



Link



NEWS LETTER OF THE DIOCESE OF AGARTALA

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Pastor's Corner

Chandrayaan on the Moon

We in Agartala celebrated Chandrayaan-3 on the Moon along with the rest of the country after an Indian-built lunar lander touched down on the moon's surface on August 23. "India is now on the moon and the success belongs to all humanity", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said as Chandrayaan-3 landed successfully on the lunar surface. "The progress made by our scientists and engineers in the field of space research is truly commendable and fills our hearts with pride," said the CBCI President. Similarly, Pope Francis has spoken about space exploration — recalling the 50th anniversary of the moon landing in 2019, when he encouraged Catholics to look to that great event for inspiration to overcome injustices.

The first seeds of space research: One fine Saturday morning in early 1960s, Rev. Dr. Peter Bernard Pereira – the then Bishop of Trivandrum – had a strange guest who had come to his house with a stranger request. The Reverend listened to him patiently but did not respond immediately. Instead, he invited the man to join the Mass the next day. At the end of the Sunday Mass, the Bishop spoke to the assembled crowd, "My children, I have a famous scientist with me who wants our church and the place I live for the work of space science and research. Science seeks truth that enriches human life. The higher level of religion is spirituality...." As narrated by Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, the Bishop's question was greeted by an unsettling silence, and as Dr. Vikram Sarabhai waited eagerly, the church finally reverberated with a loud and hearty 'Amen' from all present! A grateful Dr. Sarabhai and team promptly swung into action. The entire village of fisher folks was relocated nearby, and a new Church was built for the faithful in 100 days flat. The erstwhile St. Mary Magdalene Church and Rev. Pereira's living quarters – located strategically on the magnetic equator and blessed with a narrow ribbon of very strong electro jet current (therefore making it ideal for studying the ionosphere) – thus became the Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station where the first seeds of Indian space research were sown amidst infrastructural constraints unthinkable by rocket scientists anywhere else in the world. As the eponymous lander 'Vikram' touched down near the lunar south pole today with its aptly named rover 'Praggyan' (wisdom), here's remembering that distant weekend when

two leaders, at two seemingly opposite ends of the ideological spectrum, converged on the same grand vision of the future so that one day the sky could no longer be the limit for India!

Happy Teachers Day

Teacher's Day in India is celebrated on 5th September every year to honor and acknowledge the contributions of Teachers to society and to the education system. It is the birthday of Dr.S. Radha krishnan, a respected Philosopher and Teacher, who also served as the President of India from 1962 to 1967. On Teachers Day, students and educational institutions organize events and activities to pay tribute to their Teachers and express their gratitude for their guidance and mentorship. Being a Teacher is not an easy task, and so we appreciate all the hard work and effort that Teachers put in to ensure that students have the best education possible. Our Teachers are not just educators but mentors, guides, and friends. Malala Yousafzai, the child prodigy said about a teacher, "Let us remember: one book, one pen, one child, and one teacher, can change the world."

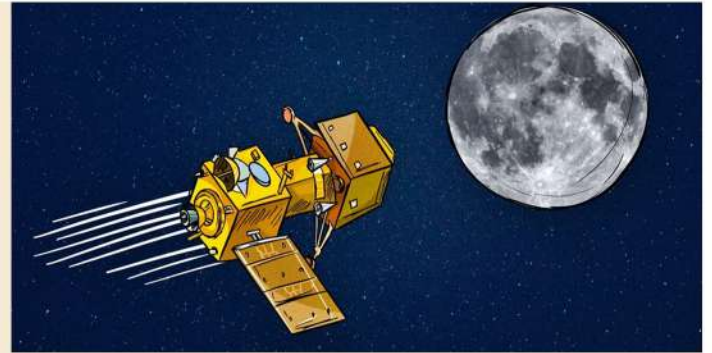
On this occasion, I would like to thank all our Teachers spread across the many Schools in our Diocese for their patience, kindness, and commitment to the cause of education. You dear Teachers have impacted the lives of our children, and we are grateful for what you have done and are doing. **HAPPY TEACHERS DAY!**

St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta

The Feast Day of St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta is on 5th September. She is the Patron of World Youth Day. Born in 1910 in Albania, Mother Teresa founded the Missionaries of Charity in 1950 in the Archdiocese of Calcutta. Subsequently, in 1963, she founded the Missionaries of Charity Brothers, in 1976 the Contemplative branch of the Sisters, in 1979 the Contemplative Brothers, and in 1984 the Missionaries of Charity Fathers. Numerous awards, beginning with the Indian Padmashri Award in 1962 and the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, honored her work, while an increasingly interested media began to follow her activities. She received both, prizes and attention, 'for the glory of God and in the name of the poor.' "On 5th September 1997, Mother Teresa's earthly life came to an end. She was given the honor of a state funeral by the Government of India and her body was buried in the Mother House of the Missionaries of Charity. Her tomb quickly became a place of pilgrimage and prayer for people of all faiths, rich and poor alike. Mother Teresa was beatified by Pope John Paul II on October 19, 2003. St. Teresa of Calcutta was canonized by Pope Francis on September 4, 2016 in a ceremony that was witnessed by tens of thousands of people, including 1, 500 homeless people from across Italy.

+ Lumen, CSC

Editorial



Oh, for a 'Chandrayaan' in the Heart!

When India's 'Chandrayaan-3' scripted history on the evening of 23rd August 2023, every citizen of India felt inexpressible joy and pride at being counted among the 142-crore people that make up this great nation. The world, amazed at the historic feat, joined us in congratulating our scientists for their prowess, hard work and dedication.

As a nation we are not entirely unfamiliar to moments of such massive euphoria, although in the past it has mostly been centered on some cricket pitch or other in some part of the world. This time it was around an incredible achievement happening quite literally on another realm. We felt ourselves up on the clouds, beyond it, and not merely crying for the moon, but sitting pretty on it!

It is unfortunate that in this great nation we often come across occasions that mar such feelings of national exhilaration, pride and unity. The unabashed efforts to make India into a Hindu Rashtra undermines the secular fabric of this nation whose identity, ethos and character is the unity it is able to forge out of mind-boggling diversity of faiths, cultures, ethnicities and languages.

It is unfortunate that we now come across many instances where differences that exist between peoples and groups are brought to the fore. In a conglomeration of peoples like India, such attempts are not only undesirable but perilous because they divide rather than unite.

Tripura is not untouched either. The news item that appeared a couple of months ago about those who change faith forfeiting scheduled tribe status has the potential to bring about division within tribal population of the State. Not only is such a proposal preposterous, but seems intended as an apple of discord.

Gone are the days when one's identity rested with who and what one actually was. Today others seem eager to define who we are. There is a need to withstand efforts of interested groups to determine our identity, history and future in ways meant only to further their agenda.

'Chandrayaan' is quite literally about broadening horizons. If only its glimmer found a resonance in the receding margins of our hearts!

J. Pulinthanath, SDB

Pope's Intention for September 2023

FOR PEOPLE LIVING ON THE MARGINS

We pray for those persons living on the margins of society, in inhumane life conditions; may they not be overlooked by institutions and never considered of lesser importance.



8th September

GIRL CHILD DAY



LINK Wishes its Readers
Happy Feast of
NATIVITY OF THE
BLESSED
VIRGIN MARY



Kamaranga Parish

Shepherd's Pastoral Visit Strengthens Parishioners



Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC arrived St. Raphael Parish on 12th August for his pastoral visit. He was welcomed solemnly with garland, bouquet of flowers and the processions of hostel children and parishioners. The solemn Holy Eucharist began with Reang entrance dance at 10am on 13 August. There were 50 parishioners who received the confirmation in the Holy Eucharist. Village leaders prepared people for the reception of the sacrament. Parish priest visited the villages, taught prayers and gave practice for the reception of the sacrament. Bishop's pastoral visit to the parish has truly strengthened the faith of the parishioners.

Fr. Arun Minj SVD

Gandatwisa Parish

Higher Secondary Program Inaugurated



The Higher Secondary program of the St Arnold School was inaugurated on 8th August in a grand ceremony in the presence of its faculty, students, parents and guests. The inauguration ceremony commenced with a welcome address by the School's Principal Fr. Prasad Rao. He emphasized the importance of providing quality education and preparing students for the challenges of higher education and beyond. Distinguished Guests, included local officials and community leaders. The Chief Guest was Mr. Animesh Debbarma, Leader of the Opposition in the

Government. Bishop Lumen Monteiro, the Chairman of the School, inaugurated the new Higher Secondary Block with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and blessing prayer, symbolizing the formal beginning of the educational venture. The event was also marked by inspiring speeches from Rajesh Tripura, EM, and Fr. Ivan D Silva, SVD, the first Principal of the School. The ceremony concluded with a cultural showcase, where students demonstrated their talents through music and dance performances. The inauguration of the Higher Secondary program at St. Arnold School marks a significant step toward empowering the youth of Ganda Twisa with quality education and comprehensive skill development.

Fr. Prasad Rao

Depacherra Parish

Chapel blessed at Tauyongkho Para



On 20th August St. Lawrence Chapel at Tauyongkho Para, was inaugurated and blessed by Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC, who was accompanied by Fr. Amalraj, the Parish Priest, Fr. Lawrence, the School Principal, and a church filled with faithful. Bishop Lumen inaugurated the chapel with the ceremonial ribbon-cutting gesture. The Bishop then proceeded to bless the newly constructed chapel, invoking divine blessings upon the sacred space, altar and all those who would seek solace and spiritual guidance within its walls. This was followed by the solemn Holy Eucharist. Bishop Monteiro took a moment to express his heartfelt gratitude to all the generous donors who contributed to the construction of the chapel. He also acknowledged the role played by Fr. Lawrence, under whose leadership the foundation of the chapel had been laid. Then a

short felicitation program was organized. The day's celebrations culminated in a joyful meal where all faithful shared in a communal feast. This meal not only nourished the bodies of those present but also symbolized the unity and solidarity of the parish community.

Fr. Amalraj

Nandanagar Parish

Sacrament of Confirmation administered



On 30th July 2023, Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC visited our Parish. On this day 11 children received first Holy Communion and 14 candidates were confirmed with the Sacrament of Confirmation. The solemn celebration was presided over by the Bishop and concelebrated by Frs. Christopher SDB, Sebastian Palatty SDB, Pulinthanath SDB and Dinesh Narzary SDB. In the homily the Bishop exhorted the faithful to have a deeper love for the Holy Eucharist and also to have a closer union with the Lord. The Bishop thanked profusely the Parish Priest in a special way for having invited him, all the other Fathers, Sisters, Brothers, the Parish Pastoral Council, the Maria Bodol, the Youth and all who took part in the celebration. The Parish Secretary in turn thanked the Bishop for sparing his valuable time for the Parish and for administering the Sacraments, although he had only just reached back from an overseas trip the evening before.

Fr Christopher Warlarpih, SDB

Ambassa Parish

SCC Seminar for the Parishioners



Ambassa (Tripura) 29th July, 2023:

Holy Spirit Catholic Church, Ambassa organized a one day revitalization seminar for the SCC unit leaders of the parish. There were 50 participants from different villages participating in the renewal program on SCC. The main speaker was Mr. Paul Sangma. All expressed the opinion that their groups are active and they come together for sharing once a week. There were few hiccups that the men seldom participate in SCC. Towards the end of the session, the Parish Priest spoke on what is SCC and on its importance. The Seminar concluded with lunch.

Fr. Ivan D'Silva, SVD

Grandparents Day celebrated



Holy Spirit Catholic Church celebrated Grandparents day in the parish. There were altogether 38 elderly parents whose names were given from different sub-stations but only 28 people came to the parish. Parishioners felicitated them by wishing and giving gifts and also provided them with good snacks and gave them gifts like torchlights and umbrellas. The 86-year-old Pope Francis instituted the Day in 2021. This year's theme "His mercy is from age to age" (Lk 1:50), takes us back to the joyful meeting between the young Mary and her elderly relative Elizabeth (Lk 1:39-56). Friendship with an older person, he said, can help the young "to see life not only in terms of the present and realize that not everything depends on them and their abilities." For the elderly, on the other hand, he noted, the presence of a young person in their lives "can give them hope that their experience will not be lost and that their dreams can find fulfilment."

Fr. Ivan D' Silva, SVD

Kumarghat Parish

Couples' Day celebrated



St Paul's Parish, Kumarghat, celebrated the first Sunday, 6th August, as Couples' Day. 80 couples from all the mondolis with their little children, gathered at St. Pauls' campus, to mark this special day. There were also a few singles who attended. Before the Holy Mass, a lively talk was given by Fr. Alfred D'Souza, CSC, the Administrator of Holy Cross Province, highlighting Christian values of a family with suitable quotes and interesting examples. During the Holy Eucharist the couples renewed their commitment to each other, and received a special blessing. After Mass, Fr Lancy CSC, the Parish Priest, thanked the couples for their active participation in the event and distributed snacks to everyone. It was a memorable day for the couples as they felt strengthened and energized in their family bonds.

Sr. Santan Nago, FS

Mothers' Day celebrated



On 20th of August, Mothers' Day was organized by Maria Sangha women of the Parish. It was an inspiring day for 110 women who gathered for the celebration. The Holy Mass was solemnized by Fr. Lancy the Parish Priest. During the homily Fr. Lancy highlighted the sacrifices mothers do for the welfare of their families, and said the Mothers need to be like St. Monica who continuously prayed for her son's conversion who later became a saint.

Mrs. Agnes Darlong spoke with her life experiences how mothers need to be faith filled women.

Mrs. Shefali Darlong on the behalf all women expressed words of gratitude to Fr. Lancy for his inspiring talks and to Mrs. Agnes for her motivating and encouraging speech. Sr. Vero M.C proposed a vote of thanks and thanked the organizers, especially Sr. Ignatius Mary, Mrs. Biaki Darlong the President of Maria Sango and Mrs. Shefali Darlong the Secretary. All women expressed their thanks. Lunch was served for all.

Sr. Ignatius Mary FS

PEACE RALLY FOR MANIPUR

at different Parishes

In the months of July and August at different Parishes and Schools like Tuikarmaw, Ambassa, Depacherra, Gachirampara, Kumarghat, Kathalcherra, Karbook, Holy Cross School - Barakathal, Peace Rallies were organized in solidarity with the victims of violence in Manipur. Here is a report:

Ambassa Parish



On 27 July and Ecumenical Peace Rally along with UCFHR members had a Peace Rally. More than 2000 people had gathered at 3pm at the ground near Ambassa Town Hall. Mr. Bijoy Kumar Hrangkhawl, a prominent tribal leader in the State and an active member of the Baptist Church, inaugurated the rally with a prayer. Fr. Ivan the Secretary of UCFHR gave an introduction to the rally, especially when he spoke about the purpose of the public meeting. He said, "The intention of this gathering is written in your hoardings, it is to be in harmony with the victims of Manipur violence". Among the crowd mostly youth and women were dominating and when asked by someone in the crowd why so many people took part in the rally? He said, "It was the showcase of inbuilt anger that was protested peacefully for the injustice done to the tribals of Manipur".

Ivan D' Silva, SVD

PEACE RALLY FOR MANIPUR

at different Parishes Contd....

Karbook Parish



On 4th August Our Lady of Good Health Parish, Karbook, organized Ecumenical Peace Rally for the victims of Manipur violence along with the Members of the Presbyterian Church, Karbook. There were 250 participants. The silent peace rally began at Karbook Bazar and proceeded through the streets and concluded at the Parish church. The participants held numerous placards and marched on the roads as they silently prayed for peace in the State of Manipur. The Parish thanks Mr. Raymond Bongcher, the Parish Secretary, who organized this Rally in consultation with the PP Fr. Allwin. A special note of thanks to the Police Administration of Karbook Sub-Division who granted permission to organize this Silent Peace Rally.

Deacon Derrick

Kumarghat Parish



On 3rd August an Ecumenical silent Peace Rally was organized by Kumarghat Parish at Kanchancherra village. Participants from Kathalcherra parish, the Baptist church, and members of EFCI church jointly took part in the Rally. There were 300 participants. The Rally began from the Kanchancherra village to the hospital tri-junction and then to the Panchayat office across the market area on the National Highway. The silent Rally was seeking justice for the violence against innocent people of Manipur, and to seek for the restoration of their constitutional rights. The Dean of Kumarghat Deanery, Rev. Fr. Lancy D' Souza, C.S.C., thanked all the participating teams and mentioned a special thanks to the Police administration for rendering their full support and gave the final blessings.

Mr. Roitua Darlong

Agartala Diocese Commission for Women organized a Silent Rally/ Candle Light procession for Manipur



On 30th July the Commission for Women in collaboration with other NGOs, Parishes, Schools Colleges, SHGs, organized silent peace rally/candle light procession in Agartala. The Convener of the Rally at Agartala and the Secretary of the Commission for Women Sr. Jolly Kottarathil FS said that the Rally was organized to condemn the heinous crime committed on women in Manipur, extending our solidarity to the suffering victims and an appeal to end the three months long violence and strife. months long violence and strife. The Rally was attended by people from all walks of life who joined Bishop Lumen --students, women, men, ex-MLA, Principals, leaders and

members from other denominations, Priests and Religious holding lit candles, placards and banners with captions on peace and unity, joined in large numbers.

Sr. Jolly FS, Commission for Women

Diocesan Youth Sunday 2023



On 6th August Diocesan Youth Sunday was celebrated by ADYC under the guidance of DYD Fr. Lawrence Darlong, with the theme "As the father has sent me so I am sending you" Jn. 20:21. The program was hosted in Nandanagar Parish. The celebration started with holy Mass and the main celebrant was Fr. Christopher SDB, the Parish Priest. After the Mass, the cultural program began. Youth from all the five deaneries participated enthusiastically. 270 Youth attended the program. The DYP Jeremy, welcomed everyone and the DYD and DEXCO felicitated all the

dignitaries with rishas and mementos. Activity Report from the month of January to July was presented by ADYC Secretary Priyanka Debbarma, Finance report was presented by ADYC Treasurer Roseline Uchoi and YCS report was presented by YCS President Betsy Debbarma. Fr. Sebastian Pallaty, the chief Guest, addressed the youth motivating them to bear witness to the mission entrusted to them and bring out positive changes in little ways that they can. From the part of Youth, Ms. Bipasha Hrangkhawl, the first Woman ATC from Tripura, gave a motivational talk to the youth, encouraging them to have love and empathy, beginning from self and to the others. Fr. PJ gave a thought provoking reflection reminding us of the danger of mob mentality which should be avoided. The program ended with the vote of thanks extended by Mr. Basil Debbarma, vice-president of ADYC.

Priyanka Debbarma – ADYC Secretary

News Briefs from the Diocese

News Briefs from JUST

Promotion of Peace through Art & Music for Schools



Jana UnnayanSamiti Tripura organized a program on the Promotion of Peace through Art & Music for different Schools on 18th August 2023 at JUST Office, Agartala. There were 70 students from 20 different Schools who took part the program. The program began by a welcome address by Fr. Lathees, Director, JUST Agartala. Then the Competitions were conducted School-wise in which three different competitions were conducted, namely, dance, singing, and art. Prizes were distributed to the winners of the competitions which was followed by feedback from the participants on the program conducted. The program ended with a vote of thanks by Mrs. Larisa Debbarma, who had a word of appreciation to all participants and organizers of this inspiring event. She also added that the seeds of peace sown through this event will continue to grow and influence the perspectives and actions of young individuals as an agent of peace in the years to come.

JUST organized Health Camps at remote villagers



Jana UnnayanSamiti Tripura (JUST) organized Health Camps at two remote villages under Ganganagar R.D Block, Dhalai, Tripura on 31st July 2023. The Health Camps were organized in the remote villages and more than 200 people mostly women and children were diagnosed from various health ailments by Dr. Joshua Debbarma, Medical Officer, Ganganagar PHC. From JUST Mr. Robert Lushai, Mr. Lilmohan Reang and Mr. Gabriel Darlong were present in the Health Camps. 11 persons were tested Malaria positive during the Health Camps out of 21 people tested and were given necessary medicines by the Doctor. Two more Health Camps will be organized this month at different remote villages with the support from the Ganganagar PHC.

Mr. Robert Lushai

"Educating one girl child means educating an entire family, never underestimate a girl"
- Unknown



Our Distinguished Guests

- Sr. Violet D' Souza BS, Procurator General from Mangalore
- Sr. Leena Serrao BS, Province Bursar from Silchar
- Sr. Helen, SAC Provincial from Bangalore
- DSP Srs. Shalini, Rita & Delsey from Shillong
- Sr. Joicy, FS Regional Superior from Rangia, Assam
- Sr. Sunita, SSpS Provincial from Guwahati
- Sr. Jeannette, SSpS Vice Provincial from Guwahati
- Bishop Mar Pauly from Irinjalakuda, Kerala

Bishop's Program for September 2023

- 02 : Killa Chapel Blessing, Khumwllwng Parish
- 03 : Mainama Jubilee, Challengta Parish
- 04 : Clergy Meeting, Agartala
- 06-07: IGSSS Governing Board Meet @Delhi
- 08-09: NERPC Pastoral Conference @ Guwahati
- 10 : FMA Centenary of arrival in NE @ Shillong
- 11-13: NERPC and Bishops Meet @ Shillong
- 15 : Holy Cross Congregational Feast, Agartala
- 16 : Dharmatilla Chapel Blessing, Bagbasa Parish
- 17 : Parish Feast & Confirmations @ Bagbasa
- 19-21: CHAI GB Meet @ DBI Guwahati
- 22-24: Standing Committee Meet @ Bangalore
- 25-27: Health Commission Meet @ Bangalore
- 30 : To Jowai for Episcopal Ordination

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