

The Ripple Effect



In a study, researchers positioned themselves across from a pay phone and studied people who made phone calls. One of the first things they discovered was that almost everyone who makes a call looks in the coin return to see if any coins happen to be there. The behavior gave the researchers an idea. The next day they randomly put coins in the coin return slot so that some of the people who used the phone actually did discover money. The researchers then hired a young woman, with an armful of books, to walk by the phone at the exact moment that the subjects

were hanging up. As the woman walked by with her arms full of books, she pretended to stumble and drop them on the ground. Astonishingly, the researchers observed that the people who found money in the slot return were four times more likely to stop and help the woman pick the books than the people who found no money in the return slot. They concluded that when we feel good, we tend to do good, which also means that the helping impulse is transferrable. In other words, if you do something good for another person, he or she is more likely to do something nice for someone else, causing a small gesture to result in a giant ripple effect. *William Bausch in '40 More Seasonal Homilies'*

This illustrates what it means to be

a light-bearer, a person transformed by the Light! S/he will start a giant ripple that will change the world...and let it begin with me and you, and let it begin today!



Pastor's Corner

+Lumen, CSC

CONGRATULATIONS and PRAYERS



On behalf of the Clergy, Religious and Laity of the Diocese of Agartala, I would like to congratulate his Lordship Bishop Lumen Monteiro at his election as Chairman of Caritas India, the social wing of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, for a second term. May God continue to give him the necessary strength to fulfill his double responsibility. We assure him our prayerful support, understanding and cooperation. (Fr. Hormis John, CSC, Vicar General)

The 'Sunrise Advantage'



There was a time, not very long time ago, when those who went out of the State for study or work necessarily belonged to the affluent class. Not anymore. In the past few years numerous young people from poor and middle class families have gone out of the State to other cities in India and have taken up various jobs there. The skill training projects of the Government that are being implemented at many places in the State, including some of our institutions, have been primarily responsible for this.



This program has further depleted an already sparse population of rural Tripura, but no one is complaining because its positive bearing on the family, the village and even the society is beginning to show. It's a phenomenon, the consequences of which, it would be gross injustice to

describe merely in terms of the obvious financial advantage it brings. This becomes clear when one listens to youngsters who come home for a few days of well-deserved holidays after having spent a couple of years at a stretch in their workstations.

One of the things they unfailingly mention is how they are appalled at the laidback lifestyle here in their own home state, which until a few years before, they subscribed to. Here back home, they note, despite the early sunrise, it takes such a long time for life to begin, for vehicles to begin to ply, for shops to open shutters, for the newspaper to arrive, for breakfast to be available at eateries.

There is certainly something to think about here. When forty million people that inhabit Northeast India allow just an hour to go unused due to whatever the reason, it adds up to forty million hours gone unused. It is a mystery how

even those that were in our Boarding houses and hostels for long periods of time, despite rising early all those years, have not made it a part of their system and schedule.

One earnestly hopes it is not so with all other things which were taught in our schools and hostels. Whatever that, this is something perhaps that all of us, especially those that run boarding and hostels, ought to take note of. We need to stop squandering away the morning advantage.

Today there is considerable talk about how NE specific interventions like the 'Act East' Policy can give unprecedented impetus to development in the region. 'The Sunrise Advantage' ought to figure in the package. Without plans to make better use of the beginning hours of the day that are generally characterized by an unequalled serenity and calm, all talks of 'the North East to the fore' have a hollow ring to it. **J. Pulinthanath, SDB**

Pilgrims of Mercy at the Holy Door

The last one month saw a number of our faithful making many sacrifices



in order to reach the 'Fountain of Mercy' and receive the forgiveness from Him. The one day Animation Programme on 23rd February, 2016, 'Mercy for those in prison', organized by the Prison Ministry Team led by Fr. Ronald SDB was a beautiful experience with the Salesian Pre-Novices enlivening the day with their many performances.

Entering the Holy Door, having some fruitful animation, making a good Confession, adoring the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and receiving Him in Holy Communion were an integral part of every pilgrimage made during these days. The Auxilium family consisting of the hostellers, teachers, and transport staff made the event truly memorable. The Altar servers from Gondacherra, the leaders from Depacherra, the students from Bodhjunnagar, the women from Mariamnagar, the faithful from Paharpur village in Depacherra Parish, the Salesian Cooperators with their families, all had their wonderful experiences to narrate after the pilgrimage to the Don Bosco Church at Nandannagar. A small group of Catechists of the Diocese animated by Fr. Joachim Kullu, SVD, made their pilgrimage on 2nd March. The meals were taken care of by the Don Bosco Canteen.

The Parishes of the Diocese devotedly joined the entire Church at the invitation of Pope Francis for the 24 hour Adoration. It was a beautiful experience for the thousands of the faithful who took part in their own Parishes and experienced the Mercy of God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Fr. Sunny, SDB

KUMARGHAT PARISH Annual Parish Sabha at Sonaimuri Village



Every year St. Paul's Parish community waits for the golden opportunity to come together as one family. As usual, this year too that dream was realized when the representatives from all the 16 villages of our Parish gathered at Sonaimuri village for the Annual Parish Sabha from January 29-31, 2016. There were 400 delegates from different villages present for the Sabha. Being the Jubilee Year of Mercy we chose the theme "*I desire mercy, not sacrifice*" for the Sabha. Fr. Lancy CSC was the main Resource Person who emphasized on 'New way of being the Church through SCC'. Frs. Cyprian SVD, and Jilson CSC also enlightened the gathering with their presentations.

During the Sabha the Annual Report of the Parish, of the different Commissions and of the different *mondolis* of the Parish was read. There was discussion and brief evaluation of the Report. The Report helped the participants to become aware of the progress made during the last year and also the challenges to be faced in the coming future.

With immense gratitude we acknowledge great interest that our Bishop Lumen Monteiro took to be present for two days with us,

encouraging us and intervening whenever needed. Many received first Holy Communion and the Sacrament of Confirmation. Prior to the Sabha some members were inducted into the faith community and some had their marriages rectified.

We thank the Lord almighty, Bishop Lumen, all the fathers, sisters, and lay collaborators for making this Sabha a memorable one. God bless all.

Fr. Arul J CSC

GACHIRAMPARA PARISH Blessing of Village Chapel at Khodungsei

Yet another special day for the Gachirampara Parish! On 21st of February Most Rev. Bishop Lumen blessed the chapel at Khodungsei Village near Damcherra which is one of the



substations of Gachirampara Parish. Our joy was doubled by the presence of Rev Fr. Joseph Dolphy Pais the Provincial Minister of Holy Trinity Capuchin Province of Karnataka. Fathers and Sisters from different parts of Tripura and Mizoram joined the celebration. The faithful of Khodungsei worked hard for a year for the event to become a reality. As I thank God for his blessings and graces I also thank and pray for the donor agencies, Propaganda Fidei and Missio for their kind help and support. The day was made much more colourful by the meaningful Liturgy, inspiring homily by the Bishop and the Cultural items by the parishioners. The great day came to an end with the fellowship meal organized by the faithful.

Fr. Prasanna, OFM Cap

KATHALCHERRA PARISH School Reopening

On 11th February Holy Cross Higher Secondary School Kathalcherra organized the Sports Day. The students with



colourful uniform participated in different activities exploring and exhibiting their talents. Fr. Lancy D'Souza, CSC, the Secretary of the School and Parish Priest of Good Shepherd Parish hoisted the flag of Sports Meet-2016 and declared open the Sports Day. Mr. Malsoma Darlong the Principal of Government College, Chalilengta, was the Chief Guest of the day. He is a former student of Holy Cross Higher Secondary School. In his speech he pointed out the students' negligence to learn Bengali and the difficulties they face later on especially in the work places and encouraged to study well. He motivated the students saying "You may ignore and escape from learning Bengali language but it will not ignore and escape from you. He encouraged the students to treat all subjects equally. The Sports Day was a successful event of the cademic year-2016.

Maria Sangha: A day of fast and Prayer

Simultaneously Maria Songho also organized a day of fast and prayer.



A good number of members were present and participated in the prayer service. This spiritual activity enhanced and deepened the faith of the people in Christ.

Aurvedic Doctors' Visit

On 14th March a group of Ayurvedic Doctors from Kerala visited our School to enlighten the students on right living habits such as breathing, eating, sleeping, drinking, etc.

Fr. Ishwar Happa, CSC

DEPACHERRA PARISH Divine Mercy Chapel inaugurated at Nabinpara.

Indeed, it was a joyful moment for the people of Nabinpara as their new chapel was blessed and inaugurated on 28th February 2016. It was a long awaited dream of the people to have a place of worship. With assistance from the propaganda fide and from the parish fund the chapel was built and dedicated to the Divine Mercy. Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC blessed the chapel and celebrated the

Eucharist.

The program began with the huge gathering of faithful from 5 villages at the entrance of village and received their Shepherd Bishop Lumen with ceremonial welcome and was lead to the new chapel. Bishop Lumen cut the ribbon and opened the doors of the Chapel; this was followed by a Blessing ceremony and Eucharistic celebration. About 27 faithful received the sacrament of confirmation



during the mass. Fr. Prasad, Parish Priest in his speech highlighted that Nabinpara village with 18 families was baptized by the Bishop a year ago has got a chapel by the grace of God. As we are in the year of mercy, Bishop Lumen told the gathering to remember that the chapel was named after Divine Mercy and urged them to gather daily in worship and meet the Merciful Lord. Finally, everyone participated in a fellowship meal.

Fr. Bhuban Sirkar

Family Commission

Being the Year of Mercy the Family Commission organized a Seminar and Retreat for the couples in the Diocese. It was held at Kumarghat Parish on 15-16 March 2016. Fr. Pradeep, CSsR and Team from Kolkata was animating the program. 90 people from different Parishes

attended the program. During this program Dr. Vijayan told the people that by changing our life style we can have a happy family life. He explained the importance of water in our body, sitting posture, and walking style. Then we had a training program (TOT) for the Family

Diocese News Roundup

Volunteers from 17-18 March 2016 in JUST, Agartala. 21 people from different Parishes attended the program animated by Fr. Pradeep. The expectation is that these leaders would be on the Team as trainers organised in different Parishes later on

Fr. John Bosco Lathees



Awareness of Malaria Prevention

In the month of February JUST (Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura) conducted 97 Behavior Change Communication (B C C)



activities in Dhalai and K h o w a i Districts of Tripura. 35 ' p u b l i c m i k i n g ' have been conducted of which 23 were in Dhalai and 12 in Khowai. 34 'Infotainment' activities have been conducted of which 23 were in Dhalai and 11 in Khowai. 28 Community Consultation an Message Dissemination (CCMD) have been conducted of which 22 were in Dhalai and 6 in Khowai. The

Field Supervisor and Community Health Volunteers are engaged in conducting the BCC program to create awareness on prevention and treatment process of Malaria.

Training on Conflict Resolution

In the month of February JUST conducted a series of Conflict Resolution trainings at 14 targeted Schools for the Peace Club members under Dhalai,



N o r t h , S o u t h , W e s t a n d G o m o t i Districts of Tripura.

141 participants of which 78 male

and 63 female took part in the Trainings. The Field Animators started the Programs by sharing about the Project to the new members of the Peace Clubs. The Animators also shared about the functions of Peace Clubs in different Northeastern States of India. The students were given input on different types of Conflicts and five basic ways of addressing Conflict. The Topics discussed in the Trainings were, Avoidance, Collaboration, Compromise, Competition, and Accommodation. The Peace Club members were also divided into groups and given group activities during the Sessions.

Mr. Vincent Debbarma

World News Roundup

Sr. Sally, MC, survivor of the Aden massacre, gave this chilling account to Sr. Rio, MC, on 4th March 2016:



Sisters had M a s s , breakfast as usual. As usual, Father stays back in chapel to say prayers, then to fix things around the compound.

8:00am: Said apostolate prayer and all 5 went to home. 8:30am: ISIS dressed

in blue came in, killed guard and driver. 5 young Ethiopian men (Christian) began running to tell the sisters ISIS was here to kill them. They were killed one by one. They tied them to trees, shot them in the head and smashed their heads. The Sisters ran 2 by 2 in different directions, as they have mens and ladies home. 4 working women were screaming, "Don't kill the sisters! Don't kill the sisters!" One was the

cook for 15 years. They killed them as well. They caught Sr. Judith and Sr. Reginette first, tied them up, shot them in the head and smashed their heads. When the Sisters ran in different directions, the Superior ran to the Convent to try to warn Father Tom. They caught Sr. Anselm and Sr. Marguerite, tied them, shot them in the head and smashed their heads in the sand. Meanwhile, the Superior could not get to the Convent. It is not clear how many ISIS men were there. She saw all the Sisters and helpers killed. The ISIS men were already getting to the Convent so she went into the refrigerator room, since the door was open. These ISIS men were everywhere, searching for her, as they knew there were 5. At least three times they came into the fridgerator room. She did not hide, but remained standing behind the door they never saw her. This is miraculous. Meanwhile, at the Convent, Father had heard the screaming and consumed all the Hosts. He had no time to consume the large host, so he threw the oil out of the sanctuary lamp and dissolved it in the water. A neighbor saw them put Father Tom in their car. They did not find any trace of Father anywhere. All the religious articles were smashed and destroyed Our Lady, crucifix, altar, tabernacle, lectionary stand even their prayer books and Bibles. 10:00 or 10:15am: The ISIS men finished and left. (**Mattersindia.com**)

Our Distinguished Visitors

- ◆ MC Fathers Francis Akihiro from Japan and Jayanthi Tatapudi from Andhra Pradesh
- ◆ Sr. Anita Jose, Sr. Jency Therese, FCC councillors from Kerala
- ◆ Fr Fabianus Barua, Claretian Bangalore Province
- ◆ Fr Pradeep, CSsR, Kolkata
- ◆ SCV Sisters: Philo (Asst. General), Cicily (Procurator General), Perpetua, Ancy, Maria Celine, Little Therese, from Vincentgiri Generalate, Kerala
- ◆ Fr. J. Puthenpura, CMI, President of Xavier Board of Higher Education from Bengaluru
- ◆ Sr. Nanditha, SRA, Superior General from Vienna, Austria
- ◆ Sr. Berchmans, SRA, Provincial Superior from Mumbai
- ◆ Jesuit Priests: Hector, Mickey, Francis Macwan

Bishop's Program for April 2016

- 02: First Holy Communion, Ambassa School
- 03: Toidu Golden Jubilee, Moharpara Parish
- 06-11: NE Bishops Meet, Nongstoin
- 13: Women's Day celebrations, Agartala
- 17: Parish Feast, Kathalcherra
- 19: SVD General Visitor's Visit
- 23: Education Commission Meeting
- 24: Parish Mass, Khumulwng
- 25-27: Caritas GB Meet, Delhi
- 27-29: CBCI Standing Committee Meet, Delhi
- 30-01: Pastoral Visit, Gandacherra Parish