

Pastor's Corner

August 15 Two Important Festivals



The 15th of August makes me nostalgic--as a citizen and as a believer! It is the day when the Catholic Church commemorates the Assumption of Mother Mary, a tradition present since the 6th century, and in 1950 Pope Pius XII emphatically declared that "the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory."

The other is India's becoming independent from British rule. At midnight in 1947 Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru unfurled the National Flag at the red Fort to mark the freedom of our country with these words, "At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom."



While India has made rapid strides especially on the economic front (India is the world's third-largest economy on purchasing power parity), many social problems continue to haunt us. According to Viraj Mehta, Director and head of India and South Asia, India faces seven key challenges:

Education and Skills-- India has 487 million workers, but more than two-thirds of Indian employers report that they struggle to find workers with the right skills.

Urbanization-- More than one-third of Indians live in cities. Meeting their needs while safeguarding the environment will require innovative models of urban development.

Health-- India faces the double burden of infectious diseases and a dramatic rise in non-communicable diseases, now estimated to account for more than half of all deaths.

Sanitation-- Many health challenges are linked to sanitation. P.M. Modi has introduced 'swachh bharat'. But the challenge is to identify and implement the right way to provide 1.2 billion Indians with a clean environment!

Gender-- There is a need for India to closely examine the norms that allow violence and a broader pattern of gender discrimination to continue.

Water-- India's large population places a severe strain on its natural resources, and most of its water sources are contaminated by sewage and agricultural run-off.

Transparency-- The vast majority of Indians say transparency is their number one concern. Transparency issues are not just a daily irritation; they are a drag on the whole economy, hampering competitiveness, growth and development."

There are other challenges like communal disharmony, human trafficking, cross border terrorism, vigilantism, environmental degradation, etc.; the list goes on. Challenges of this complexity and magnitude cannot be solved by governments alone; they require a collaborative approach involving business and political leaders, members of civil society and academia, youth groups and social entrepreneurs, YOU and ME. On this Independence Day let us, in the words of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru "take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity." +Lumen, CSC

Editorial

Some Backyard Matters



It is a known fact that the Catholic institutions in Tripura, without being exclusivist, cater to the welfare of the indigenous people mostly. The Church has its reasons for it and by and large, no one has serious problems with that. Except for a few Agartala schools and their cosmopolitan clientele, all Church institutions and service centres are located in tribal areas. Location is not everything but it is a message, a statement about one's preference and intent.



The contribution that Church, through its educational and other institutions, makes to the tribal groups in Tripura is perhaps not as voluminous as it is elsewhere; but they are definitely very evident and unambiguous. People across social and ethnic divides acknowledge its contribution in the field of education in a major way, and to a lesser extent, its health care and social uplift efforts.

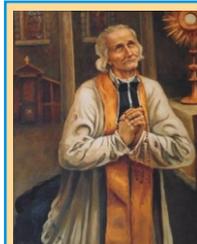
The Church in Tripura has not only been unabashedly pro tribal, but it has also become quite pronouncedly a 'tribal Church sans tribalism' in the sense that most of its members are tribesmen, emanate a tribal fragrance and yet strive to be Catholic. With the passage of years the sights and sounds that adorn our services are becoming increasingly tribal. Perhaps, rightly so.

In such an emerging scenario, one assumes there is more than mere cordiality and civility between those that together constitute the Church laity, religious, clergy. One assumes there is heartfelt relationship, ties made strong by Faith.

With a relationship of that sort supposedly in place, how can one not be surprised at the intolerance and aggression that some member individuals display towards Christian or Catholic Institutions? How is it that in times of crisis in an institution, the chief antagonists are, in some instances at least, 'our own' people? (*I keep qualifying these near rhetorical questions with 'some', 'few', lest I be blamed for generalizing*). Often this is more disturbing than the very problem that engenders it.

It surely does make us think. Where, who, what has gone wrong?

J. Pulinthanath, SDB



LINK wishes its Readers Happy Pastors Day on August 4, the Feast Day of St. John Mary Vianney.



LINK wishes everyone Happy Independence Day and Happy Feast of our Lady of the Assumption on August 15.

KHUMULWNG PARISH Farewell & Welcome to Priests



June was an important day for St. Alphonsa Parish and Diocesan Minor Seminary at Champaknagar. Two events- farewell of Fr. Roshan Kujur SVD and welcome of Fr. Stany Periera SVD- took place simultaneously. The parishioners and the seminarians felicitated them with lovely cultural items- singing, dance and skit. Farewell of Fr. Roshan brought sadness but welcome to Fr. Stany brought joy and happiness to the congregation. The parishioners and seminarians expressed their heartfelt gratitude and thankfulness to Fr. Roshan for his commitment and dedication to the parish and the Minor Seminary. Fr. Stany was welcomed wholeheartedly to the Parish and the Seminary. The joyful occasion ended with fellowship lunch in the parish premises. *Fr. Arun Minj SVD*

Reach to Enrich - Jeevadhara Minor Seminary



Family feast is a unique celebration of every formation house. It was time for the community members to come together as a family and celebrate the joy of being in a community and acknowledge the talents, skills, potentialities and capabilities and foster a sense of

oneness among the members. We at Jeevadhara Minor Seminary community celebrated the family feast on 22nd and 23rd of June with the motto "Reach to Enrich". To make the celebration more colourful and enriching we divided the community in to two groups namely St. Alphonsa and St. John Maria Vianney. There were ample opportunities for the Seminarians to unleash their hidden talents and capabilities, sharing their innovative ideas and strategies to emerge as winners in the competitions. Everyone got enough chances to come forward and explore their talents and abilities. The meticulous planning and hard work of Fr. Rector and the Staff kept everyone preoccupied and in a spirit of healthy competition throughout the event. *Fr. Stany Pereira, SVD*

TUIKARMAW PARISH Village Chapel Feasts

During the months of June and July three village communities-- Pothicherry, Laximcherra and Bortoli celebrated their village feasts respectively, after the three patron saints. Prior to the Feast Day celebrations the faithful were prepared spiritually the three days of Novenas and special Adoration followed by Charismatic Inner Healing prayer service was conducted. The faithful experienced the special blessings of God during these days of preparation in view of their Feast. Fr. Paul CR, CSC the Parochial Administrator of the Parish animated the Charismatic Inner healing Prayer in these villages. New Catholics in these villages received Baptism. Every village community organized competitions for children and youth. At the end of every feast day celebrations there was festive meal served for all.

Leadership training Seminar

50 Parish Leaders from all the villages gathered at the parish Centre on July 16 for a daylong Seminar on Leadership in the local Church. Fr. Cyprian Pinto SVD was the Resource Person.

Topics like early church leadership, Biblical leadership, and Christian vocation to lead a value based life was discussed. The Leaders were asked to talk about their leadership role and responsibilities in their local communities. At the end of the training an Action Plan was discussed and agreed upon that all Leaders would take utmost interest in organizing and helping the Priests to animate the faithful pastorally in the Parish.

Late Ananda Sing Jamatia Football Tournament

To mark the third death anniversary of late Mr. Ananda Sing Jamatia, St. Mary's Parish Tuikarmaw organized Football Tournament for the Catholic Youth of the Parish. Eight teams participated in the Tournament which began on 15th July 2017. Ms. Alponsa Jamatia daughter of late Mr. Ananda Sing inaugurated the Tournament. Late Mr. Ananda Sing Jamatia who was the Hostel Warden and the Office Staff of Holy Cross Mission, Tuikarmaw, was a very responsible and generous person and was a great asset to Tuikarmaw mission. *Fr. Alfred, CSC*

AMBASSA PARISH Women's Annual Sabha



Women of Ambassa Parish organized Women's Annual Sabha at Village Bagmara on 24th and 25th June. There were 200 participants from various villages of the Parish. The program began with the lighting of the lamp by the Resource Person and Women leaders of different *mondolis*. Mrs. Lata Marak Women President of Ambassa Parish welcomed the Resource Persons and all the participants. Women from different villages presented their Annual Reports. Sr. Susheela

Xess SSpS was invited by the Women of the Parish. There were Input Sessions on various topics like Family devotion to Mother Mary; Women empowerment; Family, Church and Society; Women's role in the family, and the great Women in the Bible. There were also Sessions on herbal medicines. Resource persons for the programme were Sr. Susheela, Sr. Cecilia and Fr. Ivan. The programme ended with the solemn thanksgiving holy Eucharist. Congratulations to the local women who took lead to bring about a change in the family and society. *Mrs. Lata Marak*

KATHALCHERRA PARISH Tripple Celebration



1. The first Sunday of July witnessed triple celebration intermingled with sadness and joy. The Parish Maria Sangha made the priests to feel great and elated as they celebrated Fathers' Day. They were lead in procession to the altar for the Eucharistic banquet. Prior to this Mr. Zonuna Darlong spoke on the importance of Fathers Day.

2. The Parish welcomed four religious Sisters on this day Srs. Sapientia, Christine, Jyoti and Charan as they have taken their respective responsibility and serve in the Parish.

3. Then came the farewell of Fr. Ishwar, CSC, and everyone's heart was sad and heavy. On behalf of the parish Mr. Lokhoram Reang voiced his sentiments for the service and respect earned by Fr. Ishwar from Parishioners. Mr. John from KCYM, Mrs. Sadhana from Maria Sangha and Fr. Lancy too enunciated their affection for the person of Fr. Ishwar, who in turn expressed his gratitude and admiration for the love, joy and oneness he experienced in the Parish. *Sr. Prema Masquith BS*

Installation and Blessing of first X-Ray Machine at St. Joseph Hospital, Agartala



"It might take a year, it might take a day but what is meant to be will always find its way." And indeed it has found its way on 5th July 2017. Our joy is elated and exhilarated as a new page has been marked at St. Joseph Hospital with the installation of a new X-Ray machine. We were greatly honored and privileged to have our dear Bishop Lumen with us to bless the X-Ray machine and reinforce us with his inspiring

words. We also started the ECG which will be a great and immediate help for the better treatment. *Sr. Juby, SJA*

West Zone SCC Coordinators' Seminar & Evaluation

The 9th West Zone SCC Seminar, Evaluation and Planning was held at Mandwi Parish on 8th July. There were 18 Coordinators along with 4 Priests and one Sister who participated. The Seminar began with Bible enthronement, veneration and sharing. The Seminar was guided by Fr. Cyprian SVD, explaining the meaning of welcoming the Lord, the Word of God and the 7 Steps of Bible Sharing. The Coordinators participated in the Seminar and shared the Word of God with great interest. 'New wine in new wineskins' was the life word and 'Forming of new SCC Units' in all the parishes was the action plan of the SCC. Some observed that SCC has gone weaker due to the lack of interest and non-participation of men, women and youth. *Fr. Arun Minj, SVD*



JUST News Roundup

Traditional Medicines



In the month of June JUST conducted a series of training programs on preparation of traditional medicines under FARM NE-II Project assisted by Caritas India. The aim of the Training was to revive the traditional knowledge of traditional medicines and help the traditional health practitioners to increase their practice and also take it as a profession and means of livelihood for Income Generation. Mr. Monoranjan

Debbarma was the Resource Person who demonstrated the preparation of different types of medicines for different diseases. The Trainings were conducted at 15 target Villages under the Project. Along with preparation of medicines the Resource Person also shared about their usefulness. The Trainings were done successfully and many were interested to learn.

Health Camp



Under IMCP-3 Project assisted by Caritas India, JUST organized 3 consecutive Health Camps at Tamarai Para, Champarai Para and Budhajoy Para under Ganganagar R.D Block. The Health Camps were led by Mr. Vincent Debbarma, Mr. Sumit Debnath and Mr. Chandan Ravi Das. The other officials who took part in the Camp were Mr. Ajit Sharma, CMO Office, Ambassa and Dr. Philip Reang. About 245 patients came for the Health Camps and were diagnosed and given free medicines. About 33

RDTs were tested during the Health Camps of which 5 Pf and 2 Pv cases were detected and treated with ACT, CQ and PQ. After the Health Camps the Field Supervisors and Community Health Volunteers were told to keep doing follow up till the detected patients were completely well. *Mr. Vincent Debbarma*

Our Readers Views

Thank you Bishop for the update on the Diocese through LINK. May God bless you and your ministry. *Fr. Manjaly, Shillong*
Thank you Bishop for the newsletter.

Fr. VM Thomas, SDB, Guwahati

You are amazing. Hearty Congratulations for your determination and dedication in bringing out the Diocesan Newsletter on the first of every month with out fail for the last many years. May God continue to bless your efforts in the Diocese. *Fr. Emmanuel, CSC, Agartala*

Thanks for linking me with the Diocesan Link.

Cyprian, SVD, Agartala

Thanks for the Link. It's always on time to link us with the Diocese. *Sr Prema, BS, Kathalcherra*

Thanks for the LINK. I was very touched reading the Pastor's Corner, dwelling on the real meaning and purpose of our life. Thanks for reminding hundreds of your LINK readers, including me, on this very essential aspect of our life and inspiring us to look at our lives from God's plan for us.

Fr. Jolly, Delhi

National News Roundup

India's 14th President Mr. Ram Nath Kovind

At a glittering ceremony in the Central Hall of Parliament Delhi, Mr. Ram Nath Kovind was sworn in as the 14th President of India on July 25, 2017. He is the second Dalit President after Mr. K.R. Narayanan to hold the nation's highest office. In his speech after being sworn in he said, *"I'm honored to be sworn in as the 14th President of India. I would be carrying out my responsibilities with all humility... I will stand and represent all 125 crore fellow Indians. I understand the massive responsibility that this is... We are a country of great diversity, yet have shown that unity is the way forward."* The country looks at the new President with great expectation! Let us pray for our new President. +*Lumen, CSC*



Pope's Twitter Account: More than 35M Subscribers; Instagram exceeds 4M followers

Pope Francis' Twitter account in nine languages, now has more than 35 million subscribers, reports Vatican Radio. It has seen a sharp rise in the last month, especially in English (with more than 11 million subscribers). The @Pontifex account, opened by Pope Benedict XVI on Dec. 3, 2012, is among the most followed in the world and the one that records the most retweets. Since March 19, 2015, Pope Francis is also present on Instagram with the account @Franciscus which has recently exceeded 4 million subscribers. "The Pope's ability to fuel public debate on complex issues is of great interest," says Professor Paolo Peverini, lecturer in semiotics at the LUISS Guido Carli University and consultant to the Vatican's Secretariat for Communication. "In my opinion," says the professor, "we should especially emphasize the growth that characterizes the Instagram account, @Franciscus, which involves young users. This is the "capacity of Pope Francis," the Italian professor underscored, to be "heard" by users who a few years ago, may have been a bit distant from the Church. zenit.org/deborahcastellano-lubov

Pope names new Secretary to Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

Pope Francis nominated Bishop Giacomo Morandi as Secretary, the "number 2," of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on July 18, 2017. The Italian prelate, age 51, was until now, the undersecretary (No. 3) of the same Dicastery since October 2015. Bishop Morandi, who also receives the dignity of Archbishop with this appointment, takes the former post of Spanish Jesuit Monsignor Luis Francisco Ladaria Ferrer, who was appointed Prefect of the Congregation on July 1. After various parish services, he was appointed Episcopal Vicar for catechesis, evangelization, culture, then archpriest of the Cathedral Chapter and finally Vicar general of the Archdiocese of Modena-Nonantola. The new Secretary of the CDF also has served as Professor of Scripture and of patristic exegesis in Modena and Rome.

zenit.org/deborahcastellano-lubov

Bishop's Program for August 2017

- 01: Clergy Meet, Agartala
- 03: Dupcherra Chapel Blessing under Mariamnagar Parish
- 04: Vianney Day Celebrations
- 05: Auxilium Foundation Day, Agartala
- 05-06: Pastoral Visit, Gandacherra Parish
- 10: Catechists Program, Champaknagar FMA New beginning, Mandwi
- 11: JUST GB Meet & AGM
- 12: Holy Cross College Graduation Day, Agartala
- 12-13: Hatipocha Chapel Blessing under Tuikarmaw Parish
- 14: ADPC Meet, Agartala
- 15-24: Caritas India Field Visit Gujarat & Maharashtra
- 27: Confirmations, SFX Cathedral Agartala

Our Distinguished Visitors

- CSC Srs. Pushpa & Shikha from Bangladesh
- Fr. Kakkattupillil, VC Provincial Superior from Kerala
- Fr. Mundackattu, VC Vice Provincial from Kerala
- Sr. Taurina Vaz, FMM Provincial Superior from Delhi
- FMM Councillors Srs. Sophia, Kiran, Molly & Rosily
- Sr. Paula FSM General Councillor from Rome
- FMM Provincial Councillors Srs. Regina & Valsa