



# LINK

News Bulletin of the Diocese of Agartala



Vol: XXVIII

Issue : 02

FEBRUARY 2024



## Editorial

### A Life well lived!

It's customary here in the Diocese of Agartala to usher in February with joyful cries of 'Happy Birthday!' Yes, February 1, the birthday of our dear Bishop has always been a joyful day for the Diocese of Agartala. It's the day the whole Diocese, in unison, thank the Lord for the wonderful person of Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC, DD, and ask for continued blessings upon him.

One feels sure that as he looks back at the tapestry of his life, and recalls countless events, moments, memories, and experiences, some of which are etched forever in the heart, some fading away with time... there is much to celebrate and to thank the Lord for. We recall how from a fledgling little Diocese way back in 1996, he has, for nearly three decades now, led it from the front and made it what it is – a Diocese of 24 parishes, hundreds of Church personnel, and many thousands of believers.

On this beautiful day, we as a Diocese say 'thank you, your Lordship' for the person you are, for the Bishop you are, and for having impacted our lives in very positive and permanent ways. We wish you a Happy Birthday, good health, and a long, happy life.

#### A WORD ABOUT 'FAMILY PRAYER'

On 21<sup>st</sup> January 2024, the Sunday of the Word of God, the Diocese of Agartala commenced the 'Year of the Word of God'. According to the instructions of the Bishop, all the parishes in the Diocese ushered in the special year with due solemnity. It is a happy coincidence that Pope Francis has consecrated 2024 as the Year of Prayer in preparation for the Jubilee of 2025. Happy coincidence because one so well complements the other.

In the Pastoral Letter announcing the Year of the Word of God, our Bishop also mentioned a variety of ways in which we could engage with the Word of God this year. He spoke about the need of Reading the Word of God, Reflecting on it, and Praying with it in the form of Lectio Divina, etc. No doubt, engaging with the Word of God, is essentially about prayer. It is prayer.

The Bishop also invited parents and children to make the reading of the Word of God, a habit in their families. Among the many suggestions given, I consider this especially important in our context because prayer in families 'as a family' is yet to become a regular practice in many places. That it has become a reality in some families is, no doubt, something praiseworthy.

## PASTOR'S MESSAGE

### Birthday is Gratitude

Today I celebrate yet another year of God's gift of life to me. The birthday has become a moment for self-reflection, growth, and appreciation for my journey of life.

Gratitude extends beyond the joyous moments; it encompasses the challenges and triumphs, the tears and laughter, all of which contribute to the unique mosaic of our existence.

As I thank God for the gift of life, this thought from St. Bernard of Clairvaux comes to mind: "When you are feeling strong, do not be complacent, but call to God with the prophet and say: "When my strength fails me, do not abandon me" (Ps 70:9). And in time of temptation be consoled and say with the bride: "Draw me after you, and let us run together" (Song of Solomon 1:4). Thus you will not lose hope in bad times, nor will foresight desert you in good times, and amid both the prosperity and adversity of changing times you will retain a certain image of eternity - blessing the Lord at every moment." (from *When My Strength Fails Me*)

Birthdays are a canvas on which the colors of gratitude, reflection, joy, and connection come together to create a beautiful masterpiece. Each birthday is a chapter in the novel of our lives, filled with the stories of the past and the unwritten tales of the future. Today as I blow out the candles and make a wish, mine will be a wish not just for myself but with gratitude for a life well-lived and a journey worth celebrating. I remember God's countless blessings on me, especially these years of my episcopate in this Diocese, and I say 'THANK YOU' God. I also say 'THANK YOU' to each of you who have been a part of my life. Please pray for me.

+ Lumen, CSC



LINK Wishes  
Our Beloved  
**BISHOP LUMEN MONTEIRO, CSC**  
A Very Happy Birth day  
&  
God's Choicest blessings!  
**1<sup>st</sup> FEBRUARY, 2024**



The reasons why family prayer remains on the 'to-do list' of many families are not difficult to gauge. One reason is the difficulty of getting everyone together. Children's tuitions pose a problem in many families. Families where some members are not Christian is another unique situation. Then there is the universal problem of 'not getting time', after the shopping and TV and evening chores. These are common situations that the pastors urge and encourage families to overcome.

Special events and times like the Year of the Word of God, or the Lenten Season we are starting this month, should become additional reasons to make 'family prayer' a non-negotiable daily event in our households.

J. Pulinthanath, SDB

**GACHIRAMPARA PARISH**

**Khashithai Para  
Inauguration & Blessing**



The long awaited dream of Khashithai Para Catholic community is fulfilled in the inauguration of a Chapel on the first day of the New Year 2024. Our dear Rev. Bishop Lumen cut the ribbon and blessed the new Chapel after which he celebrated the holy Mass for the first time. In his homily Bishop stressed on the need for unity in the community. Parishioners from far away Gachirampara and other Christian denominations were also there. He appreciated the faith of the people who, in spite of inaccessibility to this remote place, have kept the faith and invited others to join. Along with Bishop there were seven Capuchin Priests and one Deacon who concelebrated the Mass.

Khashithai Chapel was planned long back. The foundation site was blessed and following day lock-down was imposed. Many hindrances we had to face. So the work was also delayed due lack fund, road connectivity, workers problems, etc. Finally we succeeded to give some shape to the Chapel and inaugurated it in the name of our Lady of Vellankani.

I sincerely thank Bishop who forwarded the Project to our Superiors who supported it, and those who worked on the construction. I thank all the local Fathers who helped me and OLG Sisters who collaborated in our mission work.

*Fr. Felix Pinto, OFM Cap.*

**Silver Jubilee of Urwa Motha**



Celebrating Jubilee in any church is a time of joy. It is a celebration of the faith journey. Jubilee celebration reminds us our growth of faith. St. Stephen's Catholic Church Urwa celebrated 25 years Jubilee on 26th December 2023. Most Rev. Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC blessed the Jubilee Memorial stone and celebrated the Holy Eucharist along with many concelebrants. The Motha was established in 1998 by the Holy Cross Fathers. The pioneering parish priest toiled hard to cater the spiritual needs of the people. The Secretary, President and the faithful organized the program very well. The Jubilee celebration was marked by the word of God, cultural celebration, Felicitations and fellowship meal.

**Children get together at Doigula Motha**



On 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 we celebrated the Feast of Holy Mary Mother of God. All the children were gathered together at Doigula Church to celebrate the Feast and the New Year 2024. Many games and competitions were held for the children and prizes were given. Rev. Fr. Jilson Tom CSC, was main celebrant of Holy Eucharist. The celebration was concluded with a fellowship meal.

*Fr Iswar, CSC*

**KUMARGHAT PARISH**

**Annual Parish Sabha**



Our Parish had its 27th Annual Sabha from January 19-21, at Kanchancherra, with the theme "Rooted in the Word of God & Family Prayer". The whole ambiance was thrilling, refreshing and energizing.

**BODHJUNG NAGAR PARISH**

**Blessing & Inauguration of  
Athukiri Motha**

On 24th December-2023 we had the Church Blessing & Inauguration of Athukiri Motha by Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC. It was a long awaited dream of faithful to build a new church. The church was named as Christ the King. The faithful toiled hard by the grace of God to build a new church and now have a place to praise and worship. The new church will strengthen the faith of the people.

The first evening began with the unfurling of the flag by Fr Lancy CSC, the Parish Priest. The introductory Session was by Mr. Roitua Darlong, the Parish Secretary.

The second day was filled with unraveling the power and supremacy of the Word of God in our lives. Fr Leenus VC, explored and expanded the theme of the Sabha – "Rooted in the Word of God & Family Prayer" – with his energetic talk on the subject. There was the Adoration and time for Confessions that was followed by the Holy Eucharist. Later in the afternoon, Bishop Lumen Monteiro, was welcomed to the Sabah. Seeing over 375 parishioners representing all 15 monodolis at the Sabha was a joy. There was reading of the Reports of monodolis, Rosary procession with candle-lights and mesmerizing moments of music and variety of dances in the night. On 21 January, the Sunday of the Word of God in the Diocese was inaugurated by Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC. Fr Simon Fernandis, Provincial of Holy Cross Fathers NE Province, Fr Lancy, and Fr Lourdu concelebrated the Mass. After the Mass the Parish Report and Financial Statement were presented by Fr Lancy. It was also heartening to hear that the Parish has a new mondoli, Garo III - totally to 15+1= 16 monodolis. The vote of thanks was proposed by Mr. Lala Darlong, after which all were served a delicious meal.

*Sr. Santan Nago, FS*

**KAMARANGA PARISH**

**Holy Family Feast Day at the Parish**



It was a rare occasion that parents along with their children attended the Holy Eucharist on the Holy Family Feast day. Families were asked to stand with their own family members to attend the Holy Eucharist. The focus of the liturgy was on the holy family. Duties and responsibilities of parents and children were explained. There was blessing over every family group after the Holy Communion. We should encourage families to pray and attend holy Eucharist together frequently.

*Fr. Arun Minj SVD*

**Kamaranga Parish bags the First Prize  
in Bible Quiz**

SVD Parishes of Tripura celebrated Mission Day on 15th January on the Feast Day of St. Arnold Janssen at St. Alphonso Parish Khumulwng. There were group singing, dancing and Bible Quiz in



the program. Bible Quiz was one of interesting and important items that covered the Gospel of St. John, Sacraments, all the Saints, SVD Congregation, and Diocese of Agartala. All other Parishes were amazed at the Quiz responses of St. Raphael Parish and congratulated them for securing the first prize. We need to encourage our parishioners to read the 'Word of God' in this year dedicated to the Word of God.

Fr. Arun Minj SVD

**Heartiest CONGRATULATIONS**

to

**Archbishop RAPHAEL THATTIL**

**on his election as the 'Major Archbishop' of the Syro-Malabar Church**



*Prayerful Greetings*

**Heartiest CONGRATULATIONS to the newly appointed Bishops**

On 13<sup>th</sup> January Pope Francis appointed



Rev. Fr. Valan Arasu of the clergy of the Jabalpur Diocese, currently Principal of St. Aloysius College, as Bishop of Jabalpur.



Rev. Fr. Jeevanandam Amalanathan currently Vicar General of the same Diocese, as Bishop of the Diocese of Kumbakonam.



Rev. Fr. Albert George Alexander Anastas of the clergy of the Diocese of Kottar, as Bishop of Kuzhithurai. He serving currently as Professor at St. Paul's Seminary, Tiruchirapalli.



Rev. Fr. Bhaskar Jesuraj of the clergy of the Archdiocese of Agra, as Bishop of Meerut. He currently serves as Deputy Secretary of the Agra Regional Bishops Council and Principal of St. Clare's Senior Secondary School in Agra.



Rev. Fr. Duming Dias of the clergy of the Diocese of Shimoga, as Bishop of Karwar. Currently he is Director of the Sannidhi Pastoral Renewal Center of Shimoga.



Rev. Fr. Justin Alexander Madathiparambil, until now Vicar General of the Vijayapuram Diocese, as Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Vijayapuram, assigning him the titular See of Lisinia.

Earlier, on 30<sup>th</sup> December Pope Francis had appointed:



Most Rev. Vincent Aind (68), Bishop of Bagdogra, as Archbishop of Ranchi.



Most Rev. Barthol Barretto (62), Auxiliary Bishop of Bombay, as Bishop of Nashik.



Fr. Peter Rumal Kharadi (64), of the clergy of Jhabua and currently Diocesan Administrator of the same Diocese, as the new Bishop of Jhabua.



Fr. Bernard Lancy Pinto (60) of the clergy of the Archdiocese of Bombay, presently Parish Priest of St. Michael's Church, Mahim, Mumbai, as the Coadjutor Bishop of Aurangabad.



Bishop Joseph Kollamparambil was selected as the new Administrator of the Eparchy of Shamshabad after Bishop Raphael Thattil was elected as the Major Archbishop of Syro-Malabar Church.



Heartiest CONGRATULATIONS to Sr. Christine Mynsong, MSMHC, the newly elected Superior General & Team of the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians.



Heartiest CONGRATULATIONS to Sr. Angela Devi Reddy, SAC, the newly appointed Provincial Superior of the Pallotine Missionary Sisters and Team.



**Tripura Catholic Schools' Annual Cultural And Games Meet (TCSACGAM)**



A three days sporting event under the banner of TCSACAGM-2024 (Tripura Catholic Schools Annual Cultural and Games Meet) was held at St. Xavier's Higher secondary School, Pathaliaghat from 12 – 15 January, 2024. This mega event was organized by the Diocesan Education Commission of Agartala, under the leadership of Fr. Antony Balan the Commission Secretary and the Organizing Team of Frs. Babu and Blacius and Bros. Sebin, Khakchang and Anvesh. The Theme for the year 2024 was "Welcome to the Team: Not Me but We". This mega event brought together 18 Catholic Schools from all over Tripura with 750 Students and 100 plus Teachers, Fathers, Brothers, students and Volunteers taking part in this mega event.

At the Inaugural Ceremony Mrs. Dolly Reang, EM of TTAADC and Rev. Fr. Babu Stephen, SDB, the Principal of St. Xavier's School, graced the occasion as Chief Guest and Guest of Honour respectively. The Chief Guest and Guest of Honour hoisted the TCSACAGM flag which was followed by mesmerizing inter-school marchpast by all the 18 schools accompanied by St. Xavier's School Band. The Lighting of the sports torch and the oath taking ceremony set the tone for the day. The first day ended with breathtaking and enthralling inter-school cultural dance competition in the school auditorium.

The second day witnessed a number of field events both individual and group. Day two ended with the inter-school group song competition at the school auditorium.

The final day was heated up with various events finals and the teams valiantly took part in the events fighting for the winner and runner up position. The Closing Ceremony began with the arrival of Shri. Avula Ramesh Reddy, IPS, The DIG of Tripura as the chief Guest and Fr. George Jacob, CSC the Secretary of Holy Cross Education Foundation, NE, as the Guest of Honour along with all the Principals, Fathers, Sisters, Brothers and invited Guests. Both the Guests shared the stage in distributing the winner and runner up trophies, medals, and certificates to the winners and runners-up. The closing ceremony was made more colourful and memorable by different Schools' dances, singing and band display. At the end of the three days of Inter-schools Sports Meet, Montfort higher Secondary School, Champaknagar with highest points lifted up once again the TCSACAGM-2024 CHAMPION'S TROPHY and Saint Arnold's Higher Secondary School, Ganda Twisa lifted the Runners up trophy. Fr. Balan proposed the Vote of thanks in which he expressed his sincere gratitude to each and every one for their share and contribution for the success of the mega event.

*Fr. Antony Balan*

**St. Xavier's Pathaliaghat clinches National Prize**



The Diocese of Agartala is overjoyed with appreciation for the "Brass Band-Girls" Team of St. Xavier's Higher Secondary School Pathaliaghat, for winning the third prize in the All India School Band Competition held on 21st and 22nd January, 2024 at the National Stadium, New Delhi. The Band Team consists of 25 girl students aged between 11 and 16 and studying in grades 6-8. To reach the national level competitions the Team had to win three earlier stages: the District, the State and the Zonal stage. At the Zonal stage, held in Bhubaneswar on December 22, the Tripura Team emerged first in the Eastern Region, beating several teams from the region comprising Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Northeastern States. Continuous hard work and strong determination from the School management and participants is clearly evident from their outstanding performance which is a praise worthy thing.

*Bro. Anvesh*

2<sup>nd</sup> FEBRUARY  
2024

World Day for Consecrated Life



LINK Wishes all the Consecrated Men & Women Working in Our Diocese.

May they continue to be inspired by Jesus Christ and respond generously to God's gift of their vocation.

## SHG CLUSTER EXPOSURE VISITS



As part of the livelihood intervention JUST organized an exposure visit for the SHG's of Ganganagar R.D. Block to Tuikarmaw, South Tripura on 9th & 10th January, 2024. The purpose was to encourage the Women to undertake income-generation activities as alternative opportunities. 40 Cluster Members accompanied by three Staff and the Project Coordinator made the group visits. The president of Chwng Mari Society first briefed about the functioning and activities of their Society. Then the group visited the Rubber cultivation of the Society. The visiting group also went for the field visit to have a firsthand experience of the income generation activities of these SHGs. The group made use of every chance to interact with the Members of income generating SHGs and even tried their hand at testing the quality of the products. They were also very much amused to see the shop set up on the street of Tuikarmaw to sell their self-made products. The SHG Members were motivated and shared that they specifically found the knowledge sharing on income generation activities very interesting and will try to adopt the same and practice within their Groups as well.

## Training on Sugarcane Juice Extraction &amp; Jaggery making process



JUST conducted a training on Sugarcane Juice extraction and Jaggery making for the Staff on 16th and 17th January at Old Darlong Basti, Kathalcherra. The Resource Person was Mr. Lura Darlong, specialized in Jaggery making. The purpose of training was to encourage our Small Holder Farmers to take up Sugarcane cultivation for their income generation activities as their alternative opportunities. First the Staff are given training so that they can replicate this model in the field for the farmers. The Resource Person shared that the process comprises of 'crushing of sugarcane for juice extraction, filtration and boiling of juice for concentration and then cooling and solidifying to give jiggery blocks'. The juice is extracted in a conventional crusher. This is then filtered and boiled in shallow iron pans. Mr. Lura also showed the practical process to the Staff from extraction of juice to making of jaggery. JUST plans to take this model in the field which will be a beneficial opportunity for the Small Holder Farmers.

*Mr. Robert Lushai*

## Our Distinguished Guests

- Fr. Jaison, MSFS, Vice Provincial from Shillong
- Fr. John, MSFS, Provincial Bursar from Shillong
- Fr. Rayan, SVD, National Formation Secretary from Bhopal
- Fr. Chinnappa, SVD, Director Gyaan Ashram Mumbai
- Sr. Lucious, BS, Provincial Superior from Silchar
- Fr. Joseph Eucharist from Chennai

## Bishop's Program for February 2024

- 01- 08: CBCI Assembly, St. John's Bangalore
- 09 : School Annual Day, Christ Hill, Jampuijilla
- 10 -11: Parish Sabha, Kathalcherra Parish
- 12 : UFS Convent Blessing at Lokicherra  
School Annual Day at Korbook
- 13 : CSC Sisters Convent Inaugural, Harina
- 14 : Ash Wednesday, Agartala
- 16 -18: SDFI Convention, Goa
- 20 : IGSSS GB Meet, Delhi
- 21 : NECHA Meet, Guwahati
- 24 - 25: Parish Sabha, Kailashahar
- 27 - 29: Pastoral Care Conference, Bangalore