



Pastor's Corner

Independence Day & Assumption

15th August commemorates India's independence from British rule. It was on this day in 1947 that free India's first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru gave his famous "Tryst with Destiny" speech. "At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance. It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity."

People across India are reminded of the meaning of this event - that it marked the start of a new era of deliverance from British colonialism that took place in India for more than 200 years. Achieving independence was not easy; great efforts made by leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, Subhas Chandra Bose, Moulana Abdul Kalam Azad, Bhagat Singh, Chandrasekhar Azad and many others.

As we celebrate this day we need to ask just how independent is independence? *Jug Suraiya*, an associate editor with the *Times of India*, says "it is a funny question to ask. Yet though as a nation we attained political freedom 66 years ago, there are many other freedoms that we have yet to win: freedom from poverty, deprivation, disease and the bane of corruption at all levels of public life. What price is political freedom if it doesn't include freedom from hunger, from inequality, injustice and exploitation?"

On August 15 we also celebrate Assumption Day which commemorates the belief that when Mary, the mother of Jesus died, her body was not subjected to the usual process of physical decay but was "assumed" into heaven and reunited there with her soul. Her feast is an opportunity to unite ourselves to her song of praise - the *Magnificat*. It is song of patience and victory, of struggle and joy, which unites the triumphant Church with the pilgrim one, earth with heaven, and which joins our lives to the eternity towards which we journey. Pope Francis says, "Mary is always there, near those communities, our brothers and sisters; she accompanies them, suffers with them, and sings the *Magnificat* of hope with them.

Happy Independence Day! Happy Feast Day! **+Lumen, CSC**



♦Pope Francis appoints new Bishops for India:

- ♦ Fr. Theodore Mascarenhas, SFX, till now Official at the Pontifical Council for Culture, as Auxiliary Bishop of Ranchi
- ♦ Rev. Fr. Cajetan Francis Osta, of the clergy of Muzaffarpur, as the new Bishop of Muzaffarpur
- ♦ Rev. Fr. Ignatius D'Souza, of the clergy of Lucknow, as the new Bishop of Bareilly
- ♦ Fr. Joy Alappatt as Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago Syro Malabar Diocese in the United States
- ♦ Most Rev. Antony Pappusamy, until now Bishop of Dindigul, as Archbishop of Madurai



Editorial

Lifetime Investments!

As a Catholic Diocese we share the many enviable qualities and capabilities that characterize the Catholic Church the world over.

Many indeed are the benefits we derive from being part of a well-knit network spanning every nook and corner of the State.



Each of our institutions and endeavors - parishes, schools, boarding houses, dispensaries, or social service centres, share in a synergy that comes from being part of a larger network. In other words, as a Church institution, we are bigger than what we individually are.

Yet, there are areas where we, as individuals and as a collective body, display surprising vulnerability and weakness. Catechism classes, for example. We never tire of lamenting the superficiality of faith-related knowledge in our faithful, but have not effectively come up with a system of Catechism teaching, that even faintly resembles the expertise with which we manage our institutions, especially schools.

It's puzzling how we, as a Diocese, have not managed to extend our expertise and experience into an area we readily agree is among the most important. Just because some schools jam-pack a session or two of Catechism into an already crowded school routine every week, can we say that all is well?

In a place like Tripura, introducing Sunday catechism classes on a regular basis calls for an extra degree of determination. There are many demons to be fought - lack of a text, lack of a tradition, non-availability of qualified teachers, the pull of Sunday tuitions, unconvinced parents and so on.

In this respect, parents and guardians stand in need of the same as much as their children or wards, if not more.

All is not lost, however. There are parishes in our Diocese, that braving all odds, conduct Catechism classes for at least some children on an almost regular basis. Those who make it happen are trailblazers and certainly deserve appreciation for creating oases of hope in what otherwise looks like an arid desert, in this respect. Judging from the tenacity and quiet determination with which our Diocese has dealt with seemingly impossible situations in the past, one feels confident that Catechism classes will certainly become a regular Sunday feature throughout the Diocese. However, it calls for collective efforts from all sections of the faithful: the clergy, religious, parents, adult lay faithful, youth and children.

J. Pulinthanath, sdb

St. Andre Parish, Bodhjungnagar

Bible Fellowship for Youth



About 70 enthusiastic Youth from different 'mothas' gathered at Bodhjungnagar Parish for an activity filled Bible Fellowship. The program began on July 16 at 5.00p.m. and went on till July 19. During the program Seminarian Binod, Catechist Anando, motha President Mr. Bishwarai and Mr. Raju Debburma, gave them inputs from the Old Testament and Family Life Education. The program being participatory in nature, participants were divided into groups and prepared Bible Skits and composed tunes to Biblical hymns. Every evening there were competitions based on their compositions and it was encouraging to see participation of the talented youth. The culmination of the program was a candlelit Marian procession. The Youth also spent half a day for Action Plan for the coming three months. The parish Youth is divided into four Zones and each zone with an animator from the locality who will be guided and directed by the Youth Commission of the parish. May God be the companion of our youth!

Fr. Jilson Tom, CSC

Good Shepherd Parish, Kathalcherra

SCC introductory training program

Two days SCC introductory training programs were held at three villages of Kathalcherra Parish namely Mainama, Garo II and Koraticherra. Parish Resource Team consisting of Mr. Piangluma Darlong, Mr. Paul Sangma, Lalrina Darlong, Lokoram Reang and Fr. Lancy D'Souza CSC went to these villages to conduct two days SCC introductory training programs. During the training programs various church models were presented to the people and their role in all these modules. They were made to realize their role in each of these stages of church. Finally they were introduced to the "New way of being the church" module or in other words SCCs (Small Christian Communities) module. In this module the faithful are called to meet in their neighborhood as a SCC unit and to share the Word God and live the Word of God in their neighborhood communities and thus to strengthen the bond between the neighborhoods. In all the *mondolis* we got a positive response from the faithful and we have formed 12 SCC units in these villages. During the training few of the Resource Team members gave their personal testimonies about SCC in their villages and how the faith and their involvement have grown in these *mondolis*. Now people are reading the Word of God and sharing the Word of God in their respective units. *Mr. Paul Sangma*



KCYM Seminar 2014

Good Shepherd Parish, Kathalcherra organized one day Seminar on July 20th for the Youth of the Parish on the theme "Catholic Youth: Agents of Change in the Family". The theme was chosen based on the Year of Family. The day commenced with the Holy Eucharist presided over by Fr. Jerome Chorei, CSC. Mr. Paul Darlong, District Statistical Officer & Mr. Muana Darlong, Asst. Professor, University of Tripura, were the main Resource Persons. Paul Darlong in his interaction stressed on the ten point agenda for the Catholic Youth to be leaders in the family and local church. Mr. Muana Darlong stressed on the role of a confident youth in the family. The singing competition steered competitive spirit among the youth. The Action Plan for the year and the yearly planner were discussed during the evaluation. The Seminar was attended by 120 Youth from the parish. *Fr. Valerian, CSC*

St. Francis de Sales Parish, Sindukpathar

Pastoral Visit of dear Bishop Lumen

Rev. Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC, reached Sindukpathar Parish at 7:00 pm. We were happy to receive him in our midst. We had arranged the Holy Eucharist in one of our villages, namely, Paradhamonipara. It was a great event -- our parishioners from four villages came together for the celebration. The celebration began with welcoming our Bishop. It was a grand and cordial welcome by washing hands, singing songs, giving a bouquet and a risha. This was followed by the Holy Eucharist which was presided over by our dear Bishop. During the holy Eucharistic celebration Bishop Lumen administered Baptisms to 28 catechumens and the Sacrament of Confirmation to 17 candidates.



This was followed by a cultural program consisting of tribal dances from different villages. The whole community was very happy to welcome the new members to the community. It brought great joy and happiness. The celebration came to a close at 2:15pm. *Fr. Pratap, MSFS*

Tulasi the King of Herbs

The English name of Tulasi (*ocimum sanctum*) is Holy Basil. Basil means royal in Latin. No doubt it is the king of herbs. Tulasi purifies and oxygenates and invigorates the body, a heart tonic also effective in the early stages of cancer. Regular intake of the leaves reduce stress, cholesterol, fevers, eliminates toxins, prevents gastric ulcers, improves digestion, regulates bloods pressure and blood sugar. It supports the functioning of blood vessels, lungs, liver, etc. Above all it is antioxidant, anti-bacterial, anti-viral. The unique chemistry is highly complex and contains hundreds of beneficial compounds to boost our immune system. If cultivated in our homes it dispels mosquitoes. So Hindus worship tulasi as the embodiment of the goddess Laxmi. *Samson*

Aseervatham, Hyderabad



Our Readers Write

Thank you for sending me the Link which is always on time. I enjoy reading it and pray for you and the mission in Agartala. **Sr. M. Fay A.C., Kolkata**

LINK is always the proof that you have some really devoted people to take out on the dot every 1st of the month! Hats off to you and to them! That deserves a medal!...if not gold at least of Saint Brother André...**Conrad CSC, Canada**

I received your kind email and the attached LINK. Thank you very much. **+Andrew, Tura**

Thank you for LINK. It is wonderful that you are so punctual even while travelling. **Thomas Manjaly, Shillong**

Thanks for the Link all the way from USA. Your write up is really apt and appealing to read and it makes lot of sense. **Jeevan SVD, Agartala**

How great to receive this! I will read it each time and keep all of you closer in prayer. **Michael DeLaney, CSC, Chile**

Enhancing SCCs in the North Zone of the Diocese



The first SCC North Zonal level meeting was held on 14th of June at 10.30am in St. Paul's Parish Kumarghat. The North Zonal level SCCs Committee consists of St. Paul's Parish Kumarghat, Good Shepherd Parish Kathalcherra, Holy Cross Parish Bagbasa, St. Francis of Assisi Parish Gachhirampara, Holy Spirit Parish Ambassa, St. Raphael Parish Kamaranga, and St. Arnold Parish Gandacherra. 11 representatives from different parishes of this Zone attended the meeting. The diocesan Secretary of Agartala Diocese Fr. Lancy D'Souza CSC presided over the Meeting. During the Meeting the Reports of the growth of SCCs of different parishes were given. The zonal level SCC's secretary was elected in this meeting. Fr. Lancy and others gave suggestions to form and strengthen SCC groups in the respective parishes. It was also discussed on how to overcome the difficulties and problems. Reporting forms were distributed for the periodical reporting of the activities of the SCC groups. It was also decided to have zonal level periodical meeting in different parish centers. The formation of SCCs zonal committee is a sign of growth of 'New Way of being Church' in the Diocese of Agartala. Thanks to those who contributed to this cause. **Fr. Arul J., CSC, Northern Zonal Secretary of SCCs**

Glimpses from the Diocese

JUST joins in the emergency efforts

International NGOs starts work on malaria outbreak

The three member delegation of Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) or Doctors without Borders, a French-founded humanitarian-aid non governmental organization recently arrived in Tripura to investigate into the reason of large-scale malaria outbreak this year. They visited the distant hamlets of Longtraivalley sub-division of Dhalai District. The delegation headed by Dr. Hemant Sharma would be staying in the state for the next two months, a highly placed source in the Department of Health and family Welfare said. On the first day of their visit the MSF team started malaria diagnosis with RDT kits, distributed medicines among the patients and began to sensitize the public to stay aware of malaria outbreak. They will extend their services in 17 distant rural hamlets in Longtraivalley and Gandacherra sub-division during their stay in Tripura.

JUST conducts emergency malaria relief medical camps

Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) with the support from Caritas India has conducted 4 emergency malaria medical relief camps for the malaria affected villages under Dumburnagar Sub-Division, Dhalai Tripura. The Medical Team led by Dr. Anut Debbarma District Project Officer of JUST, Sr. Juliana Vaz, along with the Cluster Coordinators and Community Health Volunteers started the medical camps from 13th to 16th July 2014 at different remote villages namely: Bagirath, Dalapati, Ratannagar, New Bagirath, Kalajari and Ultacherra under Dumburnagar Sub-Division. Altogether 218 fever cases were tested with RDTs and 77 positive cases of malaria Pf diagnosed and treated with ACT-AL. Free mosquito nets were distributed to 30 poor families during the medical camps. The Team is planning to conduct medical camps at Ganganagar at Dhalai Tripura and Mungiakami Block at Khowai where malaria outbreak has taken place. *Courtesy Tripura Times*

Workshop on Cyber Crime



Cyber world is a gigantic world that has enveloped within its ambit every conceivable bit of information on devices linked to the internet. There is no escaping the lure of the cyber world given its reach and indispensability. So to sensitize the students and in order to apprise them of the pros and cons of using internet Auxilium Girls School convened a weeklong class-wise workshop on cyber crime for the students of class VXII from 23-27 June 2014. Sr. Manoda Sangma the Vice Principal of AGS through her creative and lively digital presentation discussed various issues concerning the menaces of cyber usage. The students were informed that they should exercise caution while placing personal information on facebook as it can be easily accessed. Sr. Manoda also dealt at length about the legalities associated with cyber crime. She reiterated that though the cyber network has become a lifeline of modern economy and is an indispensable part of our daily life, the hazards it poses are also significant.

Auxilium School Nandanagar

International Year of the Family: Parents-Teachers Meet

Parents-Teachers Convention is an opportunity for the parents and teachers to know each other. These meetings are not just about how the children are performing in academics or how they can improve on the subjects they are weak in. PTM is rather, a kind of friendly talk, which helps both the teachers and parents to share the problem areas of the child, seek to resolve the quandary together and to help the child improve. This also ensures healthy and perfect comprehensive evaluation where the teachers and parents come to know every facet of the child's personality like behaviour, awareness, skills, talents, weaknesses, eating habits & many such things apart from academics.



Keeping all these in perspectives in mind, Auxilium Girls' School Agartala, accomplished thirteen Parents-Teachers Meeting from Nursery to Class XII in the academic year (2014-15) on 28 June 2014. There were 1550 parents who attended.

Being International year of the "Family", Sr. Celine, FMA, our beloved Principal made a brilliant Power Point Presentations (PPT) on "Family and different issues" related to the welfare of the family members in today's fast growing life, mainly keeping in focus our children, their parents, teachers and other members of the society. The sessions were interactive and participatory in nature. The days ended on a happy note--expressing gratitude towards the parents' for their trust on the school and association.

Mrs. Shanta Roy and Mrs Sumita Roy

JUST fights Malaria



Tripura known for its lush green and famous tourist sites like Neer-Mahal (Lake Palace) only one of its kinds in North East has been in the media headlines for wrong reason over the past two months. Malaria outbreak in Tripura since June, 2014 has killed more than 150 people mostly children from

boarder villages. More than 35,000 people are affected by the killer disease. With the timely help of Caritas India and IGSSS, JUST could conduct medical camps and distributed mosquito nets in more than 30 villages under Dhalai, Khowai including Bru Relief Camps in North Tripura Districts. The fight against malaria in Tripura needs to be continued for some more time.

Dr. Anut Debarma

SALT Demonstration Plot

On 24th and 25th June 2014, JUST prepared a demonstration plot on Sloping Agricultural Land Technology (SALT) at Damdamia, Agro Farm. SALT is a process through which the fertility of soil is maintained in the hilly and sloppy lands. This technology sustains the soil fertility and helps the farmers to continue their cultivation in the same plot of land every year rather than shifting to another land. It also reduces soil erosion and deforestation. This demonstration will help farmers to learn the skills and follow the same pattern.

Vincent Debarma

BISHOP'S PROGRAMME FOR AUGUST 2014

- 02-03: Parish Pastoral Visit, Bagbasa
- 04: Vianney Day, Depacherra
- 05-08: CBCI Standing Committee Meet, Bangalore
- 09: Golden Jubilee, St. John's Bangalore
- 10-16: Caritas Field visit, Andhra & Telengana Region
- 17: St. Joseph Parish, Agartala
- 18: ADPC Meet, Bishop's House
- 20: Seminary Day, Champaknagar
- 21: Golden Jubilee of Sr. Immaculate, SCVG
- 22: MC Society Feast, Kumarghat
- 23-24: Parish Mass, Kumarghat
- 26: JUST GB Meet, Agartala
- 31: Platinum Jubilee, Mariamnagar Parish

World is getting warmer Rome

The world is getting warmer, as greenhouse gases reach historic highs and Arctic sea ice melts, making 2013 one of the hottest years on record, international scientist said. The annual state of the Climate Report 2013 is a review of scientific data and weather events over the past year, compiled by 425 scientists from 57 countries.

Highest Medal awarded to laity and the religious by the papacy

The Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice (Latin=For the Church and the Pope) medal is an award of the Roman Catholic Church. It is also known as the "Cross of Honor". The medal was instituted by Pope Leo XIII in memory of his golden sacerdotal jubilee. It is currently given for distinguished service to the church by lay people and the religious. It is the highest medal that can be awarded to the laity and the religious by the papacy. This year it was awarded to Sr. Mary Vas. On June 21 2014, a Mass of thanksgiving was celebrated by His Excellency Archbishop Salvatore Pennacchio and concelebrated by Rev. Msgr. Romanus Mbena, Rev. Msgr. Marco Sprizzi, Rev. Fr. Dr. Charles Vas, (Brother of Sr. Mary Vas and Director of Sangeet Abhinay Academy, Mumbai) and Rev. Fr. Royal Anthony (Education Director Catholic Diocese of Bareilly) at the Chapel of the Nunciature New Delhi. By the act of decree and medal, "The Holy See has recognized her extraordinary service to the Church and her generosity of mind and heart in sharing her many gifts and talents to the Nunciature for 23 long years".



Visitors at Bishop's House

- Sr. Mary Celine SSpS from Mumbai
- Sr. Pushpa Kujur SSpS from Haflong
- Sr. Bernedette SSPS from Haflong
- Ruth Lowney and Carmel Hughes from Ireland