



DIOCESE OF AGARTALA

Lead Us Onward

Link

Agartala Diocesan News letter

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Moving Onward



Brenda, a hiker, was almost halfway to the top of the tremendous granite cliff. She was standing on a ledge where she was taking a breather during this, her first rock climb. As she rested there, the safety rope snapped against her eye and knocked out her contact lens. She panicked. 'Here I am on a rock ledge, hundreds of feet from the bottom and hundreds of feet to the top of this cliff, and now my sight is blurry.' She looked and looked, hoping that somehow it had landed on the ledge. But it just wasn't there. She felt the panic rising in her, so she began praying. She prayed for calm, and she prayed that she may find her contact lens. When she got to the top, a friend examined her eye and her clothing for the lens, but it was not to be found. Although she was calm now that she was at the top, she was

saddened because she could not clearly see across the range of mountains. She prayed, 'Oh God You can see all these mountains. You know every stone and leaf, and You know exactly where my contact lens is. Please help me.' A little later, another set of hikers reached the top. One of them shouted out, 'Anybody lost a contact lens?' Well, that would be startling enough, but you know why the climber saw it? An ant was moving slowly across a twig on the face of the rock, carrying it! The story doesn't end there. Brenda's father is a cartoonist. When she told him the incredible story of the ant, the prayer, and the contact lens, he drew a cartoon of an ant lugging that contact lens with the caption, 'God I don't know why You want me to carry this thing. I can't eat it, and it's awfully heavy. But if this is what You want me to do, I'll carry it for You.' I chanced reading this story by Angel Selvaraj and I said to myself, "how

Pastor's Corner



true; this is about me!" When I look back at the 23 years that have gone by since I was appointed first Bishop of this Diocese in 1996, especially the early years, there were many times when I said, "God, I don't know why You want me to carry this load. I cannot see much good in it and it's awfully heavy. But, if You want me to carry it, I will". Today with my own life's experiences I can say that God doesn't call the Qualified but Qualifies those He calls. He has given me the hope and courage and strength to prod along and move onward!

+Lumen, CSC

Disturbing Directions Editorial



We have commenced preparations for the Silver Jubilee of our Diocese. The motto of the 2021 event, "Rejoice with gratitude and renew with hope" aptly sums up the spirit behind the celebrations. There is much, indeed, to rejoice and be thankful for and also hope for. Various programs and activities of the preparation phase will, we hope, dwell at length on all those blessings and hopes. Eminent among them, the episcopacy of our Bishop, as old as the Diocese itself! Could this become an occasion for us to examine the extent to which the Church influences the society? What impact does the church have on the public life of

the people? Some public life was on display in these pre-election days in some rural areas of the State. And for sure, much of it did not look very appealing - defections, defamations, betrayals, treachery and numerous attempts on lives of people, many of which would have been fatal even. Can we as the

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We pledge our closeness and solidarity with Sri Lanka after the deadly terrorist attacks on Easter Sunday. We join Cardinal Oswald Gracias, the President of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI), in his sentiments: "The Church in India is deeply saddened and pained by the attacks. We offer our prayerful solidarity with the families of the victims and the survivors of the church bombings. We pray to the Risen Jesus for peace."



LINK remembers our dear Bishop on 26th May and offers wishes and prayers for his Episcopal Ministry.

KOKBOROK COURSE FOR CLERGY AND RELIGIOUS:

Begins on 27 May 2019 at 9.00am and ends on 12 June at 3.00pm
Place: Don Bosco Peace Centre, Agartala
Class Timing: 9.00am to 4.00pm. For Registration contact: 9436126649



church excuse ourselves because like it or not, the Church, all churches together, holds sway over only a meager percentage of the community, and chances are the unruly elements belong outside our fold? The thought has neatness although its veracity might well be questioned.

"Puila Jati, Ulo Party' (race first, party later) was a slogan heard often in the State, prior to the elections, - a slogan that seemed to touch a chord in the hearts of many an indigenous person. On closer look, one finds that the slogan far from being extraordinarily visionary or revolutionary, merely articulates with astonishing clarity the earnest desire of everyone, especially the indigenous population of Tripura.

Even while conceding that clarity and simplicity of language has an appeal, it must be recognized that for all its clarity, the magnetic pull of even 'Puila Jati, Ulo Party' seemed ineffectual in many a pocket in the rural areas where large number of people got beaten, bruised, and battered by adherents of the same 'Jati' but different party. Does it not demonstrate that 'Jati', simply does not deserve to hold primacy of place in the scheme of things!

How we wish that as a community we had discovered it is "Puila Kaitor, ulo Jati, teibo ulo party" (*first God, then race, and then party!*) At the risk of sounding trifle pessimistic, let's ask, in reality, why is the Church a non-factor in the lives of people? We could consider this in our run-up to the Jubilee. In the words of Pope Francis, "Perhaps the church appears too weak, perhaps too distant from their needs, perhaps too poor to respond to their concerns, perhaps too cold, perhaps too caught up with itself, perhaps a prisoner of its own rigid formulas; perhaps the world seems to have made the church a relic of the past, unfit for new questions; perhaps the church could speak to people in their infancy but not to those come of age."

PS: Cannot conclude this write-up without whispering a prayer for our brothers and sisters of Sri Lanka - those whom the violence engulfed and those left to suffer the pain. Lord, have mercy.

J. Pulinthanath, SDB

MOHARPARA PARISH

Zonal Lenten Retreat

Moharpara Parish conducted three days Zonal Lenten Retreat for all the four Zones namely, Moharpara, Twithampui, Twidu and Ampi respectively. The Preachers were Frs. Devadoss CSC, Fr. Paul CR CSC, Mr. Manoranjan Debbarma and Team from AICU.

The participants were able to experience God's unconditional and forgiving love through the Sacraments. The Word of God strengthened their faith and renewed their commitment. This was a first venture to organize Retreat at the Zonal level. The faithful participated actively and responded positively.

Holy Week Service



The Holy week Liturgy was meaningful as people participated actively and prayerfully. Palm Sunday and Good Friday services were organized at Zonal level. However, for the Easter Vigil service a few nearby *mothas* were combined and gathered in one

center. All the Holy Week services were possible due to the availability and willingness of Frs. Valerian CSC, Maria Raj CSC, Tarun CSC, Jeevan SVD, and Benny CSC. Thanks to all the Priests for their gracious presence and assistance during the Holy Week.

Fr. Arbok, CSC

KATHALCHERRA PARISH

Renewal and Retreat

To experience the unconditional love of the Lord and to prepare worthily to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Kathalcherra Parish organized 6 days Retreat from April 1st to 7th.

In the first four days Fr Paul C.R. led the people towards Jesus in four different Villages. These were the days of blessing and grace as the people prepared themselves for the final day of the Retreat. The final two days we had Brother Ian Louis D' Cruz from Kolkata to open the Treasures of God's Love. On 6th April the Youth from different Villages gathered for a day long Retreat and were enriched with God's Word. On 7th April over 500 parishioners gathered to listen to the Word of God. It was a day of coming back to the Lord and many experienced healing and power of the Lord in their lives. We were fortunate to have Mr. Rajib who made these days lively through his music and singing.

Sr. Prema, BS

DEPACHERRA PARISH

Inauguration and Blessing of new Church and send off to Fr. Prasad Rao

Christ the King Parish at Depacherra made 31st March as a memorable day. Under the leadership of Fr. Prasad the new Parish Church whose construction he supervised, was blessed and inaugurated by Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, in the presence of Fr. Lancy, CSC, the Vicar General, Fr. Simon, CSC, the Provincial, and a large number of Priests, Religious and lay faithful. The inauguration and blessing ceremony ended with a





fellowship meal. On the previous evening all the 29 *Mothas* joined for a colorful felicitation and a fitting memorable farewell to Fr. Prasad who had completed 10 years in Depacherra, for his contributions to this Mission.

A fitting Farewell

Holy Cross High School and the Holy Cross Boys and Girls Hostels gave Fr. Prasad a fitting and memorable Farewell on 28th March. He was the former Principal and the Director of the then undivided Hostels. The Teachers and Children showered Fr. Prasad with gifts and flowers. A meaningful thanksgiving Holy Eucharist was offered by Fr. Prasad which was followed by heart touching farewell songs and dances by the grateful students.

Fr. Antony Balan

BODHJUNGNAGAR PARISH Popular Mission Retreat

Keeping the words of Mk. 16:15 "Go to the whole world and proclaim the good news to the

entire creation" St. Andre Parish structured the Popular Mission Retreat from 12th March to 10th April, covering 23 *mothas* under the Parish. Through the Retreat all the 23 sub-stations and Catholic families of our Parish were visited and prayed for. The following is the model of the Popular Mission



Retreat: in the morning hours, Priests visited each house, prayed in their homes and invited the faithful to the Retreat in their Village Chapel in the afternoon from 3 o'clock. We had Praise and Worship, Preaching of the Word of God, Inner healing Adoration, Confession, and concluded with the Holy Eucharist. We had a Team of four Priests, two Sisters and two Catechists. Special thanks to Vincentian Fathers from Mariamnagar Parish who had helped us during the Retreat. The Popular Mission Retreat was introduced in the Diocese for the first time. It was a great experience and spiritual renewal for the faithful during the Season of Lent.

Youth Retreat

Observing the 'World Youth Day' a Charismatic Youth Retreat was held on 13th and 14th April at Tamakari, a

substation of our Parish. 80 Youths participated and gained spiritual strength and prepared themselves to enter into Holy Week. The theme of the Retreat was "Youth, Bear Witness to Jesus" translated into the local Kokborok language as 'Youthrok, Jisuni saki wngdhi'. The Retreat was guided by three Members of the Diocesan Youth Commission, namely Mr. Sumanto, Ms. Sara and Mr. Thomas along with the Parish Priest Fr. Binoy John, CSC, Assistant Priest Fr. Amalraj, and Catechist Anando Debbarma, the PYA. The Retreat focused on



Reading the Word of God and sharing it. Bible-Quiz, Action Songs, Praise and Worship and Adoration were held. The following day, Palm Sunday, the holy Mass was solemnized by the active participation of the Youth and their singing. After Mass, there was Group discussion and Reporting by each substation. A Plan is envisaged for a Youth Program in 2019.

Fr. Amalraj

Diocese News Nuggets

Day of Fasting and Prayer for smooth Elections

Seventy-two hours 'Fast and Prayer' was conducted by the United Ecumenical Forum of Tripura from 6pm on 2nd April to 8pm on 5th April. It was held at Capital Baptist Church Nandannagar, Agartala. It was part of a National level Fast and Prayer for free and fair Elections. Over 540 Groups gathered in prayer on the same dates and time all over the country covering all the States and Union Territories. In Agartala the 72 hours Prayer was organized in 12 segments of 6 hours each. Each segment consisted of two Groups praying earnestly for the intentions

of our great Nation India. There was much enthusiasm among the groups and as many as 22 groups participated. This was the first of its kind in our country. The Catholic community was well represented with over 70 people participating on 4th April night 9pm to 12 midnight. Fr. Abraham VC and Fr. Philip VC animated the Prayer Service. It was a great witness and the Organizers were well pleased with the inspiring participation of the Catholic community. Most Rev. Bishop Lumen CSC, also found time to be present and pray for our country. It was a great act of solidarity from the part of our beloved Bishop Lumen. I was privileged to be present at the

Inauguration, for our segment of Prayer, and at the closing ceremony. It was truly an experience of unity and fraternity in the name of Jesus Christ. *Fr. Shaji M. L., CSC*

Pastoral Meeting, Chrism Mass and Inauguration of Jubilee 3-Year Preparations

The annual Pastoral Meeting was held at Bishop's House on 16th April. The first part of the Meet was the reporting Session during which Bishop Lumen, Fr. Sunny and Fr. Lawrence presented the



Report of the Diocese, Parish Reports and Commission Reports, respectively. In addition to reporting on the various events and activities of the Diocese our Bishop also reported his activities as Chairman

of Caritas India. Next Fr. Sunny, SDB, presented the consolidated Parish Reports and future plans. Next Fr. Lawrence presented the compiled reports of the various Commissions, highlighting the Meetings, Activities, Challenges, Plans and Possibilities of each Commission.

The Second Session was the Diocesan Pastoral Plan by our Resource Persons Fr. Hector SJ and Fr. Melvil SJ. The work begun one year ago was presented. Then in groups everyone had to study and amend the DPP pointers which were put out on a handout. After the group work we had reporting and editing and making of the first Draft. The Members participated with keen interest and satisfaction. The day ended with a sincere thanks to Frs. Hector and Melvil for their enormous contribution in the making of the DPP, which will now get its final shape before it is promulgated in the Diocese.

The Pastoral Meet was followed by the solemn celebration of Chrism Mass at the Cathedral Church. Many lay faithful and all the Priests and Religious in the Diocese gathered to attend the Chrism Mass, during which the Priests renewed their Vows and Holy Oils were blessed. Soon after the Mass, Fr. Shaji CSC, the Convener for the Jubilee Committee, invited the Bishop to inaugurate the Jubilee Year Logo by switching on a light.

Fr. Lawrence Darlong



Brain Storming Sessions with Women Entrepreneurs

On 27th March JUST organized a "Brain Storming Session" with a Women Entrepreneurs from different Districts of Tripura. 36 SHGs Members participated. The Resource Persons were Mr. Sandip Bandhapadaya and Mr. Prasanta Debnath (MBA). Mr. Sandip shared on how to become successful Entrepreneurs, how to develop and how to execute



the plan for achieving the target. He also spoke about the concepts of market which are: 1. Production concepts; 2. Sales concepts; and 3. Marketing concepts. Mr. Prasanta Debnath (MBA), who is specialized in Mushroom cultivation shared about the health benefits of Mushroom and about some famous mushroom cultivation in Tripura like, oyster mushroom, button mushroom, milky mushroom, and paddy straw mushroom. After the Training Fr. Jeevan SVD, Director of JUST, gave a motivational speech and evaluated the training and ended by making an Action Plan with activities to be taken by the SHGs, time line and responsible person for the activity.

Kissan Mela 2019

JUST Organized Kisan Mela on 29th March 2019 with the Famer's Clubs at Borkathal Boys Hostel ground under Hezamara R.D. Block. 160 Farmers participated and showcased their organic products. Bishop Lumen Monteiro, Chairman of JUST and Caritas India was the Chief



Guest. Dr. Pawan Kaushik Regional Manager of FRCLE was the Guest of Honour. The Special Guests were Dr. Gulab Singh Yadav and Dr. Anup Das from ICAR. The program began with words of welcome by Fr. Jeevan Kennady SVD, Director of JUST. This was followed by an Overview of the Project by Mr. Robert Lushai, Coordinator. Over 200 people came to the Mela and purchased organic products. The Farmers had put up 20 Stalls where they displayed and showcased their organic agricultural products. The Mela was an opportunity for the Farmers to sell their produce as well as to get linked with the market. Over 90% of the products brought by the Farmers were sold successfully.

Mr. Cyril Darlong

Bishop's Program for May 2019

- 01: Diocesan Consulters Meet
Clergy Meet, Agartala
- 03: Mass at Sacred Heart, Lembucherra
- 04: Silver Jubilee of Sr. Kumudini, AC
- 05: Pastoral Program, Mariamnagar
- 05-11: Caritas India GB Meet, Bengaluru
Standing Committee Meet, Bengaluru
- 12: Parish Feast, Kathalcherra
- 13-15: CSC Sisters Chapter, Shillong
- 17: FCC Convent Blessing, Harina
- 19: Dograi Chapel Blessing, Bodhjunnagar Parish
Auxilium Convent Blessing, Nandanagar
- 22-29: Caritas *Internationalis* General Assembly, Rome

Our Distinguished Visitors

- Mr. Charles, JY National Coordinator
- Mr. Scaria, JY National Campus Ministry
- Mr. Akhil, JY Kerala Campus Coordinator
- Frs. Jenson, Rajesh & Maxim from Mangalore Diocese
- Fr. Melvil SJ Provincial from Guwahati & Fr. Hector SJ
- Fr. Norbert Menezes SJ from Patna