoil of the present pandemic. We place at this Eucharistic table, Bethany's aspirations for the future, especially in living our charism and spirituality more profoundly, in humility, by treading the unbeaten paths. We pray for the Spirit of discernment in responding to the signs of the times, especially during this time of the COVID 19 pandemic. We also unite in this Eucharistic



sacrifice, with all our Sisters in different missions around the world and fervently join our Father Founder in his prayer to "Let Bethany Grow, Flower and Bear much fruit" which is chosen by us as theme of the centenary year. *Sr. Sajana Priya, BS*

Panisagar Holy Cross School

A State Rank bring laurels to family and Institution

Congratulations to SOURADEEP DEBNATH of Panisagar Holy Cross School who secured the 7th Rank in TBSE Results with a total of 479 marks and 96%. Out of 64 students who appeared from our School as regular students, one student secured the 7th Rank in the State of Tripura. The



excellent result is the fruit of the effort of all the Staff, parents and students. It may be recalled that in 2016 from the same School **SAPTARSHI BATTACHARJEE** secured 10th Rank in TBSE Madhyamik Result. Five secured A+ grade, Eight secured A grade, Nineteen secured B+ grade, Twenty seven B grade and four compartmental.

Fr. Davis Konuran CSC, Principal

Educational News Briefs

TBSE Madhyamik Result- 2020

**(Data is collected from DECA WhatsApp Group)*

S/N	Name of the School	Appeared	Passed	Compartment	Failed
1	Holy Cross, Panisagar	64	60	4	---
2	Holy Cross, Kathalcherra	94	71	15	8
3	Holy Cross, Depacherra	109	102	3	4
4	Holy Cross, Tuikarmaw	70	66	3	1
5	St. Arnold, Gandacherra	44	42	2	---
6	St. Amold, Ambassa	111	108	2	1
7	Don Bosco, Mandwi	15	15	----	-----

ICSE Results - 2020

S/N	Name of the School	Appeared	Passed	Distinction
1	Holy Cross Convent School, Dharmanagar (Class - X)	29	29	03
2	Holy Cross School, Agartala (Class - X)	285	285	198
3	Holy Cross School, Agartala (Class - XII)	Arts - 59 Science - 61	Arts - 59 Science - 61	Arts - 16 Science - 06

CBSE Results 2020

S/N	Name of the School	Class XII	Science	Class XII	Arts	Class XII	Commerce	Class X	Class X
		Appeared	Passed	Appeared	Passed	Appeared	Passed	Appeared	Passed
1	Auxilium, Agartala	47	47	86	86	7	6	139	139
2	Montfort, Champaknagar	12	12	165	161	----	----	166	164
3	St. Andre, Bodhjungnagar	---	----	148	147	----	----	87	76
4	St. Xavier's, Pathaliaghat	----	----	95	84	----	---	108	97
5	Don Bosco, Agartala	99	98	54	54	30	27	142	142
6	Holy Cross, Kumarghat	---	---	---	---	---	----	65	65
7	Montfort, Agartala	---	---	---	---	---	----	38	38
8	Holy Spirit, Belonia	---	---	---	---	---	----	22	22
9	St. Francis de Sales, Sindukpathar	---	---	---	---	---	----	40	40
10	Notre Dame Holy Cross, Moharpara	---	---	---	---	---	----	74	69
11	Don Bosco, Baijalbari	---	---	---	---	---	----	64	64

Green Sunday in the Diocese



On 28th June 2020 Green Sunday was celebrated in all the 20 Parishes under the aegis of the Diocese of Agartala. Our Bishop was present at Kumarghat Parish. A total of 25,000 saplings of different species were planted in

different parts of Tripura, mostly through our Parish Teams and Institutions. The coordination work with the Forest Department Officials was done by Fr. Lathees, the Executive Director of JUST. The day was celebrated to encourage and make people aware about the need to take care of the Environment. Climate change, global warming and erratic rainfall are some of the adverse effects felt and experienced by the world today. In this context the need of the hour is to plant more trees and raise awareness on the environmental issues in their respective Parishes.

JUST distributed dry ration

On 17th June 2020 Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) distributed dry rations to 96 families who are affected by COVID-19 lockdown at Athuthang Bari and Sinai Kami under Belbari R.D Block, West Tripura. During the relief distribution work JUST



relief Team gave awareness on how to fight COVID-19 and advised the villagers to be more alert and abide by all kinds of precautionary measures imposed by the administration to break the infection chain of Corona virus. Maintaining physical distance and wearing mask are essential when you go outside for any kind of family work. They also advised them to stay clean by washing hands and feet frequently every day.

Training on Do No Harm



The Peace Staff conducted a training program on Do No Harm with the Women Peace Club members and Youth Club of Maharaja Bir Bikram (MBB) of Khumulwng on June 2020. The training started with the discussion on COVID-19 lockdown and the

importance on maintaining social distance and washing hands every time. The Peace Staff also shared about Do No Harm. They explained that Do No Harm means taking every precaution to ensure that people will not be negatively impacted by the activity either intentionally or unintentionally even though it is understood as community problem. Do-No-Harm(DNH) field assessments help understand conflict at a project or community level, when local leaders understand which activities divide or connect people to minimize harm and support local capacities to build peace. The Peace Staff also explained the above topic taking various examples from the experience of the Staff. Do-No-Harm(DNH) is now used by many aid organizations, including Governments and multilateral Organizations.

Mr. Cyril Darlong

Our Readers Write

Thank you so much. I got your Link. You are really connected with others. *James Cruze, CSC, Bangladesh*

Thank you for LINK. Many serious reflections and thoughts including some witty ones! *Inge, Liechtenstein*

Excellent reflection, Lumen! Thanks for doing it and also for including that moving letter from the Bishop to George Floyd. Lots of food for thought throughout LINK! My happy memories from January 2005 remain vivid! *David Schlaver, CSC, USA*

Congratulations for the beautiful write up. It's a well written article. It was a new learning on 'new normal'. Many new words used in the write up carry deep meaning, putting me into serious meditation, inviting me to redefine the meaning of my life during the pandemic uncertainty. *Sushil Modi, CI Delhi*

Thanks Bishop Lumen. And that's a great quote you chose to present this issue of LINK. *Nirapel, Guwahati*

I do appreciate your encouraging message on Covid 19 considering the "New Normal". I too wish that it takes the

approach of minimalist principles regarding consumerism.

Fr. Sunny Joseph, GSS Dimapur

LINK--Certain as the dawn. Dot on the first. THANKS.

T. K., CSC, Bangalore

A million thanks for your very powerful and tender message.

Sr. Visitation, rgs, Bangalore.

Thank you for linking me with your LINK. It's really inspiring to see the hard work with lots of energy and smiles. We all do whatever we do for love of people wherever we are sent.

Lancy D'Silva, CSC, Australia

Thank you for linking me with your Diocese through the informative and interesting newsletter. The lines to ponder from Archbishop Menampampil and the Bishop's letter from Botswana, farewell to his friend George Floyd, were quite moving. Of course Pastor's Corner on 'The New Normal' is something that I learnt and liked it very much. *Sr. Marina BS, Siliguri*

Thank you for the July LINK. Thank you for your beautiful message to Love and maintain only physical distance but to stay socially connected. *Emma, CSC, Kerala*

News Tidbits from all over

Fr. (Dr.) Biju Michael Pulianmackal, SDB, is the New Regional for South Asia



The Capitulars of the 28th General Chapter of the Salesian Congregation elected Fr. (Dr.) Biju Michael Pulianmackal of the Province of Guwahati as the New Regional for South Asia. Fr. Biju Michael was born on 19th March 1970 at Moolamattam in Kerala, India. He was ordained a Priest on January 5, 1999. He holds a Doctorate in Moral Theology and Masters in English and in

Bioethics. Until now he was holding the post of Registrar at Assam Don Bosco University and was a Councilor of the Province. He was the President of the Jerusalem Campus (Ratisbonne) of the Salesian Pontifical University. He is an internationally published author. LINK congratulates Fr. Biju

Michael, SDB, on his election and wishes him a fruitful tenure.

The "Pope Francis" Hospital Ship joins the fight against Covid-19

The "Pope Francis Hospital Ship" brings medical equipment and assistance to coronavirus-hit communities along the Amazon River. "This ship has already worked miracles, bringing healing and hope to river populations," said Brother Joel Sousa, a member of the ship's coordination team. The "Pope Francis" Hospital Ship has been sailing the Amazon River for a year, delivering medical aid and assistance to some 700,000 members of coastal populations many of them indigenous communities - in Brazil's Amazon Rainforest. Brother Sousa revealed that the medical and logistical team aboard the ship got reorganized to specifically fight the pandemic. He said the crew is now committed to raising awareness and providing information to the local populations and offers on-the-spot first-stage outpatient treatment.

Vatican News