



DIOCESE OF AGARTALA

Lead Us Onward

Link



Agartala Diocesan Newsletter

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252 and going on!



The 252nd issue of LINK is in your Inbox as we step into the New Year 2019 reminding us that the Diocese has launched into the twenty third year of its existence. Our Newsletter LINK is a humble media tool, simple in appearance and brief in its contents; but it keeps us 'linked' with each other. Today I am expressing my gratitude to those who help me launch LINK on the first day of each month, not an easy task given the many constraints I have! The two persons that I want to especially mention and thank are Fr. Pulinthanath the scribe of the Editorial and Fr. Prasad the designer of the Newsletter. They are the ones who have untiringly supported me in this venture,



month after month after month. I also thank the steady stream of Readers whose 'one liners' are a great encouragement. *In the past year we succeeded in publishing the LINK on the first day of the month without a miss...and we shall do our best to keep the deadline in the coming year too!*

Let me close with a few Inspirational Quotes for the New Year from 'A Network of Grateful Living':

Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind

Pastor's Corner

word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around. ~

Leo Buscaglia

Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive and go out and do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive. ~

Howard Thurman

I draw prayer round me like a dark protective wall; withdraw inside it as one might into a convent cell and then step outside again, calmer and stronger and more collected again. ~

Etty Hillesum

Dear Readers, I take this opportunity to wish you a Peace-filled, Grace-filled and a Joy-filled New Year 2019. God bless. **+Lumen, CSC**

'Had we but world enough and time...'



As we step into another year, we thank God for His invaluable gift of 'time'. With each passing year we become more aware of its preciousness and join the Psalmist in prayer, "Make us know the shortness of our lives, that we may gain wisdom of heart." (Ps 90:12)

The slight sense of confusion and uncertainty that we feel on occasions like this is perhaps not entirely ill-founded. The astounding speed, in which time passes by, makes us wonder if everything about us is game enough for the inexorable demands it makes on us.

And yet, beginnings are usually a lot less frustrating than endings, even if slightly more fear-producing, having to deal only with possibilities and not 'could have beens' that have vanished into thin air.

As a Diocese, we have now, for exactly 23 years grappled with possibilities on

the one hand and little regrets on the other. It was on the 11th day of this month, 23 years ago that the Diocese of Agartala appeared on the ecclesiastical map of India. As we once again go past this milestone moment, we thank God that many things that were only possibilities once have taken on wings and become actual blessings.

The movement of 'time' reminds us that we also ought to move with it because 'catching up' is harder than we imagine. Our school days have taught us that. Remember those times we took some liberty and took things easy in the hope that we could later catch up with the rest, but found it wasn't easy at all? Time is a hard taskmaster, indeed.

23 years reminds us of 25 years. And we realize there's a Jubilee waiting in the wings. Another wonderful reminder of how swiftly the chariot of time flies past. The two year run up to the Jubilee gives us just enough time to make of the Jubilee a memorable milestone of growth

Editorial



and maturity as a Diocese.

As a Diocese we renew our trust in the One who guides us in our march towards destiny. We pray that He will accompany us and shower on us abundant blessings throughout the year ahead. Happy New Year!

J. Pulinthanath, SDB

LINK WISHES ALL ITS READERS AND PATRONS A HAPPY NEW YEAR 2019.

MOHARPARA PARISH**Parish Feast**

Moharpara Parish celebrated the Feast of Immaculate Conception on 9th December 2018. This also was an occasion to thank Fr. Hormis, CSC, for his long time service in the Parish as Parish Priest and Assistant Priest. Children gathered in white dresses for the First Holy Communion, added colour and meaning to the celebration. People from all the villages congregated at the Parish center in the morning. The solemn Eucharist was presided by Bishop Lumen and concelebrated by the Provincial Superior Fr. Simon CSC, and several other priests. 76 children received first Holy Communion. During the homily Bishop Lumen explained the origin for the feast and prayed for the Parish and all the families. After the Mass there was a cultural program by different villages and tribes with their traditional dances. Fr. Simon in his speech emphasized on the need to deepen their faith. Bishop Lumen appreciated for organizing such a cultural event which brings unity and oneness in the Parish. Fr. Hormis thanked the people for their support and help in the work of evangelization. The feast day celebration concluded with a festive meal shared by over 600 people from all over the Villages. *Chronicler*

KHUMULWNG PARISH**Pastor's Pastoral Visit**

The Pastoral visit to St. Alphonsa Parish Khumulwng took place on 2nd December. The day began with the welcoming of our dear Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC by our Parish Priest Fr. Valentine Dungdung SVD, followed by the Holy Eucharist.



It was a special day for all the faithful and especially for the 22 children who received the Sacrament of Confirmation. The importance and meaning of Confirmation was stressed during the Bishop's homily.

The Bishop also visited Jeevadhara Diocesan Minor Seminary and gave a motivational Talk to the Seminarians. Fr. Valentine thanked the Bishop and congratulated all the children who received Confirmation.

Fr. Stany Pereira SVD

BISHRAMGANJ PARISH**Bishop's Pastoral Visit**

Two days Pastoral visit of Most Rev. Bishop Lumen to Bishramganj Parish will be a memorable event for the faithful of the Parish. He reached the Parish on 15th Saturday and met with some Parish Council members and catechists who were present to welcome him.



We shared and evaluated on the situation of the Parish, after which he visited the FMM Sisters in the Convent. On the following day, 16th December, he addressed and blessed the participants of the Discipleship Training Program (DTP) and then moved towards Nabasardar *motha* where the faithful had gathered from all the different *mothas* of the Parish. The people who were waiting for the Bishop warmly welcomed him with song, flowers and dance. The Holy Eucharist presided over by the Bishop was followed by the Eucharistic procession around Nabasardar Village. Later there was a short felicitation program in honor of Most Rev. Bishop Lumen followed by a fellowship meal. In his message to the faithful, the Bishop emphasized on the need to encounter God in prayer and this personal encounter will encounter their Christian life. The Bishop also gave a Christmas Message and blessed the community.

Fr. Remol Marak, SDB

KUMARGHAT PARISH**Marriage Preparation Course**

A Marriage preparation course was organized on 12th and 13th of December at Kumarghat. Eight Couples from different villages attended the programmes. The main topics dealt were, the Sacrament of Marriage; Challenges to

family life; Formation of model Christian family; Christian Parenting; Children are God's gift; Christ is the centre of family; family prayer; and Natural Family Planning. The Resource Persons were Sr. Pusphpa M.C, Sr. Tarsius M.C, Mr. Santosh and Mr. Subia. The method used for the Couple were Group discussion, Chats, Testimony and Lecture. The participants expressed that they were very happy to have participated in the programme and were benefited very much. *Fr. Arul J., CSC*

Diocese News Nuggets**Montfort Brothers Celebrating an Era!**

Montfort School at Champaknagar commenced its service to humanity on 21st June 1993 under the leadership of Bro. Varghese Mandapathil, the first Principal, with just 129 students. Today the Institution has 2,160 students on its roll.



It was the Holy Cross Fathers who invited the Brothers to come to Tripura in the year 1990.

The Silver Jubilee of its foundation was celebrated on the 30th November and 1st December 2018 with much pomp and gaiety. The celebration on 30th November started with the Jubilee Thanksgiving Mass presided over by Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, and concelebrated by a large number of Priests, thanking God for the 25 years of Graces and Blessings. Many Priests, Brothers, Sisters, parishioners and old Students joined the school community in the celebration of the Eucharist. After the Jubilee Mass there was the Alumni day function where Mr. Mevar Kumar Jamatia Hon'ble Minister of Tribal Welfare, Govt. of Tripura, was the Chief Guest. Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, Bishop of Agartala, Rev. Bro. Diogini Taffarello, the Vicar General of the Montfort Brothers, Rev. Bro. Pratap Reddy, the Asst. General, Rev. Bro. Devassy M.K, the Provincial of the Province of North East India, Fathers, Brothers from other Provinces and different Communities of Northeast,

Sisters, Past Principals Teachers and old students were present. On 1st December was the final day of the Jubilee Celebrations. The Chief Guest was Mr. N.C Debbarma, the Hon'ble Minister of Revenue and Fisheries, Govt. of Tripura and a host of other dignitaries.

Jubilee is a milestone giving hope and encouragement in the journey forward. Twenty five years have passed since Montfort School sparkled with its first light. The two days Jubilee celebration marked the culmination of a yearlong celebration and was an opportunity to thank the Almighty for all the blessings showered upon this Institution. **Bro. Anand Kumar, SG**

PUSH 2018

PUSH 2018 at Divine Retreat Centre, Muringoor, was the culmination point for the Jericho Prayer journey all over India on the theme of *Pray Until Something Happens*. It was a Prophetic Intercessors Meet initiated by the National Catholic Charismatic Renewal Team. Cardinal Oswald Gracias, President of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India inaugurated PUSH 2018 on 18th November. Several



Bishops were present for the inaugural function. More than 2,500 participants attended the three-days Intercessors Meet from different parts of India. Fr. Abraham VC, Fr. Paul CSC, Mr. Domnic Jamatia and Mr. Subash Debbarma participated along with Rev. Bishop Lumen Monteiro from the Diocese of Agartala.

It was really a prayerful spiritual gathering which was able to manifest real core of intercession. And it was a real inspiration for all to be an intercessor for the world like Moses. All Resource Persons reiterated the importance of intercessors in this era. Many people shared their testimony of Jericho prayer which they conducted in their own respective Dioceses. **Fr. Abin, VC**

Care to Cancel Cancer

The Diocesan Health Commission, in collaboration with JUST, made a small effort to create awareness on Cancer to the people of the Diocese. We conducted awareness on cNcncr in 15 Parishes. The focus was on the causes, symptoms, the disease burden, self examination, measures to remain healthy and no to tobacco. The Resource Persons were Dr. Amulya



Debbarma, Dr. Prasenjit Roy, Sr. Alice Thomas BS, Mr. Chandrajoy Reang and Sr Prema BS. In each parish Act on Cancer (ACG) is formed. They will further sensitize the community on awareness and prevention of Cancer. The ACG Members were given an opportunity to visit the Cancer Hospital in Agartala where they were given an input session by Dr. Sushil Debbarma and Dr. Arup Ghosh. 'No to Tobacco Rally' was held at Kathalcherra on November 5th where 150 students from Holy Cross HS School and Nepaltilla Government School participated. Fr C V Jose flagged off the Rally. We remain grateful to Fr Jeevan SVD for the timely guidance. **Sr. Prema, BS**

Awareness Program on Civil Rights Act 1955 and Prevention of Atrocities Act 1989



St. Arnold's Higher Secondary School, Ambassa, organized a Seminar for 123 students of Class IX and XII. The Resource Person was Mr. Basker Debbarma LLB, a civil Advocate in Ambassa Court. The theme for the Seminar was "Civil Rights Act 1955 & Prevention of Atrocities Act 1989 (SC and ST)." The Resource Person said, "*When our world is in the swift transition of change, development, modernization, globalization and others, the world on the other side has its events of fall and rise. Recent time has proved itself that society faces more of economical and political disparity than in the past. The public, especially the last and the least are victimized in various ways. They fall prey to the clutches of corruption, atrocities and marginalization. To remove the clutches of all that harm the society and all of us the foremost tactic is to make ourselves aware of our rights and duties through educating the young minds of the younger generation*". After his presentation there was also time allotted for the interaction with the students for further clarification. The Vice-Principal

concluded the session by thanking everyone for their presence and active participation. **News Bureau, Ambassa**

Ecumenical and pre-Christmas celebrations in the Diocese Khumulwng: The Word became Flesh



Christmas impels us to imitate the one who was self emptying and incarnated for us to cultivate an attitude of love towards others. The same love of God was shared and celebrated with each other on 8th and 9th of December at St. Alphonsa Parish Khumulwng through Christo Mela. The celebration began with the blessing of the Crib by Fr. Ivan D'Silva SVD Parish priest of Ambassa and Fr. Valentine Dungdung SVD the Parish Priest of Khumulwng Parish, followed by prayer, preaching, skit on birth of Jesus and carol singing. The presence of Mevar Kumar Jamatia the Minister of Tribal Welfare and Forestry, who was the Chief Guest for the first day and Mr. Dhananjay Dominic Debbarma, Additional Director of Panchayat/ R D, who was the Chief Guest for the second day was encouraging. Their Message was enriching. The presence of Montfort Brothers, MSMHC Sisters and all the *motha* leaders was much appreciated. To encourage the performers the prizes were given for the best dances.

Fr. Stany Pereira SVD

Ambassa: Ecumenical Pre-Christmas Fair



All Christian denomination Members from Ambassa joined together to celebrate advance Christmas Fair in Kamlacherra. The three-day long function was 13th till 15th December 2018. Large numbers from different villages, different denominations and different walks of life participated in the Fest. Organizers have worked hard to plan this program much ahead of time. Different Pastors, Evangelists and Deacons spoke on the importance of Christmas. Mr.

Bijoy Hrangkhawl the former MLA and the leader of INPT (Indigenous National Party of Tripura), a regional political party, was the main speaker to address the gathering. He said, "Christmas brings people together and it brings peace". Fr. Ivan D'Silva, SVD, the main speaker of second day said, "As the angel Gabriel brought the message to Mary, 'Be not afraid', so too for us this message is very much applicable". He further added, "The name Emmanuel gives us hope that the Lord is with us and not to be afraid of preaching the Word of God".

Since three years the All Christian pre-Christmas Fair takes place and it is a time for preaching the Word of God and sharing the Christmas message of love, peace, forgiveness and joy. *News Bureau, Ambassa*

Tuikarmaw: Ecumenical Christo Mela

Christo Mela-2018 was organized on 16th December 2018 at Tuikarmaw by South Tripura Christian Forum for the fourth consecutive year. The Theme for this year was "That they may be all one". The Christo Mela was Inaugurated by Bishop Lumen



Monteiro CSC, the Bishop of Agartala, in the presence of eleven different Christian church Leaders. In his address to the faith community he called upon all to foster greater unity among the Christian community. He appreciated the participating church leaders of South Tripura and conveyed his wishes and blessings. Various church pastors gave a fitting message of Christmas to the Christian community calling everyone to forgive and love one another. There was Carol competitions organized between the churches. The Christo Mela 2018 ended with a Lucky Coupon Draw. *Fr. Alfred, CSC*

International Day for Persons with Disabilities 2018

JUST celebrated the World Day of Persons with Disabilities along with State Social Welfare Department, on 2nd and 3rd December 2018 at Sishu Bihar H.S School, Agartala and



Rabindra Satabarshiki Bhavan, Agartala. There were 25 PwDs/CwDs and Parents who participated in the program from JUST Organization. On 2nd December Sports Competitions were conducted for the PwDs/CwDs in which some of the children participated. On 3rd December the day was celebrated with cultural program and the Chief Guest was Miss Santana Chakma, Minister of Social Welfare and Social Education of Tripura. Again on 16th December JUST organized Picnic for the Persons with Disabilities at Jangal Mahal Park in Khowai. There were 35 PwDs/CwDs and parents who joined the picnic.

Progressive Saran

Mr. Saran Deb (with Cerebral Palsy), son of Subhash Deb, resides at Lembucherra under Teliamura Block. He is just 12 years old. JUST CBR Staff identified him in 2014 while doing baseline survey. Before CBR worker intervention, he could not do anything



without someone's help. CBR worker Mr. Jabesh Sarkar did home based intervention and home based education regularly. He made a walker using bamboos for strengthening his leg. He also applied physiotherapy regularly. Recently, JUST provided him a getter, a special chair and a table. JUST also provided him a toilet chair. Now he use the toilet chair without the support of anyone. Other children are also helping him and are playing with him.

Mr. Cyril Darlong

Vatican News Nuggets

Cardinal Patrick D'Rozario, CSC, Pope's special Envoy to World Day of the Sick

Pope Francis on December 11, appointed Cardinal Patrick D'Rozario of Bangladesh as his special delegate to the special celebration of the Catholic Church's 27th World Day of the Sick in the eastern Indian city of Kolkata (formerly Calcutta), February 9-11, 2019. The tradition of the World Day of the Sick was instituted by St. John Paul II on 13 May 1992, designating its

celebration to the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, February 11 each year. Cardinal D'Rozario became the first Cardinal of Bangladesh when Pope Francis elevated him to the Cardinal's rank at the Consistory of November 19, 2016. The 75-year old Archbishop of Dhaka also became the first Cardinal from among the Bengali-speaking people on either side of divided Bengal, inhabiting Bangladesh and India's West Bengal State. *Robin Gomes*

Bishop's Program for January 2019

- 01: Tuikarakma Chapel Blessing under Depacherra Parish
- 04: Agartala Chennai Sivagangai
- 05: Priestly Ordination of Dn. Amalraj at Paramakudi
- 07-14: CCBI Plenary Assembly, Chennai
- 15-25: Home Visit
- 25-27: Parish Sabah, Kumarghat
Installation of new Parish Priest

Our Distinguished Visitors

- Bro. Dionigi Trafferalo, SG Vicar General from Rome
- Bro. Pratap Reddy, SG Assistant General from Rome
- Sr. Izabela Swierad, SAC Superior General from Rome
- Sr. Josephina D'Souza, SAC General Councillor from Rome
- Mrs. Dipsha Sebin, Chartered Accountant from Guwahati
- Fr. Sesil HGN, brother of Fr. S. George from Germany
- Fr. Paul Vincent HGN, from Vijaywada, AP
- Mr. Arokiasamy, brother of Fr. S. George from TN