



Life's Fragility

As I pen these few lines I'm just out of the hospital after a bout with typhoid and am supposed to be on 'strict rest and diet' says the doc. It's also a few days before my sacerdotal

Pastor's Corner

ordination anniversary the 35th! I look at this time as a God-given opportunity to slow down, look back, reminisce and rejoice. But reading PRAYERFULNESS by Robert Wicks I have become aware of life's fragility. He says "when we are continuously aware of life's fragility, we are more spiritually mindful and life is richer." Not that my daily life's routine does not have its sacred moments of prayer and meditation-- it's just that the hectic schedule takes things such as life's fragility for granted!

Psychologist Mark Epstein tells a story about a visit he and other mental health professionals made to the revered wisdom figure Ajahn Chah in Thailand. They were in discussion with him about spiritual mindfulness, impermanence, and gratitude for life, when at one point Ajahn Chah looked at them and



held up a glass. He said, "You see this glass. I love this glass. It holds water. It is beautiful when the sun shines through it. It makes a nice ping sound when you hit it. But if the wind blows through the window and knocks it over and it breaks...of course! When I know the glass is already broken, I love every minute I have it."

Obviously he is raising our minds to the fact that fragility is true not only with respect to our possessions, but also of our relationships. For the life we have on this earth is precious and short. Prayerfulness leads us to remember this and honor life's fragility, to value what and who is really important in our life.

When we don't keep this in mind we lose perspective, says Robert Wicks. "We rush mindlessly toward our graves. We are in the future, preoccupied with details, or captured in the past." We must wake up. No one else can do this job of waking up for us. Waking up is ultimately something that each one of us can only do for ourselves.

"Practicing prayerfulness and putting it into practice will help you keep in mind life's fragility and appreciate each day", says Robert Wicks.

+Lumen, CSC



Puja Thoughts from the Sidelines

One of the fascinating things about the October puja of the Hindu community is the admirable manner in which it combines devotion and revelry. In a place like Agartala everything feels toned up during the

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festive week. The entire city, even its most forlorn alleys, come alive and display a rare élan - lights, music, color, and camaraderie.

The puja belies the assumption that development and affluence slacken religious fervor and devotion. If at all anything, the puja seems to prove that these sentiments are deeply ingrained in human psyche. But there are other aspects of the celebration that seem to be undergoing some change with the passing of years - aspects which could be of interest, not only to Hindus, but to everyone.

For example, most 'sangha' now make 'social service' an integral and important part of their puja celebrations. Thanks to this growing trend one invariably finds socially useful activities being taken up as part of the puja celebrations: blood donation, distribution of goods to poor and other such initiatives. One



notices yet another change. There was a time when puja pandals were meant also to make an aggressive statement about the power, wealth and the clout that the 'sangha' wielded. One does not come across such reckless flaunting of power or wealth any longer. On the whole, things seem to have become a lot better.

There might be a take home thought here for us. Perhaps, it's that we need to consciously ensure 'the poor' are in some way or other part of our big celebrations - like Christmas, for example. Not merely 'part' of the celebrations, but 'centre' of the celebrations, perhaps. Another lesson, perhaps, is that we ought to steer clear of attitudes and decisions that reduce our Church merely into an elite and exclusive sangha of self-righteous believers.

We have the Annual Diocesan Eucharistic Procession coming up in a few days. We could be tempted to use the event as an argument, a number statement. That would be impoverishing what's surely a wonderful opportunity to honour and adore the Eucharistic Lord and to manifest our faith in him.

With nineteen eventful years behind us, we cannot claim to be a young Diocese perhaps. Nevertheless, we're still learning learning the right manner of doing things, and the best way of living out our faith. **J. Pulinthanath, SDB**

**St. Francis of Assisi Parish,
Gachirampara**

Parish Feast

Our Parish celebrated the Founder's Day and the Parish's Patron Feast on 4th of October.



The day was made colorful through meaningful liturgy where the

parishioners and the borders joined their melodious voices in singing. Since the day's readings were based on marriage our Bishop Lumen spoke about the Sacrament of marriage and the unity needed in the family. He also spoke of the duty of parents to be involved in the spiritual growth of their children in his homily. The day was made more colorful by the parishioners and borders through their cultural items. Fathers and Sisters from the neighboring Parishes were part of the celebration. The day ended with a fellowship meal.

Fr. Prasanna Kumar Ofm Cap

St. Paul Parish, Kumarghat

First time SCC Day celebrated



St. Paul's Parish celebrated SCC Day for the first time on

27th September. The day started with the Solemn Eucharistic celebration. This was followed by reporting of SCC groups from different *mondolis*. It was learnt that most of the SCC groups are functioning well, though at the same time there were some groups that are weak due to lack of motivated leadership. It was a matter of great joy to note that SCC has helped faithful to come closer to one another and God through prayer and Bible sharing. Those groups which are active shared their positive experience of unity and closeness they experience as a result of SCC. Using participatory methods Fr. Jilson CSC made the participants to become aware of the importance of working together to achieve the goals of the Parish through SCC. The SCC day helped the faithful to experience the joy of having SCC in different villages. It further motivated the representatives to strengthen the SCC in the local churches. The celebration came to an end with a common meal.

Regent Lawrence Wanniang, CSC

**Don Bosco Parish, Nandan nagar
Being generous for God**

There was definitely a sense of excitement in the air as the whole parish gathered on 11th October at the Parish to celebrate Mission Sunday. The celebrations were anticipated to give the students an opportunity to participate

before they leave for their *puja* vacation. After the Mass, everyone moved to the



festivities. Food stalls with exotic local dishes were the

main attraction. Put up by our own parishioners, the colorful food-stalls satisfied the hunger of everyone. The chance games for children attracted a few. The auction was another huge draw. Fruits, vegetables, chickens, flowers, cakes and much more were on display. The givers and the takers had all one purpose in mind--to contribute to the extension of God's Kingdom in different ways. The gathering was a significant moment for our small Parish. The unity of purpose and the opportunity to be generous for the Kingdom of God made everyone forget the hardships involved. Of course, on 18th October everyone gathered once again in prayer to celebrate the actual Mission Sunday with a beautiful liturgy. *Fr. Sunny, SDB*

St. Alphonsa Parish, Khumulwng

SCC Evaluation and Training

Fr. Ronald SDB organized the SCC Evaluation and Training for the Co-ordinators of 7 Parishes of West Zone on 10th



October at St. Alphonsa Parish, Khumulwng. The SCC program began with Bible sharing and

was followed by Evaluation and planning for next 4 months. The Evaluation brought to light that there is a lot of positive outcome of the SCC such as-increasing faith, bringing unity, helping the needy, etc. We also became aware of the limitations such as- ignorant of SCC, lack of participation of men folk and children, etc. The highlight of the Evaluation was that we need to form and strengthen the SCC Units in our Parishes. The program ended with the arrival of AICU Tripura Unit Rosary Rally at 2pm. They prayed the Rosary for the parish and shared lunch together. *Fr. Arun, SVD*

**Good Shepherd Parish,
Kathalcherra**

Blessing and Peace Rally

Good Shepherd Parish, Kathalcherra was blessed with a new Village Chapel in



Koraticherra. It was blessed and inaugurated on 3rd October by Most Rev. Bishop Lumen. Thanks to Fr Lancy CSC our Parish Priest for

his hard work in completing the construction on time. The blessing of the new Chapel has brought the joy of praying and worshipping together. We prayed that God may bless all our benefactors and people involved in making the dream come true.

Peace Rally

On 9th October Holy Cross Higher Secondary School, Kathalcherra,



organized a Peace Rally to Nepaltila. All the students of the School participated in the Rally

conveying the Message of Peace to the people around. Carrying placards and messages, the students sent a strong message of peace and love, at the same time creating awareness for the ecological environment. They conveyed the triangular message of relationship with nature, humans and God.

Parents Day at Chailengtha

On 16th October Holy Cross School Chailengtha, under Kathalcherra Parish organized Parents



Day. "You may not be able to predict the future but you can build the children for the future...So do not only invest in bank

or on yourself but invest on your children", was the heart-touching message given by the Chief Guest, Mr Dilip Debbarma, the Commandant of 8th Battalion TSR Chailengtha. Invited Guest of Honour Mr. Kishore Debbarma the Additional SP of Dhalai, an ex-student of Holy Cross, said that "every institution has a humble beginning and Holy Cross Chailengtha is one such." Fr K.J Abraham, the Provincial Superior praised the School which began with small numbers but is steadily growing. Sr. Katini VSDB the Headmistress presented the Annual Report of the school. The fathers, sisters, and parents were enthralled by the wonderful cultural performances by the students.

Fr. Ishwar, CSC



Holy Cross School, Tuikarmaw Parents Day Celebrations



Holy Cross School Tuikarmaw, celebrated Parents' Day on 10th October. With great joy and enthusiasm the Staff and the Students' community took part. Shri Manindra Reang Honorable Minister for Jail and PGP Department was the Chief Guest. Shri Rajesh Kumar Das the SDM of Santir Bazar Sub Division was the Guest of Honor. The dignitaries were welcomed by the School Band. Fr. Abraham C. CSC Secretary of the School gave the welcome address. Fr. Alfred CSC presented the School Report. The students exhibited their talents and skills through dances, songs and skit, and made the audience happy and joyful. The Chief Guest addressed the gathering and congratulated the students for their colorful cultural performance. He appreciated the teaching faculty for their hard work in training the students. Sr. Anita SABS the Headmistress thanked everyone. 900 parents were present for this great event. *Fr. Alfred, CSC*

AICU Programs

General Body Meeting

The Meeting was chaired by Fr. Harry, CSC and started with a Prayer led by Deacon Gabriel Darlong, CSC. 38 Lay Leaders from all over the Diocese participated in the GBM. The following points were discussed: 7th Holy Eucharistic Procession; Rosary Rally; Cathedral Fund; Ordination of Deacon Gabriel Darlong CSC. It was a well attended and fully participatory Meeting. We are grateful to JUST for providing the logistic support and food.

2nd Holy Rosary Rally

The 2nd Holy Rosary Rally, organized by AICU in the Diocese of Agartala began on 10th October at 7am from St. Francis Xavier Cathedral Parish Agartala, and ended on 12th October at 6pm in Bishramganj Parish, covering 14 parishes in three days.

About 35 Lay Leaders from different Parishes participated in the Rally. The aim of this Rally was to pray for the unity and prosperity of every Parish. On the arrival to every Parish, the faithful gave a warm welcome to the Team. It was then followed by recitation of the Rosary and prayers. We thank Fr. Emmanuel CSC, the Principal of the Holy Cross College, for allowing us to avail the college bus for the Rally. We also thank the Fathers who generously arranged food and accommodation for the Laity Church Leaders.

Mr. Paul S. Darlong

Auxilium Girls School, Nandannagar

Student Development Programme (SDP)

One day Student Development Programme for Class VII on September 26, Class VIII on September 28, Class IX



on September 29, Class X on September 30 - from 7.15 am to 1.00 pm was organized in the School. Topics dealt were Education to Life and Love; Media Education Cyber Crime; Care of Creation our Common Home; etc. It was a great experience for all the students to attend this program which was indeed, "education beyond text books". The entire program was coordinated and conducted by Sr. Celine D'Cunha Principal, along with Srs. Rihun, Mercy, Margaret and Janicia as her Team. The students since intermingled with team games, action songs, various yells and very enriching learning sessions. We learned the meaning of growing up gracefully as teenagers understanding the real meaning of true love, infatuation, obsession, liking, fondness; cultivating feminine qualities, building our lives on the strong foundation of values, virtues

and principles, being empowered with quality education, being aware of the media that tries to influence our life styles how we need to use media critically, cybercrime, etc. Many of the issues were real eye-openers for us.

An important moment of the program was group efficiency project based on the theme: "Care of Creation our Common Home." We were asked to present the theme in drawing, poems, speeches and art. Students wanted to live in a beautiful world and committed themselves to make this world a beautiful place. We are grateful to our beloved school, to Sr. Celine D'Cunha our Principal, and all the Sisters. Indeed it was a very inspiring learning experience, truly education beyond books!

Sr. Kharmuti Margreth, FMA

St. Arnold School, Gondacherra Wildlife Week Celebration

St. Arnold High School Gondacherra was the venue for the 61st Wildlife Week celebration at the Sub-Divisional level on 12th October. Many dignitaries attended the program including our MLA Mr. Lalit Mohan Tripura, Smt. Bhanumati, IFS Ambassa Forest Division. Students from



different Schools of the Sub-Division also participated in this event. Mr. Lalit Mohan Tripura, the MLA, inaugurated the program by lightning the lamp and spoke about the Environmental Awareness. He also stressed on the importance of wildlife in the State of Tripura and what measures can be taken to protect the nature. St. Arnold School students welcomed everyone with a beautiful welcome song and other programs. Earlier we had different competitions conducted among the students of local schools regarding wild life. Our school students got many prizes and some are selected for the State level competition.

Fr. Bosco Lathees

JUST Programs

Awareness on Irrigation Facilities for Farmers



In September 2015 JUST organized a series of Awareness Programs on Irrigation Facilities for the Farmers Clubs as an encouragement towards double cropping system. The Programs were conducted at 32 villages under Hezamara R.D Block. 416 farmers (281 men and 135

women) took part in the Awareness Programs. The Resource Persons were the elderly traditional farmers and the Staff. They shared about the irrigational systems of the present and the systems that were practiced earlier. The aim of the Awareness Programs was to make people aware of the different types of irrigational systems and irrigational facilities and schemes available for the farmers from the government departments. The Awareness Programs provided a common platform for the farmers to share about their traditional knowledge so that good practices can be revived. 416 farmers were benefitted from the Awareness Programs.



JUST distributes 50 Sewing Machines to SHG Women



JUST together with IVDP Krishnagiri in Tamil Nadu distributed 50 Sewing Machines to 50 SHG women from West, Khowai and South Tripura Districts on 9th October 2015. Magsaysay awardee Mr. Kulandai Francis the founder Director of IVDP was the Chief

Guest, while Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, the Bishop of the Diocese of Agartala and Chairman of JUST and Mr. Xavier from Tamil Nadu were the Guests of Honor. Mr. Francis encouraged the women to make use of the assistance to stand by their own. Fr. Jeevan Kennady, the Director of JUST thanked IVDP for the constant support rendered to SHG women in Tripura for the past two years. **Vincent DebBurma**

Our Readers Write

I just received and perused the Link! Thanks once again. The piece you wrote about Gandhi is very touching. I've heard that story before.

Alan, CSC, Nairobi, Africa

Thank you for 'LINK'ing us always right on time. **Thomas Manjaly, Shillong**

A Million Thanks to you Bishop for the October Link. **Sr. Rihun, FMA, Agartala**

Thank you so much for adding my name in the list of 'LINK' recipients.

Benjamin, SVD, Kamaranga

Thanks for LINK October. **Navin Lakra, SVD, Guwahati**

I received the LINK-October-2015. I am so grateful for your great concern to us. **+Andrew, Tura**

Just read the October LINK, the whole of it. It keeps me in touch with the Church of the N.E., Tripura especially. Thank you very much. I really like reading it. There is plenty of life in your local Church. **J. Charles Descary, csc,**

Thank you Bishop for the LINK. Happy to read our Diocese is vibrant.

Ivan, SVD, Ambassa

Thanks indeed for sending me the LINK of October. I was touched by your message on Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of our great nation. Your message challenges all people of goodwill especially the Christians to be authentic witnesses to the teachings of Jesus found in the Holy Bible. May the good Lord bless you, the ardent Shepherd of the Diocese. **Fr. Jolly, Delhi**

LINK as always is wonderful. **Peggy, USA**

At the out set let me say a big thanks for regularly sending the copy of your link. Wonderful. God chose Bishop Lumen to work in that special land for the progress and developments of people. May God bless and give you strength to overcome all the challenges that you will have to face.

Mr. OJ Varghese, Salem

Tid bits from all over

'Confess-a-thon' at Colombian Mall draws 350 priests

In the South American nation of Colombia where an estimated 70 percent of the population identifies as Catholic it is not unusual to encounter Catholic priests at a cathedral, or perhaps at a religious school or hospital. Seeing scores of priests at a shopping mall, on the other hand, is a less frequent occurrence. But for thousands of shoppers at Gran



Estación Mall in Bogota, Colombia last week, that's exactly what happened. Some 350 priests congregated at the Mall to offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation in a "Confess-a-thon" held October 6-7. Shoppers were surprised to see the priests, who were spread out at different stations throughout the Mall, offering opportunities for Confession, or just to talk. Many took advantage of the opportunity. The Bishops' Conference reported on the event on its website. Fr. Hernán Baéz explained that the Mall was chosen because it contains a chapel and prayer room. "What we were able to accomplish with these days of Confession is to show that the merciful Jesus walks through the streets, even in a mall," he said. (zenit.org)

Church's new Medical College all set for launch

A new Medical College under the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India in

Jharkhand will be inaugurated by Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghubar Das,

who will be the chief guest at the Constant Lievens Academy of Health Sciences and Hospital at Mandar, near the state capital of Ranchi on November 7. Political and social leaders, besides top Church dignitaries in India, will attend the function to be held at Holy Family Hospital, Mandar, says a note from Bishop Theodore



Mascarenhas, Chairperson of the college's Executive Committee. The medical college aims to take healthcare to a predominantly tribal region. It has come up after several initial hiccups. Earlier in an interview CBCI president Cardinal Baselios Cleemis described the Medical College as the "long cherished brainchild project" of the Conference. The college is patterned on the CBCI's first such attempt St. John's Medical College Bangalore.

India has at least 176 Government Medical Colleges and 206 private Medical Colleges. The proposed Medical College is named after Jesuit Father Constant Lievens, who is revered as the apostle of Chotanagapur. He came to the region in 1885, at least 40 years after the first Christian missionaries Lutherans landed in Jharkhand. (Mattersindia.com)

Pastoral visits of Bishop



Our Distinguished Visitors

- Magsaysay award winner Mr. K. Francis from Tamilnadu
- Mr. Xavier philanthropist from Tamilnadu
- Sr. Susheela, AC, Superior General from Bengaluru
- Sr. Marie Fay, AC, Asst. Provincial from Kolkata
- Fr. Rodney Borneo from Kolkata

Bishop's Program for November 2015

- 01: Masli Jubilee, Kumarghat Parish
- 01: Garo II Chapel Blessing, Kathalcherra Parish
- 02: All Souls Day Mass, Kathalcherra
- 03: Tuimairang Chapel Blessing, Khumulwng Parish
- 04-05: SCC Seminar with National Team, Agartala
- 04-05: Meet with Church in Need Team
- 06: Parents Day, St. Arnold School, Gandacherra
- 07: School Day, Auxilium Girls School, Nandanagar
- 08: Holy Eucharistic Procession, Don Bosco Nandanagar
- 11-16: National Eucharistic Congress, Mumbai
- 17: Borders Day, St. Mary's Champaknagar
- 18: Catechists Seminar, Pastoral Centre
- 21: Education Commission Meet, Don Bosco Nandanagar
- 22: Christ the King Feast, Depacherra Parish
- 23-28: Caritas Field Visit to Chhattisgarh
- 30: Srirampur Chapel Blessing, Kamaranga Parish