

**Thank You Lord**

The year 2016 will soon come to a close. The end of the year calls us to thank God for everything--our life, our work, our families and friends, our talents, etc. My reflection at the end of the year is based on 1 Peter 4,10-11: "God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another". When we use our abilities and talents to help others, God is glorified.

Reuben Tellis says, "People who have noble characters and command respect from others often do a lot of things to help other people while expecting nothing in return. Those who benefit from their generosity tend to start doing the same things themselves. Because of this, benevolent people sometimes receive unexpected benefits in return for their good deeds. It is a natural rule that revolves around the cycle of cause and effect. The universal truth is that genuine kindness and compassion will shine through the

ages and won't fade with the passage of time."

God did not give you your talents and abilities for your benefit. They



are for the benefit of other people, and their talents are for the benefit of you. "I am so grateful for people who are talented in areas that I'm not good at" says Rick Warren. For instance, I'm grateful for accountants. Because I stink at accounting! I'm grateful for people who know how to do taxes. I'm grateful for people who have mechanical ability. I couldn't fix a carburetor if I had to. I wouldn't even know where it is!

Everybody has different talents. God has given me some talents. My talent is for you. It's to help you. But here's the point: You've got talent, too. When are you going to start blessing others? When are you going to start helping others?



**Pastor's Corner**

As we look back at the past year, let us thank God for what we have achieved by sharing our talents, and let us say THANK YOU.

God bless. +Lumen, CSC

**LINK congratulates Dr. Fr. Emmanuel Kallarackal, CSC, Principal of Holy Cros College, for the Award of Best Principals of India 2015, awarded by all India Association of Christian Higher Education.**



**An Advent Reflection**



**Editorial**

Imperceptibly, with each passing day the morning fog thickens and the temperature dips. That's all there is, it seems, in these days of currency-related woes, to remind us that Christmas is round the corner.

Over the years so many things have grown around the beautiful feast of Christmas, some of them helpful, others less so. One such phenomenon is what has come to be known as 'advance Christmas'. Perhaps this is how the practice came about. Not wanting to miss the good feeling that Christmas brings with it, institutions, associations, schools, clubs, companies and other entities celebrate an anticipated version of it before dispersing for vacation. These pre-Christmas celebrations have become widespread in recent years. It seems naïve to be dogmatic about

the pros and cons of a Christmas celebration, anticipated or postponed. All I would suggest is that it seems to impinge a bit on the season of Advent.

If the sober season of Advent, as



Catechism teaches, is more about expectation, waiting and preparation for the great event of Christmas, and less about celebrations as such, we then need to back away from celebrations of all sorts, even of Christmas, until it actually arrives.

Thanks to the immense popularity of Christmas all over the world, the historical event that happened on a particular day at a particular place has today also become a season of celebrations. Just that it seems to make more sense when the extended celebration of Christmas happens after the feast of Christmas, not before it!

Holding Advance Christmases have a ring of craziness about them, like throwing a wedding reception and eating up all the cake before the couples have actually got married.

I just hope these lines don't come across to the reader as an effort at demonstrating or encouraging a 'holier than your Advent' attitude. In intent, they are anything but that. Here's wishing every reader of Link, the peace and joy of Christ Child. Merry Christmas!

J. Pulinthanath, SDB

### The Door of Mercy closes

The Holy Door of the Year of Mercy at Don Bosco Church Nandannagar was solemnly closed by Bishop Lumen Monteiro in the presence of



thousands of the faithful who had gathered for the Eucharistic procession on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2016. It was a fitting conclusion of the Year which had brought many groups to this Church. Before the start of Eucharistic celebration at Auxilium grounds, hundreds of them entered the Holy Door at Don Bosco Church and used the opportunity for reconciliation as 12 priests sat for two hours as the Blessed Sacrament was exposed.

As the date of the closing of the Door of Mercy drew near, there was renewed enthusiasm in visiting the shrine. Groups from distant Parishes like Bagbasa and Sindukpathar, Amarpur, Kamranga, Kumarghat, Ambassa, Kathalchera and Tuikarmaw made a pilgrimage to the Holy Door. Nearby Parishes like Bishramganj and Bodhjungnagar took part joyfully and the faithful from Nandannagar Parish also came happily once again as part of the pilgrimage groups.

The Year of Mercy has been a time of blessing, of reconciliation and renewal. Congratulations to all the Parishes and Groups which have made many sacrifices to be here at the Door. Our thanks go to all the priests who have been available for confessions and animation. Our Catechist Subhash and Mr. Dilen Debbarma with his Canteen Staff need special thanks. We pray that as the Door is closed, the Church in Tripura will continue on its journey to becoming truly a Church of Mercy! Fr. Sunny, SDB

### Tuikarmaw Parish Rosary Procession to conclude October



As a culminating activity in the Parish's observance of October as the month of the Holy Rosary, St. Mary's Parish Tuikarmaw, organized a Rosary procession on 31<sup>st</sup> October. The procession began at 5pm by carrying decorated statue of Mother Mary around the village with candle lights. During the procession rosary was recited and hymns were sung to honour Mother Mary. It was a great occasion for the Parishioners of Tuikarmaw to give honor and thank Mother Mary for all the graces that they have received through the month October by praying the rosary. The procession ended with the Holy Eucharist, celebrated by Fr. C. Abraham, CSC, the Parish Priest and Fr. Alfred, CSC, preached a meaningful homily highlighting the importance of praying the rosary. Bro. George S.

### Ambassa Parish The Year of Mercy in Action

Ambassa, October 30: The concluding part of the Year of



Mercy is celebrated in Action at Bagmara, one of the Sub-Centre's in Ambassa Parish. The village is one of the oldest Catholic villages having 62 Catholic families. It was a unique way to commemorate the Year of Mercy by administering the sacrament of Marriage to 7 couples. After attending the marriage preparation course for 3 days, they were dressed well to receive the matrimonial Blessing

from the Parish Priest, Fr. Ivan D' Silva. More than three hundred people witnessed the nuptials, which included Parishioners, Relatives of the couples and their friends. Fr. Cyprian preached a suitable homily on the occasion. After the Holy Mass, the wedding dinner was served to all. Not just the couples but everyone at Bagmara experienced God's reconciliation and mercy.

### Media & Social Communications Seminar

Ambassa, October 12: Ambassa Parish Youth had an opportunity to



interact with the Social Communication Coordinator of Agartala Diocese Fr. Ivan D' Silva, SVD. When the rest of non-Christians were celebrating the Pooja festival, Ambassa Parish gathered the Youth from the different villages/sub-stations to have one day Input Session on Media Education. It was surprising to see the number of participants turned out to make use of this opportunity. The Parish Youth animator Mr. Naithunglian Halam found the right time when youth were in holidays. 72 boys and girls participated in the one day Seminar. The Resource Person spoke on benefits and evils of modern gadgets. He said these could be "harmful if we do not use them wisely". He warned them, "Youngsters can be criminals, thieves and selfish, if they are not open to learn its constructive and destructive effects".

### Charismatic Renewal in Ambassa Parish

October 16, 2016: Ambassa parishioners have experienced the 'Lord Jesus' through two days of Retreat by Mr. John Jaques from Kolkata. It was benefited by Catholics, other Christian denominations and even by non-Christians. In two days many people have experienced the healing touch of Jesus; many got cured; many have promised to read the Bible





daily; many have denounced their sins and many have come close to God. The Mothers' Association prepared the noon meal for the participants, while volunteers helped the people during the healing prayer session along with the preacher. At the end of the Retreat many came forward giving testimony and praising God for the wonders he had done. Almost all felt like Simon Peter during the transfiguration of Jesus saying, 'another two more days would have been nice'!

News bureau, Ambassa

### Bagbasa Parish

#### Annual Youth Convention

Holy Cross Parish organised a three day Youth Convention at Joynagar, one of the villages of Bagbasa Parish for the first times since the inception of the



Parish. We received an overwhelming number of 175 youth in the Parish. The main theme was 'Remember your Creator while you are still young' (Ecclesiastes: 12:1) and a sub theme: 'Pray with Rosary...Grow with Mary'. It was conducted from 21st to 23rd October 2016. It was a journey with scripture, sacraments and rosary. The focus was to create a taste for the Word of God, Sacrament of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist and get rooted in family prayer through the Rosary. There was Holy Eucharist, Faith sharing, Theme based talks, Bible Quiz, Praise and Worship, Rosary, Confessions, and Adoration.

The Youth who attended realized the poverty of their knowledge about the scripture, sacraments, personal and community prayer, family prayer especially with Rosary, the necessity of the sacrament of reconciliation, Holy Eucharist, the customs and traditions of the Church, teaching of the catholic Church, the need of marriage preparation courses etc. They acknowledged the need of such formal gathering at least once a year. Fr. Shaji M.L CSC

## Mother's Successor in Tripura

On the evening of the 16th November, at Bishop's Hose Agartala, Bishop Lumen organized a simple felicitation program for Sr. Prema, MC the Superior General of MC Sisters, who was on her first ever canonical visit to the North East, beginning with Tripura. The program was attended by a number of Religious, Priests, and



Friends of St. Mother Teresa from in and around Agartala. The audience attentively listened to Sr. Prema as she shared her thoughts, recollecting and reflecting on her predecessor's messages to the people of the world. An hour spent was valued dearly by all those who attended the program more so because of the cordial interaction with Sr. Prema during and after the program.

Fr. Lawrence Darlong

## JUST News Roundup

### SHG & Conflict Resolution

In the month of October 2016 JUST conducted a series of trainings on conflict resolution for the SHG women at Borkathal, Khowai, Twikarmaw, Burburia and Belbari. The Resource Person was Mr. Nipen Debbarma. 110 SHG members took part in the training programs. The main objective of the trainings was to enhance the SHG members on managing conflict. The training focused on improving the skill of



the SHG members in resolving conflicts. The Resource Person gave a brief introduction on conflict. He also shared on various points like diversity in conflict, miscommunication, feelings and emotion, differences and internal conflict. Group work was given to the participants in which there was active participation. Of the 3 groups the 1<sup>st</sup> and

2<sup>nd</sup> brought conflict and the 3<sup>rd</sup> group was to solve the conflict. The SHG members participated well in the group activities that were undertaken to give them more clarity and understand how to resolve conflicts in different situations in their day to day life.

### Promotion of Traditional Farming systems and Practices

In the month of October 2016, JUST who was assisted by Caritas India under FARM Northeast Project conducted a series of programs at Village level. Series of consultation meetings on identification and sharing to promote traditional farming systems and practices for the farmers clubs under Hezarama R.D Block were conducted. The facilitators of the project were Mr. Vincent Debbarma, Mr. Amit Debbarma, Mr. Sunil Debbarma and Mr. Mantu Debbarma. About 326 farmers (121 Male and 205 Female) took part in the program. The Coordinator first shared about new project activities and then had session for open discussion with the farmers. All the programs were conducted successfully and concluded with vote of thanks and refreshment.

Mr. Vincent Debbarma

## What Our Readers Write

You are great! Whatever happens, the Link appears on 1st. After many issues I opened the one today. May be your introduction about laughter did the trick. Then I see lot of news. All written well. Congratulations. +John Moolachira, Guwahati

Again on the dot!... Thanks for all the news. Good story on laughter... I remember my superior at the scholasticate who was telling us the same... Conrad, CSC, Canada  
Thank you for sending me the LINK right on the first day of the month

without fail. I love reading it. The short reflection from your end which I look for, tickles my brain always.

Fr. G.P. Amalraj, Guwahati

Thank you Bishop. It is the link in my inbox reminds me that we are already in the new month.

Fr. Jeevan, SVD, Agartala

Thank you dear Bishop for your on-time Link. As usual, the Pastor's Corner was unique from all other corners. It was wonderful to note that the Editorial focused on the Year of Mercy. Glad to know that a lot of activities in the parishes keep the Diocese vibrant.

Fr. Mariaraj csc, Shillong

### Pope Francis

In one of his final gestures in the Jubilee Year of Mercy, Pope Francis made a surprise visit to meet seven men who took the controversial step of leaving the priesthood and starting a family. A Vatican statement said the Pope left his residence on Friday afternoon, November 11, and travelled to an apartment on the outskirts of Rome where he met seven men who had left the priesthood in recent years. The Pontiff also met their families. The Vatican said Francis wanted to express "his closeness and affection" to the men and their families. Earlier on Friday, Pope Francis met with thousands of homeless and marginalised people at the Vatican and asked for their forgiveness. "I ask your forgiveness if I have ever offended you with my words or for not having said something that I should have," the Pope said, according to Catholic News Service. Religion News Service

### Over 900 million crossed a Holy Door this Year

Archbishop Fisichella said: "Finally, let us not forget that this Jubilee has journeyed also on the Internet! The site realized in seven languages has received more than 6,523,000 visits ... and there are more than eight million subscribers to the site. ... A word should

also be mentioned for the Jubilee Volunteers who came to Rome. There were more than 4,000. They came from 36 different countries, and the eldest was 84 years old, whereas the youngest was aged 18." Some 21 million pilgrims participated in the Jubilee in Rome. "The most numerous group consists of Italians, followed by German speakers, then the United States of America, Poland, and Spain, but also reaching Russia, China, Japan, South Korea, Venezuela, Chad, Rwanda, Angola, the Cook Islands, Nepal... in short, we can say that the whole world has come to Rome," Archbishop Fisichella said. Agenzia Fides

### Worldwide Catholics in 2016

As every year, Fides News Service offers statistics to give a panorama of the missionary Church all over the world. The tables are taken from the latest edition of the "Church's Book of Statistics" published (updated to 31 December 2014). To 31 December 2014 the world population was 7.160.739.000 with an increase of 66.941.000 units. The world percentage of Catholics increased by 0.09 %, settling at 17.77%. Bishops in the world increased by 64 units, to 5,237. Diocesan Bishops number 3,992 (47 more), while Religious Bishops number 1,245 (17 more). Priests total number in the world increased by 444 units, to 415.792. Diocesan priests increased

by 765 units, reaching a total of 281.297. The number of Religious priests decreased by 321 units to a total 134.495. Women Religious had an overall decrease in the number by 10.846 units to 682.729. Special feature prepared by S.L. Agenzia Fides 10/23/2016

### Chennai's Stella Maris College gets Pride of Catholic Church Award

CHENNAI: Stella Maris College, one of the oldest women's colleges in India, was conferred the 'Pride of the Catholic Church Award' by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) Office for Education and Culture, New Delhi, for being the 'first and best' in the country in implementing the National Catholic Education Policy-2007. The Principal, Sr. Jacinta Quadras, received the award on October 15 at the meeting of the Catholic Colleges & Institutions at the Archdiocesan Pastoral Centre in the city. According to the institution, the award was given after assessing various criteria that included infrastructure, courses offered, co-curricular activities, student support systems and operational quality data. (Source: Indian Express)

### Our Distinguished Visitors

- ▲ Fr. Devasy Pudusserry from Archdiocese of Imphal
- ▲ FS Sisters Pigi Pereira and Rufina Tuscano and Mrs. Jaibi Fargoes from Mumbai
- ▲ Fr. Martin Joseph from Gwalior Diocese
- ▲ Sr. Prema MC, Superior General from Kolkata and Sr. Ann Cecil, MC Regional from Shillong
- ▲ Fr. Paul (NECHA) Director
- ▲ Fr. Paul Puducherry, CSC, from Sumer, Meghalaya
- ▲ Mr David Susai and his mother from Mumbai, relatives of Fr. Lourthusamy
- ▲ Mr Edgar Afonso, Architect from Goa
- ▲ Fr. T. Adaikalaswamy, CSC, from Trichy, TN
- ▲ Fr. Bitaju, OSST, Jesus Youth International Chaplain from Bengaluru
- ▲ Mr. Sibir Jacob, Jesus Youth International Director from Cochin
- ▲ SCC Srs. Sherly, Alice and Deepa, Provincial & Team from Guwahati
- ▲ Fr. N. I. Michael from Kottayam
- ▲ Sr. Martina MSMHC, SCC Coordinator from Shillong

### Bishop's Program for December 2016

03:	Diocesan Education Seminar, Agartala
04:	Paikho-Sacraments of Initiation, Gachirampara Parish
06:	Clergy Meet & Recollection, Agartala
08-10	Cardinal's Reception, Dhaka
10:	ADPC Meet, Agartala
11:	Parish Church Blessing, Bishramganj
16:	Christo Mela, Belbari
17:	Christo Mela, Tuikarmaw
18:	Parish Church Blessing, Khumwllwng
19:	JUST GB & Annual Gathering
20:	Christo Mela, Kamaranga
21:	Blessing School Building, Sindukpathar
22:	Presbytery & School Blessing, Amarpar Christo Mela, Karbook
24:	Christmas Midnight Mass, Mariamnagar
25:	Christmas Day Mass, Agartala Cathedral
29:	Parish Sabha at Ichamara, Tuikarmaw Parish
31:	Thanksgiving Service