

Pastor's Corner

God's Sense of Humor and my Response!

"If we genuinely trust scripture, our own experience, and our own sanity, we can only conclude that God has a sense of humor, and a robust and sneaky one at that", says Ron Rolheiser OMI, in his recent blog of 6th June. He continues, "A generation ago, Peter Berger wrote a remarkable little book entitled, *A Rumor of Angels*. Unlike Aquinas, Anselm, Descartes, and a number of renowned philosophers, he didn't try to "prove" the existence of God through logic and argumentation. Rather, he simply examined a number of very ordinary human experiences and pointed to what's hidden inside and behind the walls of those experiences. Now, one of the experiences Berger highlights is the experience of humor. Here's his thesis: no matter how oppressive and dire the circumstance, human beings always have the capacity to make light of it, to view it through the prism of irony and humor. For example, martyrs have joked with their executioners and, no doubt, there was some banter, sarcasm, irony, and bitter humor at times inside extermination camps. The fact that people can do this, and do in fact do it, shows that there is always something transcendent inside us, something over which no human oppression has power, something that sets us above any situation within which we find ourselves. Our sense of irony and humor manifests that something in our soul sets us above anything that can beset us.

If God not only has a sense of humor but is also the author of humor itself, then humor is an important quality within sanctity and holiness. What makes for wholeness, maturity, holiness, love, and for the kind of person you want beside you at the table, here and at the eternal one in heaven? Certainly,

you want someone who manifests the qualities that Jesus asked for in the Sermon on the Mount – along with a warm, playful, and mischievous sense of humor."

"Keeping your funny side up won't resolve all conflicts but it will prove a preventative to destructive community arguments," says Dr. Archana Bnhate. So let's try to make ourselves laugh whether we feel it or not. There are many occasions in daily life which call for laughter; and I, the undersigned, am constantly looking out for them. Above all let us learn to laugh at ourselves! As Goodman says, "it's important to take your job seriously, but take yourself lightly". Self-humor can diffuse a stressful situation, flipping it back on itself.

Incessant Rain causes Water Logging and Landslides

The incessant rains last week affected the lives of thousands in Tripura, hundreds of thousands in neighboring Assam and Meghalaya, and millions in neighboring Bangladesh. Floods and landslides in the State and waterlogging in the capital City of Agartala left us marooned. The District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) swung into action saying that it was ready to face any exigency. Our MC Sisters reached out to the marooned people with medicines and materials. Several hectares of crops have been inundated, animals have been washed away, and houses

have been under water. Landslides on the National Highway has breached the road in several places, and Tripura, which was cut off from the rest of the country, is slowly inching back to normalcy!

+Lumen, CSC



EDITORIAL

Unforeseen Sabbath Obstacles

We know that Church attendance is not everything, but we also know that it is very important to attend Church. And hence, we insist on our faithful attending the Church, especially on Sundays.

In a scenario where many only need the slightest alibi to give the Sunday Church a miss, -tuitions,



inclement weather, etc, one does well to get vocal about Sunday church, even at the risk of seeming to reduce 'honoring-the-Sabbath-commandment' to merely attending church. Granted Parish realities differ one from another and yet one would like to believe that over the years there has been a noticeable improvement in church attendance in the Diocese. Looks like it takes a while for one to get habituated to

Sunday church-going. Once it happens, thankfully the habit stays!

A couple of Youth that attended the recently held Logesong workshop, brought to the attention of the participants a dilemma connected to Church attendance many young people were struggling with. They pointed out that of late, many competitive examinations are held on Sundays. Competitive examinations are like a springboard to the future and many of their long-cherished dreams hinge on getting through competitive examinations. Sitting for these means foregoing Sunday Mass. They are by no means comfortable about it. They find themselves in a fix.

Others added that it is not just competitive examinations that are held on Sundays but Government department-related meetings too. What is more, it is mandatory for those employees concerned to attend these Sunday meetings.

Needless to say, these Sunday assignments deprive them of the Church.

In these evidently changing times, are there middle paths or alternatives that we need to explore, so that such arbitrary and insensitive steps by powers that be, need not necessarily deprive our faithful of their most important weekly worship? Perhaps an additional Mass at a time that suits those for whom it is meant? Some adjustment of the time, and perhaps, even the day, if it's required. The bottom line is to do whatever it takes to ensure that Mass is not missed during the week.

If in our parishes, both the Pastor and the faithful take daring and resolute steps in this regard, there are ways of getting around these and yet more obstacles that may come in the future, perhaps.

J. Pulinthanath, SDB

Parish News Briefs

TUIKARMAW PARISH

Adieu to Fr. Sojan CSC and Welcome to Fr. Thomas CSC



St. Mary's Parish Tuikarmaw bid adieu to Parish Priest Fr. Sojan Augustine CSC on 5th June 2022, Pentecost Sunday. Fr. Sojan who served the Parish for three and half years. Nearly 500 faithful from all the *mondolis* were present to express their gratitude to Fr. Sojan and to acknowledge his contributions for the growth of the Parish community.

During the Holy Eucharist on that day Fr. Thomas Pereira CSC was installed as the 13th Parish Priest of St. Mary's Parish, Tuikarmaw, by Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC, the first Bishop of Agartala. CBCI Deputy Secretary General Fr. Jervis D'Souza from Delhi, CSC Provincial Fr. Simon CSC and a large number of Priests concelebrated at the Mass. We wish the new Parish Priest Fr. Thomas all the best and the assurance of our prayers for his pastoral ministry. The day was meaningfully organized with felicitation programme and agape meal for all the faithful. *Fr. Renju, CSC*

AMBASSA PARISH

Green Pentecost Sunday



Ambassa (Tripura) 05 June, 2022: Holy Spirit Catholic Church in collaboration with Oisho Bani Society celebrated the Vanamahotsav (Green Sunday). Prior to this two hundred plants

were collected from the forest department nursery. Ambassa forest department was kind enough to provide us with different types of plants, such as Agor, Champa, Bamboos, Neem, and Jackfruit. Another three hundred plants of Jongcha and Jackfruit were collected from the parish nursery, which was monitored by Ambassa Forest Department. This year World Environment Day fell on Pentecost Sunday, which coincided with the parish feast of Ambassa. More than 600 people from different villages of the Parish gathered to celebrate the Feast. There were 51 children who received first Holy Communion on this day. It being the multi coloured day there was all the reason to celebrate the Green Day. More than 350 people collected the saplings to plant in the ground at their home compound. Over the years the awareness of greenery and a safe environment has become the priority for the people even though they stay in their villages. *Ivan D'Silva, SVD*



BISHRAMGANJ PARISH

Parish Patronal Feast cum Reception of Sacraments

Sacred Heart Parish, Bishramganj, celebrated its patronal feast on 12th June 2022. Bishop Lumen Monteiro, C.S.C., graced the occasion. Fathers, Sisters,



and Brothers from different places were present for this joyful celebration. People from all over the Parish and the neighboring parishes also came and took part in the grace filled occasion. During the Holy Eucharist, Bishop Lumen administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to 52 candidates, and 70 candidates received 1st Holy Communion. It was a great joy for the church at Bishramganj as the Youth had trained the candidates who were receiving the sacraments in collaboration with Sisters, Catechists and the Parish Council. After the Holy Eucharist, there was a short felicitation program wherein our Bishop, priests and religious, lay leaders, youth were honored. The parish Youth, members of Marian Bodol, and Salesian Postulants presented programs for all those were present. The event ended with *Agape* meal. *Fr. Remol Marak, SDB*

MOHARPARA PARISH

Bishop's Pastoral Visit:

Immaculate Conception Parish Moharpara witnessed God's blessing through the visit of our beloved shepherd Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC on the 28th and 29th of May 2022. 150 people received God's blessing through the



Sacrament of Confirmation and 10 children received first Holy Communion in Twithampui Zone. The faithful welcomed our Lordship with their beautiful traditional attire and a welcome dance. Similarly, on the next day the Feast of the Ascension of the Lord, 100 people received the Sacrament of Confirmation and 20 children received first Holy Communion in Moharpara Zone. After the Holy Eucharist a short felicitation program was held for our beloved Bishop in honor of his 26th Episcopal Ordination Anniversary.

Youth Bible Camp:



Moharpara Parish Youth Movement had one day Bible Camp in St. Joseph Church Tuidu on 5th of June 2022. The Camp commenced with a welcome speech followed by Bible Class and concluded with the Holy Eucharist. Around 100 Youth from different sub- centers of the Parish participated in the event. Fr. Joe Paul CSC the Resource Person gave them classes on the Bible. After the Session the Youth were given an opportunity to clarify their doubts. The Resource Person exhorted the Youth to give importance to the Bible and to read it daily. The Camp concluded with a common meal and the Youth returned back with enthusiasm and renewed faith.

Maria Sangha Seminar:



Under the leadership of the Diocesan Women Commission Secretary Sr. Jolly FS and Sr. Mary Halam CSC, the Women of Moharpara Parish gathered together for one day Seminar. It was held on 19th June at Yesu Khristu Jayanti Church Gamaku, wherein 100 Women from different sub centers of the Parish participated. The event commenced with an introductory speech followed by Sessions and concluded with the Holy Eucharist and a common meal. During the Sessions the Women were enlightened about dealing with daily family problems and were exhorted to give importance to family prayer and Holy Rosary. *Fr. Arbok Lyngdoh, CSC*

GANDACHERRA PARISH

Blessing and Inauguration School Block:

"Everything is possible by the power and grace of God"-



most important events: Green Sunday and Family feast. On this day the lay faithful of St. Arnold's parish are blessed with the presence of his Lordship Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, csc. The lay faithful from different

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mothas gathered to welcome Bishop ceremoniously and it was followed by the Holy Eucharist presided over by the Bishop. During the Holy Eucharist Bishop gave an inspiring homily during which he stressed on the importance of family in the society and care for the nature and environment. After the communion Bishop prayed over the families. After the Holy mass people gathered to celebrate the green Sunday. An official from forest department gave a speech on the importance of planting trees and Bishop distributed 500 plants of different kind to the people. Bishop and Fr. Prasaad Rao Parish priest symbolically planted the trees.

Bro. Bikash Debbarma

KUMARGHAT PARISH

Seminar for Village Leaders

St. Paul Parish organized two days Seminar for the

village Leaders of our Parish on 18th and 19th of June. In spite of the torrential rain 62 participants attended. The day began with the enthronement of the Bible and prayer followed by welcoming the participants and the Resource Persons with a *risha*. The Resource Team



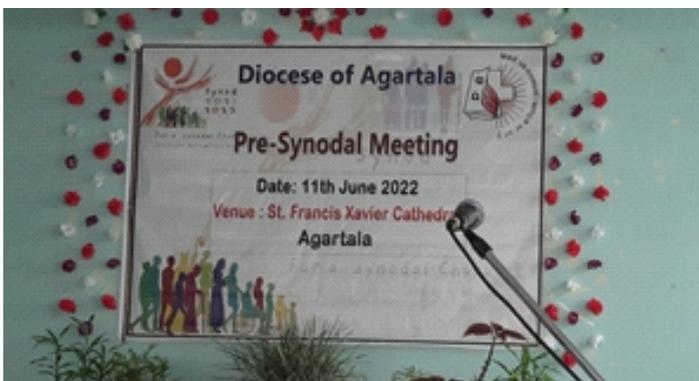
consisted of Fr. Hormis CSC, Fr. Cyprian SVD, and Fr. Jeevan SVD, and they were supported by Sr. Bastian FS, Sr. Vero M.C, Sr. Tarcisius MC and Fr. Lancy CSC. Fr. Jeevan SVD began the Seminar dealing with the topic "Leadership in the Church and Synodality". Fr. Cyprian dealt with "Sacraments and homily in the absence of a priest". Fr. Hormis dealt with "History of the Church and the present day scenario". He also highlighted some aspects of the Sacrament of Marriage. The topic of "Sunday Eucharist and conducting Sunday services" was explained by Fr. Lancy CSC. Sr. Bastian FS taught to prepare the "intercessory prayers" and "appropriate hymns for Sunday Eucharist and Sunday Service". The participants appreciated the well conducted Seminar. They were happy and said that the Seminar was very effective. The Parish Priest thanked the participants and the Resource Team for their well-presented papers, and thanked God for His help.

Fr. Lancy D'Souza, CSC

News Briefs from the Diocese

Diocesan Synod renews Church in Tripura

Agartala, June 11, 2022: Nine months of the intense synodal meetings at different levels ended June 11 with the diocesan pre-Synodal meeting in



Agartala. As many as 92 representatives of laity, catechists, women's groups, youth religious and priests attended the day-long prayer, reflection, discernment and planning for the future of the Church in Tripura. The participants have resolved to make the spirit of Synodality, "Journeying together"

beyond the diocesan synod meeting into their daily lives.

"The meeting provided an opportunity for diverse members of the Diocese to come together for a liturgical celebration, pray together, and reflect on their experience of the Synodal process," said Jesuit Father Irudhaya Jothi, the contact person for the Synodal preparation in the Diocese of Agartala. He noted that Diocese has completed different stages of the Synodal process. "It is time now to listen to the feedback from the synodal consultation meetings across the Diocese and dialogue about the local Church's current reality, read the signs of the times and discern the Holy Spirit's call," he added. The priest, who introduced the art of active listening and intentional speaking, expressed satisfaction at the outcome of the process that passed the diocesan synthesis of pre-Synodal document.

Manai Ranglong, a woman participant, said the diocesan synod meeting and the pre-synodal documents expressed her feelings and aspirations. "It is time we owned up synod decisions such as promotion of local vocations and formation of the children and youth in the faith," said the representative of Bagbasa, the

northernmost Parish of the Diocese.

The Diocese of Agartala was among the first to discuss the Synod on Synodality starting in September 2021. Bishop Lumen Monteiro of Agartala pointed out that the Church in Tripura has until now stressed the faith formation of the laity and the expansion of the Kingdom of God. A group of lay people said the diocese's "infancy period has been a bit prolonged and it was time to encourage lay leaders in the Church."

A challenge for the Tripura Church is the presence of the Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara Rites, who view the Oriental Catholics as different denominations. "This creates a certain amount of misunderstanding; hence proper education of the laity is needed," Father Jothi said. Soon after the synodal meeting, Bishop Monteiro met with Bishop Raphael Thattil, of the Eparchy of Shamshabad, under which the Silchar Syro-Malabar Catholic Mission operates in Tripura. Father Jothi says much good would have happened if Bishop Thattil too had attended the Agartala diocesan synod. "It was a missed opportunity," he added. *By Matters India Reporter*

Pallotine Sisters Convent and Girls Hostel at Bagbasa

14th of June 2022 was a memorable day for the



Pallottine Missionary Sisters at Bagbasa. On this day the Convent and Hostel were inaugurated by Fr. Simon Fernandes CSC, the Provincial Superior Holy Cross North East Province, and Sr. Helen Lourdasamy SACm the Provincial Superior of the Pallottine Missionary Sisters. The new building was blessed by Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro CSC. The Holy Eucharist was presided by his Lordship while the neighboring Priests, Religious and a few Laity joined in prayer. After the Holy Mass there was a short felicitation program by the Hostel Girls to welcome and thank all the Fathers, Sisters and special invitees. Each guest was given a *risha* and a bouquet of flowers. The program was concluded with a vote of thanks by Sr. Susmita. Special thanks to the CSC Provincial, CSC Administrator, and Fr. Ajith Philip CSC, for their financial support for the new building. *Sr. Susmita Kullu, SAC*

News Briefs from all Over

N-E India: Joint Meet Identifies Areas to Combat Human Trafficking

Guwahati: A joint Conference organized by North East Diocesan Social Forum and Caritas India Zonal Office at Guwahati on June 10 identified areas to combat human trafficking in the North-East region. Human trafficking or modern day slavery is a growing global crisis. No State in North-East India is



immune to crimes of human trafficking. This modern day slavery needs local, national, regional and global action to eradicate.

At the inaugural ceremony, on behalf of NEDSSS Executive Director, Fr. Tom welcomed the

participants, followed by lighting of the lamp. Bishop Lumen Monteiro, in his keynote address highlighted the 4Ps approach of Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Partnership in dealing with human trafficking. Rev. W. C. Khongwir, former Moderator of PCI, spoke on the greater need for networking on the lines of rescue and rehabilitation. Fr. Jose SVD, Director of SANSKRITI, opined that human trafficking was the third biggest modern crime in the world, after arms and drugs trade. Miss Ruth, representing Caritas India Zonal Office Guwahati, said that there have been instances where Women have become agents of trafficking in N-E India. Sr. Prema Chowallur SCC, the Vice President of Amrat Talitha Kum India, shared about the Network of religious Sisters who are actively involved in preventing and rescue works, related to anti-human trafficking in India.

The inaugural session was followed by a technical Session animated by Ms. Malathy and Team from Justice and Hope Foundation, based in Chennai.

The objective of the roundtable Conference was to facilitate learning, reflection and common action on

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the topic of human trafficking. Inputs from participants and interactions with several Organizations working to prevent and address the issue of human trafficking were highlights of the Conference.

The Valedictory function, presided over by Fr. Jose SVD and Dr. Athpariya, made a number of recommendations. The round table Conference came to end with a common prayer and vote of thanks proposed by Fr. Tom. *Courtesy NE News*

JUST News Briefs

World Environment Day

On 5th June 2022 World Environment Day was



organized by JUST with the theme "Only One Earth" at Satnithol Para, Mahimchow Para and Dolajoy Basti under Padmabil R.D. Block, Khowai. The program began by sharing the purpose and the theme of the day by the Coordinator of FARM NE Program, Mr. Robert Lushai, and also announced that Farmers will be taking part in the "Green Sunday" event by doing plantation which will be conducted on 19th June 2022 at the Diocese level in all the Parishes. The Coordinator appealed for making community and individual forest in the wasteland through plantations. The Coordinator further announced that every month one day throughout the year will be dedicated for plantation in the target Project areas. 100 Saplings were planted in three villages. The Farmers will be continuing to do more plantations as their target is to plant over 1,000 saplings of different species at different locations.

Awareness & Sensitization Program on Health & Hygiene for Children & Guardians



Awareness on Health and Hygiene was organized in all the 10 JUST Coaching Centers under Ganganagar R.D Block. On this day a Cleanliness Drive was also carried out in all the Centers to promote the values of cleanliness, discipline and respect for the environment. The children cleaned the compound area of the Coaching Centers and the streets nearby. It was an effort to educate and sensitize children about the importance of cleanliness for a healthy environment. After the cleanliness drive a number of fun-filled activities, games and quiz competition were conducted. All the children were given chocolates and some valuable gifts as a token of love from their teachers like exercise note-books, pen and pencils.

Mr. Cyril Darlong

Bishop's Program for July 2022

- 03: Parish Feast, Kumarghat
- 05: Clergy Meet, Bishop's House Agartala
- 07: Mission Appeals, USA

Our Distinguished Guests

- Fr. Jervis D'Souza, Deputy Sec. General from CBCI Delhi
- Fr. Ignatius SJ from St. Michael's College, Patna
- Fr. Prakash Louis SJ from Patna
- CA Ms. Dipsha, Bijesh & Team from Guwahati
- Fr. Alwyn Dias, OFM Cap Provincial from Bangalore