



# DIOCESE OF AGARTALA

## Link *Lead Us Onward*



Agartala Diocesan Newsletter

Vol. XXII - No. 10 - October 2018

### Pastor's Corner

#### The Snake and the Saw



2nd October is the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, the 'father of the nation' who is considered a founder of the nonviolence movement. He lived, spoke and promoted non-violence, something so badly needed in our lives, our country and our world

today. He believed in the principle of **ahimsa = nonviolence**. Ahimsa's precept of 'cause no injury' includes one's deeds, words, and thoughts. The story of the Snake and the Saw comes to mind. A snake penetrated into a carpentry workshop. As it slipped, it passed over a saw and got slightly wounded. Suddenly, it

turned and bit the saw, and biting the saw, the snake seriously got wounded in its mouth! Then not understanding what was happening and thinking that the saw was attacking "him," it decided to roll around the saw to suffocate it with all its body by squeezing it with all its strength, but it ended up being killed by the saw!!!

Sometimes we react in anger to hurt those who have harmed us, but we realize later that after all we are hurting ourselves. In life sometimes it is better not to react so as not to suffer consequences that can sometimes be deadly or harmful.

Let us also take a look at the laws of nature:



The food we eat, has to be digested and then thrown out of the body in 24 hours, else we will fall ill. The water we drink, gets in our body and is thrown out in 4 hours, else we will fall ill. The air we breathe, has to be thrown out in 1

minute, else we will die. And so the question: What about negative emotions like hatred, anger, jealousy, insecurity? So often we hold them in our body for days, months and even years. If these negative emotions are not thrown out regularly they prop up into psychosomatic diseases. So do not let hate take over your life because love is stronger than anything.

Jesus spoke, taught, and lived love and so did Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi was a great admirer of Jesus and his teachings. As we celebrate his birthday let us try to live and propagate his belief of **ahimsa**. **+Lumen, CSC**



### Editorial

#### Setting our House in order

It is hard not to take note of the turbulent times the Church is passing through all over the world, including our country. The woes that have befallen the church in



the state of Kerala make a telling case in point and as members of the Church, we would do well, perhaps, to give it a thought. Rather than engaging in venom-spewing discussions and virulent arguments that will only add to the muck the issue has already generated, it's time, I propose, for silence and introspection.

Can we keep dismissing the disturbing headlines that pop up in the media simply as 'attacks on the Church' by its enemies? I don't think so. While we cannot remain impervious to the labors of those hell-bent on tarnishing Church's image, we perhaps also ought to take a harder look at things we have, perhaps, for centuries, got accustomed to.

Marcellus in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* refers to something "rotten in the state of Denmark." Recent happenings in the Church indicate there is much in it that needs serious looking into. The threat they pose is far more dangerous because they gnaw at those vital parts which give identity and meaning to us and slowly reduce us to mere caricatures of what we ought to be.

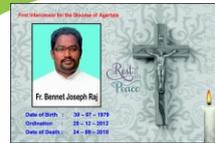
We know for sure that nothing, neither external factors nor traitors from within can destroy the Church that Jesus

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#### Shocked, Grieved and Saddened...

As LINK goes to the Press we have received the shocking news that our dear Fr. Bennet Joseph Raj is no more. He died in a road accident today 24th September 2018, close to his home town, Mangalakuntu, in TN.

We are shocked, grieved and saddened by his untimely death--barely 6 years of priesthood and 39 years of age! The Diocesan Fraternity of Agartala mourns his untimely death. We pray that God in his mercy receives his faithful servant into the peace and joy of His presence.



#### Fr. Thomas Thengumpally, CSC (Born: 13-05-1939 Died: 08-08-2018)

Fr. Thomas Thengumpally, CSC, senior confrere and once Parish Priest of St. Joseph Parish Agartala (now St. Francis Xavier Cathedral), once the Chancellor of the Diocese and Member of the College of Consultors, pioneer Parish Priest of several Parishes in the Diocese of Agartala, breathed his last on 8th August at the age of 79. He was a cheerful person, deeply spiritual,

and a friend to all.

LINK mourns his death and offers prayers for the repose of his soul.

#### Fr. Thomas Thekkekandom, SDB (Born: 25-12-1936 Died: 17-09-2018)

Fr. TT Thomas, SDB, passed away very suddenly on 17<sup>th</sup> September. A senior confrere, he lived a quiet life at Don Bosco Pathaliaghat community. He was a spiritual person and helped us in the Diocese with spiritual work, especially as 'confessor'. LINK mourns his death and offers prayers for the repose of his soul.



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brought into being at the cost of his life. Time and again, trappings that have accumulated and stuck to it over periods of time simply shed away. When we see straw-built citadels that looked like mighty edifices collapse overnight, we do well to scrutinize our own stories and what underpins them.

Jesus has a curious way of unceremoniously slipping away from situations and people that even remotely contemplate worldly power and glory (Jn. 6:15). Sometimes when blinded by the dazzle of adulation, power, wealth and everything else the world has to offer, an empire-building instinct gets the better of us, and we set about beating the men servants and the servant girls, and eating and drinking and getting drunk (Lk 12: 45) Jesus, perhaps, quietly exits from the scene.

When faced with such temptations may the memory of a feet-washing Master, who only had a few fishermen and the riff-raff of society for company, and who after a life time of service to others, died abandoned on a tree, jolt us out of our bad dreams. We pray that these challenging times become for us an opportunity to rid ourselves of encumbrances we would be better off without so that we can be wise and trustworthy stewards whom He has placed over his household (Lk. 12:42).

## TUIKARMAW PARISH

### Bible Sunday Celebration

26<sup>th</sup> August 2018 was celebrated as Bible Sunday at St. Mary's Parish Tuikarmaw. The day was organized in two circles. The faithful belonging to Garo community gathered at Holy Cross School Ichacherra. The faithful belonging to the Reang community gathered at Lokicherra. The Seminar on Bible was organized in both these places. Special emphasis was given on the usage of Bible. Various Competitions were conducted like, Bible Skit, and Bible Quiz, etc. the Winners were awarded with prizes.

### Parish Feast



St. Mary's Parish celebrated our Annual

Feast on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2018. Prior to the Feast day celebrations nine days of Novenas and Holy Eucharist were conducted. The Novenas began on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018 and Fr. Bhuban Sarkar was the main Celebrant. On this day the parish Flag was hoisted. Each day of the Novenas were animated by different village *mondolis*. Each day of the Novena there was a theme from the life of Mother Mary. During the Novenas CSC Frs Robert, Iswar and Hormis, Frs. Blasius SDB, Pratap MSFS, and Bosco were the main celebrants. They spoke on the Role of Mary in the Church. The Feast day festive Mass was presided over by Fr. Jeevan SVD. Frs. Varghese MSFS and Mathew MSFS joined for the Eucharistic Celebration. Fr. Jeevan stressed two important aspects of Mary that is Helping Others and Loving Others. He invited the faithful to Help and Love one another. The celebration ended with festive feast day community meal.

*Alfred, CSC*

## AMBASSA PARISH

### Girl Child Day



Ambassa, September 08, 2018: Holy Spirit Catholic Church celebrated the Girl Child Day along with the Birthday of Mother Mary. People offered flowers and prayers to Mother Mary at the Marian Grotto. Over 375 people mostly women and girls were present. At the Holy Eucharist, women and girls took active participation in the Church to make the liturgy more meaningful. Melodious choir sung by girls helped the congregation to involve devoutly in the Mass. The Parish Priest Fr. Ivan D' Silva, svd drew the attention of the faithful in the homily mentioning about the atrocities that are continuously taking place on the girl children, such as rape, female infanticide, eve teasing, illiteracy of the girls, trafficking, etc. He called on everyone to respect and help girl children in the families, societies, institution and work places. All girl children were felicitated at the end of the Holy Mass.

*News Bureau, Ambassa*

## KUMARGHAT PARISH

### Girl Child Day celebrated

On 3<sup>rd</sup> of September Girl Child day with the theme "Every Girl is a Precious gift" was celebrated at Kumarghat Parish. Fr. Babu Paul SJ was the main celebrant. In his homily he spoke about the important role of girls in the society. Half day Seminar was conducted by Fr. Babu Paul SJ. 150 Hostellers from Fatima Girls hostel and from Shanthipally participated in the Seminar. Fr. Babu began the seminar with ice braking exercise. Video clip group discussions were conducted. He emphasized on the inequalities faced by the girls in the society and the need to promote them as equal in every area of life. At the end of the program the girls also expressed themselves that they will live dignified life in the future.

### Bible Sunday celebrated



On 26<sup>th</sup> August, Bible Sunday was celebrated at Kumarghat Parish. At the beginning of the Holy Eucharist the Word of God was carried in procession and venerated with the garland and arathi. At the introduction and the in the homily, Fr. Arul the Parish Priest preached about the importance of the Word of God for each one's life. After the Holy Mass there was action song and skit was enacted which was followed by bible quiz for the children. The children too participated with eagerness, joy and vigor. At the end of the program all extended their hands forward and renewed their pledge with Joshua "As for me and my household we shall serve the Lord." *Fr. Arul J, CSC*

## KATHALCHERRA PARISH

### Charismatic Retreat



Parish level Charismatic Retreat took place in the parish centre on 18 and 19 of August. Fr. Subash Baroi and Sr. Chistina Sheela from

Khrisnanagar Diocese, West Bengal, led the two days spirit-filled Charismatic Retreat. A large number of the faithful turned out and many people were healed through the prayers. Morning 8.30 started with Praise and Worship, then Talks and Prayers. By evening there was special adoration along with healing prayers. Both the days the Retreat ended with Holy Eucharist. Then people departed after having a meal that was prepared in the parish.

**Girl Child Day**



Girl Child day was celebrated in our Parish on 9th September. Fr. Ajith Philip CSC, presided over the holy Mass. Sr. Suman B. S. gave a beautiful and elaborate introduction to the Mass on the value of a girl child and the need to respect everyone without being biased by any gender differences.

**Jericho March**



Jericho Cross reached the Parish on 12th September at 7.30am from Kamaranga Parish. Fr. Jomon SVD brought the Cross along with Parish Council Members. Fr. Ajith CSC received the Cross in the presence of a large numbers of parishioners. After the initial prayers the Cross was taken into the different *mondolis*. On 14th September evening the Jericho Cross was taken to Kumarghat.

*Fr. Ajith Philip, CSC*

**Diocese News Nuggets**

**ST. ARNOLD'S SCHOOL GANDACHERRA**

**Media and Communication Seminar**

Ambassa, September 18, 2018: One day Seminar on 'Media & Communication' was organized by the school administration for the Class VIII, IX and X students in St. Arnold's School, Gandachara. Fr. Ivan D' Silva, SVD the Secretary for the Social



Communication commission of Agartala Diocese was the Resource Person. One hundred two students were present. Fr. John Bosco the principal of the School formally introduced and welcomed the Resource Person. Fr. Ivan started with different levels of communication and explained with examples what 'good communication' is. He called on to the young students, 'to come out on to the street and protest against the rapes and against the fake news, to raise the voice against the voice less, to fight for the justice and right of the minority and women'. He said, "The family values which were inherited are replaced by the latest gadgets, and we need to be aware of this". As one of the student thanked the Resource Person for making them aware of the Media and its negative and positive impact, all in unison appreciated the Media class.

*News bureau, Ambassa*

**North Zone Small Christian Community Gathering**

Ambassa, September 12, 2018: More than 50 people from different Parishes gathered together for the North Zone SCC Meeting in Ambassa.



Representatives from Bagbasa, Kumarghat, Kattalchara, Kamaranga, and Ambassa Parishes were present for the Meeting. Mr. Sopon Sangma the President of Ambassa Parish SCC Committee welcomed all the participants for the half day Meet. Then Mr. Indrajit Sangma of Ambassa led the seven steps 'Bible sharing'. Mr. Vandinga Darlong the SCC North Zone Secretary read the Report of last meeting in Kattalchara. Then the North Zone Coordinator Fr. Arul called on all the parishes to present their Report. After few common suggestions, parish-wise workshop was held to discuss and chalk out concrete plans for the coming days. The Meeting concluded with the finalizing the date and place for next sitting.

*News bureau, Ambassa*

**Children's Festival**



Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) organized a Children festival on 15<sup>th</sup> August on the occasion of the 72<sup>nd</sup> India Independence Day with full excitement in the entire center by organizing Art, Quiz and Drawing Competitions. The children were made to participate in different games organized by the Teachers and they were also thrilled to get candy from their Teachers. The students enjoyed the fair with activities like skipping, blind fold games and different rides. They also received some special messages and lesson of unity and brotherhood from their Teachers through this program. Apart from building relationship and friendship this celebration brought happiness and love amongst the students. The festival ended by distributing 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> prizes to the winners of various activities in different categories.

**Inter School Peace Meet**

Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) organized drawing



competition during Inter-School Peace Meet with the target schools 16th August 2018. The participants were divided into different groups and asked each group to discuss on peace and put it into a beautiful picture through art. Each group was provided chart paper and colour pen for drawing any picture what peace means to them. After the drawing each group was asked to give a presentation on what they have put up in the chart paper. The Schools authority along with the Peace Staff selected the best three drawings from the groups for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> places, and prizes were awarded to the participants.

*Mr. Cyril Darlong*

**Ranchi Jesuit calls treason charge 'fabricated'**



Indian Jesuit Father Stanislaus Lourdusamy says a treason charge linking him with militant Maoists is a fabrication being used to discredit his work for prisoners and tribal people. The 82-year-old Jesuit, popularly known as Stan Swamy, was charged along with eight other rights activists on Aug. 28 for alleged links to a banned Maoist group in the western state of Maharashtra. "It is nothing but a complete concoction and absolute falsehood that is being propagated by Maharashtra police," Father Swamy said in a Sept. 3 statement. Father Swamy said he has been Convener of an organization called Persecuted Prisoners Solidarity Committee (PPSC) which assists under-trial prisoners. He has also created awareness among tribal and Dalit people about their rights including helping tribal people become aware of a Supreme Court judgment that "the owner of the land is also the owner of the subsoil minerals." *UCAN*

**Sofia's arrest an assault on Constitution**

Describing the arrest of a woman research scholar for raising slogans against the Tamil Nadu BJP President as an "assault" on the Constitution and "Idea of India", the Congress said there was an "undeclared Emergency" in the country and fascism playing out in full glory. Sofia, 25, shouted slogans against the Modi government on a Tuticorin-bound aircraft when she was seated behind Tamil Nadu BJP President Tamilisai Soundararajan. She was arrested following a complaint from Soundararajan, who alleged that Sofia had uttered "unspeakable words" at the airport lounge. Claiming that the police was pressurized to register a case, Tewari said: "If this is not undeclared Emergency, then what is? This (arrest) was not only an assault on the freedom of speech and expression, not only was an assault on our fundamental rights, it was an assault on the Constitution, it was an assault on democracy, it was an assault on the Idea of India and it was fascism playing itself out in its fullest glory". *IANS*

**Muslim University awards Jesuit Theologian**

The Aligarh Muslim University, a Muslim University in Aligarh, a city in the Indian State of Uttar Pradesh, has awarded German

Jesuit theologian Fr. Christian W. Troll the "Sir Syed Excellence



Award", a prestigious award given for his excellent work in the field of Islamic studies and Muslim-Christian relations, Fides News Agency reports September 13, 2018. Prof. Abdul Kidwai, Head of the Department of Koranic Studies at Aligarh Muslim University, announced that the award will be given on October 17, 2018, during a special celebration organized at Aligarh Muslim University. Fr. Troll in his research on the different traditions of Muslims in South Asia tried to understand "the burning issues that so many religious leaders have faced in the last 200 years". *Fides*

**Our Distinguished Visitors**

- Sr. Bernadetta, SSpS and Ms. Daniele Dafe from Australia
- Mr. Joseph Mrs. Jansi dad and sister of Fr. Lourdu, CSC
- Sr. Gina, SSpS, Councillor from Meghalaya
- SVD Frs. Roy & Joseph from South Africa
- Sr. Rose Celine, BS Superior General from Mangalore
- Sr. Lilitta, BS General Councillor from Mangalore
- Sr. Annie, SCC Provincial Superior from Guwahati
- Fr. Freddie D'Souza from Allahabad Diocese
- Sr. Miriam, FSM Provincial Superior from Bengaluru
- Sr. Alphonsa Celine, FSM Principal Holy Angels School, Salem TN
- Bros. Mathew SG, James, SG and Jose, SG, Mizoram

**Bishop's Program for October 2018**

- 01: Program, Bethany Khayerpur
- 02: Pastoral Meet, Agartala
- 03-05: DFNEI Convention, Imphal
- 06-07: Confirmations, Ambassa Parish
- 13-14: Parish Sabah, Tuikarmaw
- 14: Lokicherra Silver Jubilee under Tuikarmaw Parish
- 16: FORUM Directors Meet, Bengaluru
- 17-18: Caritas National Assembly, Bengaluru
- 24: Tribal Cultural Program, Karbook
- 27-28: Parish Program, Gachirampara
- 28: Meet Jesuit Provincial
- 29-31: Caritas India GB Meet, Delhi