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NEWS LETTER OF THE DIOCESE OF AGARTALA

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## Pastor's Corner

### TRIBAL LIVES MATTER... MANIPUR MATTERS!

The situation in Manipur continues to be grim after almost three months of violence which has claimed so many lives and caused untold misery across the State. In solidarity with the appeals from the CBCI and the Archdiocese of Imphal, we in the Diocese of Agartala have responded with our mite to mitigate this humanitarian crisis by way of prayer and financial support. I extend my appeal for peace and pray for a solution in the troubled State of Manipur.

Here are excerpts from a thought-provoking article by Archbishop Menamparampil in Indian Currents.

It is calculated that internet shutdowns like those in Manipur and Punjab by law enforcement agencies have cost the nation \$1.9 billion during January-June period. Such communication disruptions weaken economic

activities. Modiji, who might be less moved by the loss of human lives than the reduction of market gains, could be invited to take some initiative in settling affairs in Manipur to prevent further economic loss. Jairam Ramesh



says the way Modi has "deliberately ignored Manipur" in her moment of agony is shocking, totally incomprehensible.

"Tribal lives matter" pleads P. Sainath at Xavier Institute of Social Service, Ranchi, echoing the African American call "Black Lives Matter" after George Floyd's death. Pradyot Kishore Debbarma of Tripura sent out a similar message recently, referring to his own situation, "Don't play with the emotions of tribals! Their fight is for their rights, lands, language". They are willing to pay any price.

Modiji remains unmoved. He coolly raises the issue of Uniform Civil Code and diverts the nation's attention from the tragedies of Manipur. Is he deliberately adding insult to injury by keeping the Manipur horrors as a non-issue? It was not so with Vajpayee. People remember how he had expressed profound grief in 2001 when there broke out a conflict in Manipur. He was faithful to his Raj Dharma. What Rahul calls a 'horrible tragedy' is a non-issue for Modi...

In the context of these trends, China passes a new foreign relations law that speaks of "amity, sincerity and mutual benefit" with neighbors. Amazing! No one takes these words in Xi's mouth seriously. But words have power on their own. The other day Biden called Xi a 'tyrant', Putin a 'pariah' in reference to the mutiny of Yevgeny Prigozhin. But Modi remained a worthy partner. Their business instincts seem to coincide. When wealth is exchanged, differences disappear...at least for a while. When flattery is exchanged, failures are forgotten. People change when interests coincide. Kamala Harris spoke of the great spiritual and philosophical messages that India passed on to the rest of the world. Respect for life has always remained central to them all. Then, "Tribal lives matter. Kuki lives matter. Meitei lives matter. Indian lives matter. Human lives matter". Today our interests ought to coincide, not with the exchange of dollars and rupees, but with hearts and minds united in shared human interests. Manipur matters.

+ Lumen, CSC



### THE MANIPUR MAYHEM

Some Seventy years ago William Golding observed that 'man produces evil as a bee produces honey'.

In his celebrated novel, *Lord of the Flies* (1954) a group of children undergo loss of innocence on an Edenic island, where a mysterious and fearful "beast" causes them to divide into factions, with murderous outcomes. They descent from civilization to absolute savagery. Manipur seems to prove that Golding's "evil as a bee" remark was frighteningly spot on.

Initially, Manipur shocked us, then it benumbed us, and then gradually, we got used to it – morning after morning browsing through the day's share of gore, brutality, and shame, routinely, almost expectantly. The contours of violence have gone berserk in this neighboring state to such an extent that adequate words are not easy to find – to describe the anguish and pain of those at the receiving end. 'And much it grieved my heart to think, what man has made of man!'

Manipur is a test. Amidst rallies, protest marches, debates, discussions, and the deafening silence and shocking indifference of those that matter, there are numerous theories doing the rounds – plausible ones, probable ones. We too could delude ourselves that the intellectual angst we feel is adequate action. However, angst alone, whatever its degree and nature, hardly help alleviate the indescribable pain and suffering thousands have gone through and



relocated to.

It's not easy either, to decipher why things are going the way they do. Is it a case of some simple plans, slightly mischievous ones, gone horribly

wrong or is it some pre-scripted agenda playing itself out to the letter?

It is sad that 'delay' - intentional or otherwise, has been a leitmotif in the Manipur conundrum – delayed intervention, delayed response, delayed knowledge – the case of the horrific video that surfaced after about 80 days is a case in point. But the truth is that certain things cannot wait. Hunger, want, sickness, misery, brokenness, and the uncertain future of thousands who live in the relief camps under ramshackle arrangements need immediate attention. As we continue to pray for Manipur, we realize that solidarity is the need of the hour and therefore, generously reach out to these needy neighbors.

Henceforth, 3rd May 2023 shall remain etched in the psyche of the Manipuri population, as 8th June 1980 has become a date to remember in Tripura's chequered history.

J. Pulinthanath, SDB

EDITORIAL

**KUMARGHAT PARISH**

**Parish Feast Day celebrated**



July 2, 2023, was a beautiful day at St. Paul Parish, Kumarghat, where the Annual feast was celebrated with grace and devotion. Around 600 parishioners from all 15 mondolis of the parish thronged the parish campus to take part in the annual festival. The newly-consecrated Bishop Joachim Walder, Auxiliary Bishop of Aizawl Diocese, celebrated the feast day Mass, thereafter carried the Blessed Sacrament on a beautifully-decorated vehicle around the Kumarghat area. Hundreds of faithful took part in the Eucharistic procession, praying and singing, despite the mid-day heat.

The parish priest, Fr Lancy CSC, and various committees were happy to find the day filled with joy and fervor. Several Priests and Sisters of the neighboring parishes also joined. Mr. Lala Darlong gave brief history and explanation of the growth of the parish. Mr. Roitua Darlong proposed the vote of thanks. After the Holy Eucharist green Sunday was celebrated at the Parish Centre. Bp. Joachim and Fr. Lancy symbolically planted the saplings and distributed some to all the mondolis. To conclude the day fellowship meal was served to all.

*Sr. Santan Nago, FS*

**CHALENGTA PARISH**

**Felicitation Ceremony for Meritorious Students**



St. Joseph's Parish, Chailengta, conducted a heretofore unknown in these parts, a grand Felicitation Ceremony for our School's first batch Madhyamik successful students of all in this jurisdiction (not only of our school but others as well). Meritorious students of Holy Cross High School and other English and Bengali Medium Schools of Class X and XII (2022-23) participated in good numbers. The date was 9th July and the venue was St. Joseph's Parish Centre, Chailengta.

A thanksgiving Holy Eucharist was celebrated by Fr. Harry D' Silva CSC the parish priest cum School Secretary and concelebrated by the Principal of our School, Fr. Friny Peter CSC.

During his exhortation Fr. Harry thanked the Lord and prayed for the Principal, the Teachers and all those who contributed for this great result in our Schools. At the outset this batch of students had a hard time to adjust with the gamut of studies. But each of them remained faithful and achieved their goal with flying colors.

There were 15 Students along with their parents of our Parish who were honored them with a beautifully tailored memento, and a Pen and a specially made individualized Certificates by the School Authority for their wonderful achievement. The Catholic Laity of Tripura office-bearers, Mr. Manoranjan Debbarma, Mr. Binod Debbarma and Mr. Sujit Debbarma were present for the program. Everyone who was present expressed their deep sense of gratitude to the Teachers for their dedication and commitment. A cute and brief cultural program followed which ended with a sumptuous Agape for all.

*Fr. Friny Rwnljal, CSC*

**AMARPUR PARISH**

**Inauguration and Blessing of SFS School, Burburia**



The much-awaited new school building, St Francis de Sales School at Burburia was inaugurated and blessed on June 21, 2023 by Rev Fr Sabu Francis MSFS, Provincial of MSFS Guwahati Province and Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC, respectively. Fr Lijeesh Mathew MSFS, Principal of SFS School extended a warm welcome to all the invited guests. Speaking on the occasion, the honourable chief guest Shri Pathan Lal MLA, acknowledged that SFS School, Burburia is the best school in and around Amarpur town. He also exhorted the parents to send their children to an English medium school which will give an extra edge to pursue their higher education. Then Shri Prasanth Badal Negi IAS, SDM of Amarpur advised the students to seize every opportunity that the school provides to become the best version in one's life. Bishop profusely expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the MSFS Fathers of Guwahati Province and Sisters of the Destitute of Delhi Province for

imparting quality education in the far flung village of Burburia. On the other hand, Fr Provincial solemnly asserted that we are committed to the education of the heart echoing the words of the founder, Fr Peter Marie Mermier "The heart of education is education of the heart." Last but not the least, the mega event culminated with a sumptuous meal.

*Fr. Lijeesh, MSFS*

**Ganda Twisa Parish**

**Feast Day celebrated at Ajoyda Para**



Ajoyda Para village came alive with jubilation as its faithful commemorated the annual Feast Day in honor of their patron Saint James. The festivities, held on 23rd July 2023, were led by the Parish Priest, Father Prasad Rao, who presided over the Holy Eucharist, offering prayers and blessings. The Holy Eucharist was attended by not only the villagers but also Holy Spirit Sisters and Parish Council Members. After the solemn Mass, the festivities transitioned into a felicitation program. Village elders and Members of the Parish Council expressed their gratitude and appreciation to the villagers for their devotion and faith. At the end a sumptuous meal was served to all the villagers.

*Sr. Rini, SSpS*

**MC Sisters extend a Helping Hand to the Poor at Bagirath and Ajoyda Para**



On 19th July two villages namely Bhagirath and Ajoyda Para received aid consisting of essential commodities from the M.C Sisters in Agartala. Fr. Prasad Rao who accompanied the Sisters to these villages spoke about the M.C. Sisters and their love for the poor, and thanked them for their continued support, compassion and kindness, rendered to the deserving people of these backward villages of Ganda Twisa Parish.

About 75 families benefited from this program. The M. C Sisters meticulously organized the distribution to ensure that each family received a sufficient amount of dry ration and buckets.

*Br. Joseph Darlong*

**DEPACHERRA PARISH**

**Grandparents Day celebrated**



On July 23, 2023, a heartwarming celebration of Grandparents Day took place at Christ the King Parish in Depacherra. In harmony with our mother Church to observe Grandparents' Day, the community came together to honor and cherish the elderly. A total of 40 esteemed Grandparents were the guests of honor, and they were treated with utmost respect and love. The event was filled with joy as the elders were presented with thoughtful gifts, expressing gratitude for their love, wisdom, and invaluable contribution. The atmosphere was brimming with warmth and appreciation, with the younger generation actively participating in organizing the event. The Grandparents Day celebration at Christ the King Parish was a beautiful testament to the importance of intergenerational bonds and the wisdom that passes from one generation to the next. It was a day filled with laughter, love, and memories, ensuring that the elderly felt cherished and valued for the legacy they continue to leave in the hearts of their loved ones.

*Fr. Amalraj*

**POPE'S INTENTION FOR MONTH OF AUGUST 2023**

**FOR WORLD YOUTH DAY**

**We pray the World Youth Day in Lisbon will help young people to live and witness the Gospel in their own lives.**

**Seminar on**

**'Clergy for a Safer Church and Society for Children and Vulnerable Adults'**

A one day Workshop cum Seminar on the topic "Clergy for a Safer Church and the Society for Children and Vulnerable Adults" was organized by the Diocese of Agartala for the Priests, Religious and Heads of Institutions, at Bishop's House, Agartala, on 4th July from



9a.m. to 4.30p.m. There were 50 participants. Fr. Lancy CSC, the Vicar General, welcomed Fr. Abraham Kochupurackal, C.S.C., the Director of MIIT, Shillong who was the Resource Person. Our Diocese also welcomed and felicitated Most Rev. Joachim Walder, the Auxiliary Bishop of Aizawl, on the occasion. The seminar cum workshop helped to enhance the participants' competencies and skills of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults from abuse, as well as becoming safeguarding agents in our places of ministry. We thank Fr. Abraham Kochupurackal, C.S.C., for directing this workshop and our dear Bishop Lumen Monteiro, for organizing this Seminar.

*Dn. Derrick Augustin*

**Women Commission Deanery level Meetings Seminar**

The Women Commission arranged Deanery Level meetings of five Deaneries in the month of June and July 2023. Kumarghat Deanery held meeting at Kailashahar, Depacherra Deanery held the meeting at Karbook, Ambassa Deanery held the meeting at Gandacherra, Agartala Deanery held the meeting at Nandannagar and Moharpara Deanery held



the meeting at Baijalbari. The respective Parish Priests also encouraged the women members to be active in their own way building up the church and carrying out their own duties. There was a good participation in all the Deaneries and the credit goes to the Parish Priests for their support and guidance to the members. During the Meetings we discussed and made plans to celebrate some of these programs at the Parish level, like Father's day, Grandparents day, Mother's day and Girl child day. We also discussed in detail on various issues, available resources, Women cell/ Maria Sangho in every Parish and their activities in view of the forth coming National Women's Conference at Bangalore. We decided to have regular meetings at Deanery level as this will create a strong bond between the members.

*Sr. Jolly FS,  
Secretary of Women's Commission*



**Our Sincere Congratulations to Bishop-elect Fr. Ferdinand Dkhar  
New Bishop of Jowai**

His Holiness Pope Francis has appointed Fr. Ferdinand Dkhar (61), currently the Administrator of the Diocese of Jowai, Meghalaya, Northeast India, as the Bishop of Jowai on July 8, 2023. His episcopal Ordination will be at Jowai on 1st October, 2023. The See of the Diocese of Jowai became vacant when Bishop Victor Lyngdoh was appointed as the Archbishop of Shillong on December 28, 2020. Fr. Ferdinand Dkhar will be the third Bishop of the Diocese after Bp. Vincent Kympat (2006-2011) and Bp. Victor Lyngdoh (2016-2020). Jowai Diocese was erected in 2006, bifurcating it from the Archdiocese of Shillong. It is 64 kilometers away from Shillong, and has a Catholic population of 1,20,275 in 23 parishes.

### The United Christian Forum of North East India

Guwahati, July 21, 2023: The United Christian Forum of North East India has expressed its disgust, pain, and condemnation at what it says was a horrifying incident that occurred in Manipur State. "A video recently surfaced on social media showing two Kuki women being paraded naked by a mob that has been confirmed by the media and FIR of the incident that took place on the said date, just a day after the ongoing clashes in Manipur began. Although, the women were paraded naked May 4 at B Phainom, a village in Kangpokpi district, the incident came to light only on July 19.

The incident, the forum says, is nothing short of barbaric and inhumane. The forum and Christians of northeastern India "stand in solidarity with the victims and their families during this traumatic time. We extend our heartfelt sympathies and prayers for their healing and recovery," says the statement issued by forum spokesperson Allen Brooks.

The forum has urged the federal and Manipur governments, along with statutory bodies such as the National Commission for Women, to take immediate cognizance of the "appalling crime and take all necessary measures to ensure justice is served swiftly and fairly. We expect nothing less than the strictest punishment for those responsible for this heinous act."

It offered prayers and support to families affected by the ongoing clashes in Manipur. "We appeal to all parties involved to exercise restraint, engage in peaceful dialogue, and find an amicable resolution to the conflict."

*By Matters India Reporter*



### 37TH WORLD YOUTH DAY

#### AUG. 1- 6 WORLD YOUTH DAY IN LISBON, PORTUGAL

More than 400,000 young people have registered for the Aug. 1-6 youth jamboree in Lisbon, Portugal — including a delegation from Ukraine and one from Russia — that culminates with a visit by the Pope. Pope John Paul II initiated the first World Youth Day in 1986.

World Youth Days have long been known to be celebratory occasions — a week of concerts and rambunctious youth festivals, along with daily catechesis and prayer services — but looming large over this event will be how the Portuguese church, and Francis in particular, confronts the sobering reality of abuse.

The socio-religious developments in Portugal since the 1974 revolution have mirrored the secularizing trends in North America and Europe. In many respects, combatting those trends was why Pope John Paul II started World Youth Day, a message that was reiterated by Pope Benedict XVI, who also used his messages at World Youth Day to warn against rising tides of secularism and disbelief.



Young people working as volunteers in Lisbon for World Youth Day



Young people in Lisbon for World Youth Day



Theme for 2023 WYD "Mary arose and went with haste"  
(Lk 1:39).

## Children Parliament Program on Drug Awareness and Child Rights



The Children's Parliament is a group of children of a particular village, neighborhood, or region who come together as a group for activities, learning, and to represent their interests and opinions to the decision makers of the village. Being part of a group, it enables the children to build their confidence and approach other children and adults with suggestions on how to better their conditions and prospects. JUST had formed the 10 different groups in

## News Briefs from JUST

all 10 non-formal education Centers under Karbook Block in order to keep the children more active and aware about the goals and objectives of the program. It involves all the children's participation. JUST conducted a program on Child Rights and Drug awareness in which Mr. Maheswar Tripura, member of Twipra Student Federation and also a teacher in Charisma School, Karbook, gave an awareness, shared on how drugs are affecting today's children in Tripura. He also shared about schemes available for the disability children and orphans and abandoned children, classroom behaviour and child protection on good touch and bad touch. He motivated many children on how to deal with the social issues. He also shared many important values and schemes provided by the Government which many children are unaware of. Children responded well to his sharing and questions were also asked.

### Promotion of Human Rights education in Schools

Awareness program on Promotion of Human Rights education in Schools

was organized at Synod School, Lefunga, by JUST in collaboration with NEDSSS, Guwahati on 28th June 2023. There were 107 students from Class VII to XI who participated in the awareness program. The Resource Person discussed on different topics like, Definition of Human Rights, explanation of seven main Human Rights, Why Promotion of Human Rights education in Schools is important, role of Human Rights education in schools, necessity of teaching Human Rights in the schools, how we can promote Human Rights in the schools, etc. The program ended with a vote of thanks by Fr. Lathees S, Director of JUST. He said that JUST is always ready to help in any assistance required in the days ahead. He also thanked the Principal of the School for his cooperation in conducting the program in his school.



Mr. Robert Lushai

Wishing You all a  
Happy Feast of  
St. John Mary Vianney  
Patron of Priests



Happy  
Independence Day  
&  
Assumption of the  
Blessed Virgin Mary

LINK Wishes its Readers  
Happy Feast of Assumption of Our Lady  
and Independence Day

### Our Distinguished Guests

- Bishop Joachim Walder from Silchar
- Fr. KJ Abraham, CSC from MIIT, Shillong
- SJ Frs. Thomas Mathew & Royal Saldanha from Maibang
- Fr. Rejin Joseph SJ, from Didambra, Assam

## BISHOP'S PROGRAM FOR AUGUST 2023

- 01 : Clergy Meet, Agartala
- Consulters Meet, Agartala
- 03 : Inaugural, Sacred Heart Study House
- 04 : Vianney Day
- 05 : Candlelight Rally for Manipur at Agartala
- 05-06 : Pastoral Program, Kathalcherra Parish
- 08 : Inauguration of Hr. Sec. Section, Gandacherra
- 12-13 : Pastoral Program, Tuikarmaw Parish
- 15 : Independence Day, Agartala
- 19 : JUST GB Meet, Damdamia Office
- 19-20 : Toyonko Chapel Blessing, Depacherra Parish
- 21 : Girls Hostel Blessing, Tuichakma
- 22 : MC Sisters Congregation Feast
- 27 : Parish Feast, Mariamnagar
- 31 : Bhagawantila Chapel Blessing, Karbook Parish