



God's Plan for me

Coach Grant Teaff of Baylor University in Texas has written a book called 'I believe'. In it he describes an incident that happened earlier in his career at McMurry College. One Saturday night he and his team had taken off in a

chartered plane to return to Texas. Suddenly the plane developed serious trouble. The pilot announced that he would attempt a crash landing. The plane was loaded with fuel, so an explosion was likely. As the plane sped downwards one of the players called out, "Coach Teaff would you lead us in prayer? We're all pretty frightened." Teaff prayed aloud for everyone. Seconds later the plane bellied across the ground. A shower of sparks engulfed it. Miraculously, however, it didn't explode and no one was hurt. The next night Teaff and his family were in the Church together. Right in the middle of the services Teaff got up and left the church and went to the McMurry Fieldhouse about a mile away. He went directly to the team's dressing room and knelt down and prayed: "God, I know you have a **plan**, a purpose, and a will for my life and the lives of these young



men. I do not know what it is but I'll... try to impress upon the young men I coach this year and forever that there is more to life than playing football; that you do have a purpose for our lives."

I too know that God has a purpose for me. "Many are the plans in a person's heart; but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails." (Proverbs 19,21) My prayer for this year is: bend my will to your will O God. Looking back at the year gone by and as I begin to count my blessings, there is much to be thankful for. The dark areas, the grey ones, the happy ones, the sad and painful ones -- in

ways very unique each of these has brought me closer to God. As I celebrate another anniversary of my birth it is gratitude that wells in my heart; and with the Psalmist I say: "I thank you Lord with all my heart. I sing praise to you... You answered when I called to you; with your strength you strengthened me." (Ps. 138) And I pray for strength to take up the challenges that await me. Lead me Onward. Duc in altum! +Lumen, CSC



Link wishes our Beloved Bishop Lumen on his Birthday.



Magic, Miracles and Challenges!

The arrival of February is always greeted with extra cheer in Agartala Diocese. The birthday of the head of the Diocese on the first day of the second month is a much-anticipated occasion not only for the clergy and religious of the Diocese but also for the faithful at large.

We wish our Bishop, Most Rev Lumen Monteiro, CSC, DD, a very Happy Birthday. The Diocese as a whole prays that this special day brings him happiness, peace, good health and God's blessings.

On this happy day, as a Diocese, we thank him and thank God for him. There is indeed a great deal to thank God for. That's one of Bishop Lumen's refrains, heard each time the Diocese gathers around him. There's also much to thank Bishop Lumen for. He has the knack of bringing magic to otherwise drab and depressing situations and affairs. For instance, this very paper you're reading now!

If over the years, LINK has acquired the reputation of being



the most regular newsletter in the world, Bishop Lumen has a lot to do with it. One may not find much of Bishop Lumen within the pages of the Link, but there's no doubt, there's a lot of Bishop Lumen 'behind' Link. It's a small miracle how despite numerous handicaps and hardships he is able to

deliver with almost frightening regularity! Oh yes, keeping the LINK unbroken for 19 years is indeed something. Today LINK is a habit!

Each birthday reminds the celebrant of having come thus far and of the journey yet to be done. Just as Bishop Lumen today looks back and sees much to thank God for, perhaps, he also looks ahead and sees much, to pray for.

Part of the unique charm of Tripura is the challenge it offers on every front. But then, challenges also have the habit of prodding one on to higher goals and newer pastures. For Bishop Lumen, who has been through challenges, the

past is perhaps a miracle and the future is a challenge. As the entire band of the faithful of the Diocese rally around their Bishop on this his birthday, they have this prayer on their lips that God's face continue to shine on him so that every challenge will only enhance his resolve to keep on dreaming and changing those dreams into reality. *Duc in altum! Happy Birthday.*

J. Pulinthanath, sdb

Khumulwng Parish

Marriage Preparation at Khumulwng

Parishners were informed much in advance of the need of marriage preparation in their lives. They were alerted if failed to attend the course, their marriage would not be blessed. So the parishioners took the matter seriously and informed the villages. There were 12 couples who attended the Marriage Preparation Course at Pastoral Centre in the parish this year. Some of them even belonged to other denominations and some non-Christians. The Course began at 9 am and ended by 4pm every day. The classes were conducted by the parish priest and the catechist. In the course, the couples were instructed about Catholic faith besides marriage and family related issues. They were also brought to the awareness of the teaching of the Church with regard to illegal relations, infidelity and abortion. They were reiterated that family prayer and regular church attendance are the foundations of a happy family life. The couples liked the Course and suggested it could be for a longer time for the benefit of the couples. **Fr. Arun Minj, SVD**

Kathalcherra Parish

KCYM Sabha - 2015

Good Shepherd Parish, Kathalcherra organized KCYM Sabha 2015 at Garo II *mondoli* on 3



& 4 January 2015. The Theme chosen for the Sabha was '**Catholic Youth: Opportunities and Challenges**'. Mr. Bupesh Kolai was the main Resource Person. He emphasized the role of Catholic Youth today in moulding the society and their family, and made them aware of the dangers of peer group pressure. Fr. Lawrence Darlong presided over the Holy Eucharist and called upon the youth to build the family on the model of Holy Family by

being agents of change through prayer. Highlighting on the utilitarian culture in the town and its effects on tribal youth Fr. Simon Fernandes, CSC, reminded the youth to be aware of their choices and to make right discernment and friendship. In this Year of Consecrated Life he invited the youth to dedicate their life to the Lord and pray for Vocations. The Sabha was attended by 210 youth from the Parish. **Fr. Lancy D'Souza, CSC**

Gandacherra Parish

Parish Get Together and Parish Feast

Soon after the Christmas celebration the Parish faithful organized a three days Get Together for the parish children from 26th to 28th December. Children from different *mondolis* participated in the program. For the first time we organized this Get Together. The faithful appreciated and requested to have this program every year, so that the children could be taught the right teachings. Children were encouraged to learn prayers and hymns. Different competitions were conducted and prizes were distributed.



Two weeks later the faithful had an opportunity to come together in the name of St. Arnold Jansen, our parish patron. We celebrated our Parish Feast on 18th January. In preparation for this we had two days program for the people. A Seminar was conducted on the theme 'Church is the Family of God' which was also the theme of the Feast. Importance of being a member of God's family was explained by Fr. Cyprian, SVD. Bishop Lumen spend some time with us and met the parishioners for a short while and gave his valuable suggestions. On 18th we had the Holy Eucharist which was presided by Fr. Cyprian, SVD. Fr. Valan CSC also took part in our feast day celebrations.

Fr. Bosco Lathees

Depacherra Parish

Festival of Faith: 1st January 2015 was a dream come true for five *mondolis* (Paisoa, Tuikrakmaw I and II, Paroa and Nabin para) of



Depacherra to come together for the Sacrament of Confirmation. More than 400 people enthused by the presence of Bishop Lumen whom they received ceremoniously and in a procession they led him to the village chapel. 154 candidates received confirmation during the Eucharist. Bishop while appreciating the efforts of the priests and catechists he also urged the faithful to remain united and foster the deep faith. After the Eucharistic celebration a cultural program was conducted by different *mondolis*. At the end Fr. Prasad expressed his sincere gratitude to one and all for their support and cooperation. On this Joyful occasion Paisoa *mondoli* arranged a common meal for all and all had participated in it.

New Mondoli at Karbook: The greatness of God could be seen in the parish of Depacherra. The Evangelization efforts of the parish bearing fruits as the number of faithful keep increasing and 18th January was proud moment for all the Parishioners of Depacherra as a New Mondoli Bhagyaprasad Para was added. It was a joyful time for all nearby *mondolis* to have the gracious presence of Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC. During the holy Eucharistic celebration Bhagya Prasad *mondoli* (New *mondoli*) was blessed and inaugurated by Bishop Lumen. He



gave the Sacrament of Initiation to 54 new catechumens and on same day



74 candidates received the Sacrament of Confirmation. All the *mondolis* (Bhogoban Tila, Dabugia, Jaleya and Icchachori) had participated on this occasion. Fr. Bhuban Sarkar made a regular visit to prepare the new catechumens. Fr. Prasad expressed his gratitude to all especially catechists, parish council members, *mondoli* heads for the success of the day. The day ended with a *Priti-Bhoj*.

Fr. Bhuban Sirkar

Our Readers Write

Thanks dear Bishopji for the 213th issue of the News letter LINK. I am really touched by your persevering efforts in bringing out without gap this beautiful diocesan Newsletter which lets the world know month after month the numerous Evangelization activities taken up and implemented by the Diocese under your able shepherdship. May the Good Lord continue to bless you and your Diocese. **Fr. Jolly, Delhi**

Thank you dear Bishop for mailing me the LINK. It keeps me connected with the Diocese. It is indeed a great joy to see the Diocese growing under your dynamic leadership.

Fr. Shaji, CSC, Umkiang

Your LINK was great always! You really do put out an informative, interesting publication each month.

Peggy, VA, USA

Thank you for LINKING us on the first itself. Great! **+PK George sdb, Miao** Congratulations for the 213th issue!...that is an achievement worth celebrating! **Conrad, CSC, Montreal** Thanks for your Newsletters which we look forward to reading every month. We wish 'LINK' all the best for the future. Keep it going. **Magda, Mumbai**

Fr. Cyprian attends United Christian Prayer for India

A Seminar cum Workshop was organized by an ecumenical group under the leadership of Archbishop Emeritus of Delhi Most Rev. Vincent Concessao and Rev. D. Mohan Senior Pastor, New Life Assembly of God National Prayer and Church Transformation Initiative in Bangalore from 6th to 8th January 2015. There were about 500 delegates from different denominations. The Catholic Church was represented by 15 Bishops and about 40 Priests and Religious. I was delegated by Bishop Lumen to attend.



Besides prayer and worship the great command of Jesus to go and make disciples of all nations (Mt. 28:19) was highlighted during the discussions. Preaching the Good News to our countrymen during our life time is a command, challenge and burden laid on us by Jesus Himself was discussed extensively with examples, graphs and charts. At the end of the Seminar we pledged for focused prayer for the country, prayer walk for the nation, meaning praying on the site (places) with insight from God, for systematic disciple making by adoption of districts. And finally we pledged to envision all pastors in our locality, block, city and district for prayer for the nation and disciple making. This Seminar was second of its kind in Bangalore calling significant Church leaders of all denomination for united prayer and action to reach the nation with Good News for making disciples in our life time. **Fr. Cyprian, SVD**

JUST News

JUST links the PwDs with VRC

A camp was organized by Vocational Rehabilitation Centre (VRC), Tripura for identification cum registration of



Person with Disability (PwDs)/ Children with Disability (CwDs) on 29/12/2014 at the Panchayat Samiti Hall, Telliamura RD Block. People with disability were identified by the CBR staff of JUST through baseline survey. The same was communicated to the authority of Teliamura R.D Block. 40 PwDs were registered for livelihood resource support during this camp.

Distribution of Poultry Chicks and Cow Feed

16th December 2014, Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) in collaboration with Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)

organized 'Farmers' meeting cum Poultry chicks distribution program at East Tamakari under Hezamara R.D Block. The dignitaries present for the program were Dr. M. Datta joint Director of ICAR, Shri, Pranab Debbarma MLA & Chairman, BAC, TTAADC, Dr. Vinay Singh Scientist ICAR, Dr. Billo



Debbarma, Assistant Director Veterinary Dispensary Hezamara R.D Block, Dr. Avijit Halder, Principal Scientist ICAR and Shri. Bikram Debbarma, Technical Officer of ICAR. 150 farmers took part in the program. 90 farmers received 10 each poultry chicks and 20 farmers received 1 bag each Cow feed. The program was concluded with vote of thanks proposed by the coordinator Mr. Vincent. **Mr. Deepan Gurung**

National and Global News Tidbits

Bishops ask Modi to urgently intervene to save secular India

Officials of the Indian Bishops in a special consultation have asked Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to urgently intervene and stop activities that challenge nation's secular nature. They urged Modi "to urgently intervene and take appropriate action to stop incidents that pose big threat to the unity of this secular nation," said a press release from Indian Catholic Bishops' Conference. Cardinal Basileos Cleemis Catholicos,



President of the Conference, presided over the special consultation on 20th January in New Delhi. Cardinals Oswald Gracias, Telesphore Toppo and George Alencherry also attended it along with CBCI Office-Bearers, representatives of Conference of Religious, laity youth and women. **C B C I Spokesperson**

Pope in Sri Lanka and the Philippines



Pope Francis' Sri Lankan trip began Jan. 12. It included meetings with religious leaders in the majority Buddhist

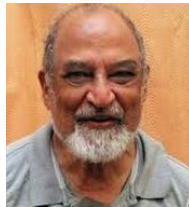
country and the canonization of St. Joseph Vaz, a 17th century priest, who is now the first recognized Sri Lankan saint. "His undivided love for God opened him to love for his neighbor; he ministered to those in need, whoever and wherever they were," the Pope said at St. Joseph Vaz's canonization Mass in Colombo Jan. 14. "His example continues to inspire the Church in Sri Lanka today. She gladly and generously serves all members of society." Pope Francis departed Sri Lanka for the Philippines on 15th January. The Pope walked down the red carpet at the International Airport of Colombo, saying farewell to Catholic Bishops and Sri Lankan officials. As is Pope Francis' tradition on his trips, he carried his own bag.

In the Philippines more than six million attend largest papal Mass in history. Pope Francis celebrates feast of the Santo Niño in Rizal Park, Manila on 18th January. More than six million people have attended what is thought to be the largest papal Mass in history in Manila. Vatican spokesman Fr Federico Lombardi said "We are not able to count all these people,

obviously, or to verify this, but in any case, we have seen so many people that we believe that it is possible," Fr Lombardi said during a briefing, according to Reuters. "If this is true, and we think it is, this is the largest event in the history of the popes." **Catholic Herald via CNUA**

"My godfather's sainthood brought tears to my eyes" Pope in

When Pope Francis proclaimed Joseph Vaz a saint shortly before 9 am on January 14, estimated million-odd devotees attending the canonization ceremony broke into jubilation amid thunderous applause. For one person in that multitude of devotees it



was a momentous occasion. Fr Cosme Joseph Vaz Costa of Aldona, professor at the Pilar Theological College, was there and there were tears in his eyes. It was his birth that was the only approved miracle in the path that took Joseph Vaz to sainthood. The saint also happens to be the godfather of Fr Costa. In an interview, Fr Costa narrates his emotional trip to Sri Lanka to attend the canonization of his godfather. **By: Melvyn Misquita**

Nearly 6 Million People came to see Pope Francis at the Vatican in 2014

Nearly six million people took part in various encounters at the Vatican with Pope Francis during 2014, only a few hundred thousand less than year of Francis' Election. These comprised General Audiences (1,199,000), private audiences (567,100), liturgical celebrations in the Vatican Basilica and in St. Peter's Square (1,110,700), and Angelus addresses (3,040,000). April, May, and October were the busiest

months, during which numbers at general audiences and liturgical celebrations were visibly higher than other months. Last year, the prefecture said that since Pope Francis was elected on March 13, more than 6,600,000 faithful participated in the various encounters with Pope Francis. The year before that, with Pope Benedict XVI, the Vatican said 2.3 million pilgrims and visitors joined the now Pope Emeritus for an audience, liturgy or prayer at the Vatican.

By: Deborah Castellano Lubov

pK the movie

For those that have not yet seen PK, it is about Aamir Khan, an alien from another planet, who gets a rude awakening when he lands nude on planet Earth. Apparently, on his native planet there was no need of apparel, social mores



or putting on pretence. You were what you were, hence did not need to wear anything, let alone a plastic smile! Period. Not so on Planet Earth. Clothing is its first cover up operation (pun intended). Then comes language; words and colours that mean different things to diverse peoples, religions and cultures. So we have Hindu widows and Christian brides wearing white, while Christian widows and Muslim women wore black. We may take such things for granted, but for an alien like PK it is an eye-opener. And Aamir does manage to keep his eyes wide open, his big ears flapping, his Charlie Chaplain gait amusing, and his abundant flow of seemingly innocuous questions quite flabbergasting. It is his constant questioning of human behaviour, that we "normal" humans take for granted, that he finds so abnormal; earning him the sobriquet "PK", Hindi for somebody who is inebriated. He is indeed inebriated, with another spirit that of seeking rational or plausible answers.

We Indians have lost our sense of humour (if indeed we had one) and are more prone to rumour. We lack the ability and humility to laugh at ourselves. But PK is no laughing matter. In a light-hearted manner it addresses some really heavy stuff. Devoid of the Bollywood hype, PK is definitely *paisa vasool*. Both Aamir and co-star Anoushka Sharma acquit themselves well, while holding the rest of us guilty! I would agree with Akhilesh Yadav that PK has a strong social message. To find out more, go see the movie. It is better to bare one's soul than to walk around naked like the Emperor who had no clothes; but nobody had the guts to say so. PK does. **By: Chhotabhai, a Kanpur based social activist**

Bishop's Program for February 2015

- 01: Parish Sabah, Kathalcherra
- 02-09: CCBI Meet, St. John's Bangalore
- 10-12: PSC, Caritas Delhi
- 15: Confirmations, Ambassa Parish
- 17: Agartala Diocesan Pastoral Council Meet
- 21-23: Pastoral Visit, Gachirampara Parish
- 25-27: CBCI CARD Meet, Delhi
- 28-01: Mass & Grotto Blessing, Pathaliaghat Chapel Blessing, Bishramganj Parish

Our Distinguished Visitors

- Bro. Jesu, CSC, Vicariate Superior from Bangalore
- Fr. Jose Kaariamadam, CMI from USA
- Fr. James Kallarackal, OFM, from Bangalore
- Fr. Joy Pallikunnel, from Dibrugarh
- Fr. Joe D'Souza, SDB & Family from Assam
- SVD Regents from Arunachal
- CSC Fathers from Meghalaya & Mizoram