

## Editorial

J. Pulinthanath, SDB



### Happy Birthday, Bishop!

As one gets on in age, birthdays become dearer in every respect. Our dear Bishop Lumen is certainly not old, but not as young as he used to be decades ago. That he is young at heart and in spirit is evident from the very active life he still leads despite health issues trying to slow him down. On this first day of February, his birthday, we as a Diocese, in unison, wish him a happy birthday and many happy returns of the same. Our wish for him is that as days go by, God's many blessings and the simple joys of life make his days more and more exciting, exhilarating and satisfying. Happy Birthday dear Bishop.

### Jubilee Agendas

With the advent of smartphones, the internet, and social media platforms, the gap between our villages and cities have narrowed a great deal. Rural areas that once struggled with limited access to information and resources now have a window to the global landscape. It has empowered rural populations, offering them new opportunities for economic and social advancement.

In a relatively small place like Tripura the impact of such changes is felt also in people's attitude to faith and faith-related matters. With a free-for-all, no holds barred access to information it is not surprising that time and again, small sections of faithful, urban and rural, get hooked on to fanciful ideas floating around in social media and other virtual platforms, posing as truth, and challenging centuries-old practices of the Church. This was a major concern of at least two parishes that recently held a series of discussions among its faithful in connection with their Parish Feast Day celebrations.

The constant pressures of modern life, the rise of secular ideologies, and a world that often places materialism over spiritual growth can make it difficult to remain steadfast in our beliefs. Many people are searching for purpose, yet struggle to find lasting answers.

The need for catechism has never been more urgent. Not a Catechism that's merely about memorizing facts—but one that's about embracing a relationship with Christ that transforms us and the world around us. It's about understanding the sacraments, deepening our prayer life, and committing to live the teachings of the Church each day. Through such a catechesis, we can equip our faithful to tackle the tough questions, the moral dilemmas, and the trials that inevitably come their way.

The blessed Jubilee Year that we have embarked on, with the theme "Pilgrims of Hope," offers an incredible opportunity for renewal, growth, and deeper commitment to the teachings of Christ. It is during times like these that the Church's mission to instruct and strengthen the faithful becomes even more urgent.

Let's make the most of this opportunity by deepening our own faith, sharing that faith with others, and being the hope that the world so desperately needs. As we walk together on this pilgrimage, let us always remember that Christ is with us, and that in Him, we find true hope and everlasting peace.

## Pastor's Corner

### *The Art of making Tea reflects Life's Rich Canvas*



In the simple act of making tea, there lies a profound metaphor for life says Thomas Isac. Just as no one relishes tea powder by itself, the true essence of life is not found in isolated ingredients but in the complex blend they create together. This blend is not just about tea; it's about the fusion of different elements such as water, tea leaves, and often enriching spices like ginger or cardamom, and let's not forget the sugar that sweetens the mixture according to taste. Each component brings its unique flavor, contributing to a final product that is greater than the sum of its parts. This teaches us a vital lesson about the beauty of diversity, the strength of unity, and the value of sweetness in our lives.

The process of making tea is neither hurried nor haphazard. It requires patience, as the water must come to a boil, and the tea needs to steep properly to extract the full depth of flavor from the leaves and spices. This parallels the patience we need in life to listen, to learn, and to allow ideas and relationships to mature at their own pace.

Moreover, the act of making tea is often a shared one, involving others, whether in preparation or enjoyment. Similarly, the best experiences in life are those that involve collaboration and sharing. Making tea for someone can be an act of kindness and a simple way to connect, bridging differences over a cup of warmth. It encourages us to extend a hand, or a cup, to those around us, fostering community and togetherness.

In the ritual of tea-making, we are reminded that every individual has a role to play. The water, the tea, the spices, and the sugar are all essential. Without any one of them, the tea would not be the same. Just as in society, every person matters; every skill adds value, and every contribution helps shape the outcome.

By embracing each other's differences, working together, and adding a touch of kindness and positivity, we can create a community as rich and vibrant as a perfectly brewed cup of tea. Let this simple act inspire us to see the beauty in diversity, the power of unity, and the importance of sweetness in our lives. (ref. Charis India November 2024) This anecdote is an inspiration for me to be as rich and vibrant as a perfectly brewed cup of tea.

As I celebrate my birthday, I recall the happy memories and thank God for my precious life, the many blessings, and the numerous wonderful people who have entered my life and enriched me. The 72 years that I complete today include 45 as a priest and 29 as a Bishop! These years have been grace-filled and love-filled, experience-filled and people-filled! As I celebrate yet another year of God's gift of life to me on February 1, I remember God's countless blessings on me and I say 'THANK YOU' God and 'THANK YOU' everyone who have been a part of my life.

+ Lumen, CSC



### Bodhjungle Parish

#### Annual Children's Day Celebration



The first day of the New Year 2025, began with the children of the Parish in Barkathal, one of our Sub-centers, having come together for their annual gathering. More than 150 children with their parents and relatives were present. The program began with a prayer service. Fr. Joe Paul CSC presided over the Holy Eucharist combined with the Solemnity of Mary: Mother of God. The well-prepared and animated Day kept all the children occupied. The Prayer Service, the Eucharist, Bible Quiz, Dance, on-stage and out of stage activities filled the day. The children were given prizes for their performances. The entire co-pastoral Team of the Parish {Men & Women Religious, belonging to five different Congregations}, were present in a spirit of collaboration. It was indeed a Day of bringing out the enormous potentials, buried in the children. The parents were happier to see their children being active in their good spirit. Though the Day was exclusively meant for the children, it brought a considerable number of adults together on the same venue.

#### The Feast of St. Brother Andre



Unlike the other years, St. Andre Mission celebrated the Feast of its Patron St. Andre as a Parish community. The President, Secretary, Youth Leader and the Maria Sango representatives from each sub-center were invited. The festive Eucharist, Parish Council Meeting, and the common meal, kept everyone involved for the entire morning. The Parish Fathers along with the Priests from SAMS-CSC concelebrated over the Feast Day Mass. The presence of the Religious Sisters from SABS, CSC, FCC & FSM Convents added more joy to the festive activities of the Day. The visit of the Fathers from Holy Cross Provincialate including the Provincial Fr. K J Abraham, was an added joy to the Parish community.

*The Chronicler*

### Bishramganj Parish

#### Annual Parish Sabha



There was four days of joyful celebration of Annual Sabha at Bishramganj parish organized for the faithful from 9th to 12th January 2025. There were different subjects on different days taken for discussions and evaluation of which the theme culture and faith in the context of Tripura was taken as one of the prominent subjects and it was animated by Fr. PJ Joseph from Don Bosco Peace Centre, Agartala. On the 12th January being final day of the Sabha, it was integrated with the reception of first Holy Communion for children, Confirmation, welcoming of Fr. Jetendis Sohshang SDB the new priest, farewell of Fr. Albestar Kharkongor SDB who is on transfer, and the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of Most. Rev. Lumen Monteiro CSC, DD the Bishop of Agartala of his religious life. The Bishop was the main celebrant of the Holy Eucharist. After the Mass the faithful gathered in the parish hall in order to felicitate our Bishop and the new priest and to say 'thank you' to Fr. Albestar. After the short felicitation programme all were served a delicious lunch. Our Bishop distributed a new year calendar to every family.

*Fr. Remol Marak, SDB*

### Gondatwisa Parish

#### St. Arnold Janssen Feast Annual



The Feast of St. Arnold Janssen, the Founder of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), and patron saint of our Parish, was celebrated with great devotion and festivity on January 18th and 19th. On January 18th there was a Retreat led by Rev. Fr. Leenus VC. It was a time of reflection, prayer, and renewal, encouraging participants to deepen their faith and commitment. Fr. Leenus's sessions provided valuable insights into spiritual growth, family prayer and practical ways to live out one's faith.

In the evening, vibrant competitions were held among the parish's substations. Events included a Bible quiz, singing, dancing, and a cultural program. These activities showcased the diverse talents of the parishioners and strengthened the bonds of community. On January 19th, the celebration reached its spiritual climax with the solemn Holy Eucharist, presided over by Rev. Fr. Jeevan Kennedy SVD, the Provincial Superior of the Northeast Province. In his homily, Fr. Jeevan Kennedy urged the faithful to remain steadfast in their relationship with Jesus. He reminded the faithful that the Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian life. A highlight of the celebration was the first Holy Communion to 73 children. It was a moment of profound spiritual significance for the children, their families, and the parish community. After the Holy Eucharist, a felicitation ceremony honored the esteemed Guests, including Fr. Nabin Lakra SVD, Fr. Antony Balan, Holy Spirit Sisters from Agartala, Moharpara, Belonia, and Ambassa. The event concluded with a festive meal.

*News Desk -Gondatwisa Parish*

### Kamaranga Parish

#### Christo Mela



The famous Kamranga Christomela celebration began on 15th December with a street play and dance in the market places, streets and highway circles. The drama on 'Birth of Jesus' attracted the crowd, one of the best medium to disseminate the message of Christmas. There were 20 baptisms and 35 confirmations. Christo mela witnessed Christmas carols, musical skit on birth of Jesus and numerous dances. The glory of Kamranga Christo Mela is kept alive through these beautiful programmes.

#### Youth Awareness & Fellowship Program



**Young people are the future of the society and the Church. A youth awareness**



programme was held at St. Raphael Church, Kamranga for two days. There were about 60 Youth who participated in the programme. The awareness programme included the following: drugs and social media addictions by Fr. James SJ, Youth responsibility towards the Church by Fr. Lawrence Darlong, Illegal relationships and abortion among youth by Fr. Ivan D'Silva SVD and Catholic marriage and sacrament by Fr. Arun Minj SVD. There were various games, sports, singing and dancing items to keep alive the spirit of the youth in the programme. Youth Fellowship programme too was organized on the eve of New Year. The Youth enjoyed being together and benefitted a lot from various awareness programme.

### SVD Mission Day Celebration



SVD Congregation is a missionary congregation. Three SVD Parishes of Tripura celebrated SVD Mission Day at St. Raphael Parish Kamranga. There were about 700 participants gathered for the celebration. The three sets of entrance dance for the Holy Eucharist set the tone of the celebration. Fr. Arun Minj SVD was the main celebrant of the Holy Eucharist who reiterated the reading of the Word of God everyday like our Founder St. Arnold Janssen. At least 14 SVD Lay partners renewed their commitment to help mission work. The most attractive event of the celebration was the Bible Quiz on the Gospel of St. John, SVD Congregation, and the Sacraments. The other captivating programme items were Halam and Reang tribal dances inviting people to proclaim the Word of God. The SVD Mission Day celebration invited parishioners to be partners in mission and evangelization.

**Fr. Arun Minj SVD**

### Tuikarmaw Parish

### New Chapel blessed at Peratia



"How lovely is your dwelling place o Lord!" The newly built Village Chapel at Peratia Village was solemnly blessed and inaugurated on 16th January 2025. The chapel was blessed by Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC in the presence of Fr. Thomas Pereira CSC, the Parish Priest, Frs. Renju and Vicky the Assistant Parish Priests, Religious Sisters and hundreds of faithful and invitees from the village and from different monodis. Prior to the blessing of the Chapel Fr. Thomas Pereira thanked the donor agency CHURCH IN NEED, GERMANY for the financial assistance to realize the dream of the community at Peratia. He also thanked Peratia mondali for their united efforts, local contribution and hard work in realizing the construction. The blessing ceremony was followed by a meaningful Eucharistic celebration. After the Holy Mass there was a short reception programme followed by fellowship meal.

**Fr. Thomas Pereira, CSC**

### Khumulwng Parish

### 8th Parish Youth Fellowship



Youth Fellowship with the theme JESUS IS OUR HOPE began with an inauguration ceremony including prayer, and lamp lighting by Fr. Maxim (Parish Priest) and Opening dance by youth of Belbari motha. An address was given by Mr. Pradip (Parish Secretary), followed by speeches. On Sunday Sr. Clare Francis MC from Twimairang, delivered an inspiring talk on faith and youth empowerment, encouraging the youth to grow spiritually and lead with purpose. For the morning hours Fr. Alwyn and Sr. Virginia AC from Gokulnagar were the resource persons in leading the youth for a motivated healthy life followed by the Holy Eucharist.

The afternoon session was guided by Dr. Baby (Junior Scientist, ICAR-KVK, west Tripura) who focused on healthy living, adopting a nutritious diet, and opportunities in agriculture for livelihood. The evening session with the Group Discussion led by Father Maxim, focused on pressing social issues such as suicidal rate, social media, Substance abuse, youth in the church affecting today's youth.

This was followed by quiz competition. After the dinner there was cultural dance competitions. The final day concluded with the motha-wise youth report and concluding thanksgiving Eucharist. 48 youth participated in the Youth Fellowship.

**Fr. Maxim SVD**

### News Bytes from the Diocese

### 18th All Tripura

### A' Chik Katolik Songsal celebrated



Good Shepherd Parish, Kathalcherra was privileged to host the 18th All Tripura Catholic Garo Annual Sabha at Garo II Village this year from 10 to 13 January 2024.

About 400 delegates from all over Tripura participated in this august gathering. A resources team headed by Rev. Fr. Jacquish B. Sangma from Tura animated all input sessions.

The Sabha began with flag hoisting followed by Holy Eucharist on the first day.

On the second day Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro CSC, DD, Bishop, Diocese of Agartala participated in village reports presentation and gave input session on contribution of Garo catholic community in the diocese and future hope on them. Bishop Lumen blessed the Silver Jubilee memory stone erected in commemoration of 25th anniversary of starting all Tripura Catholic Garo annual convention "Tripura A'Chik Katolik Songsal".

There was a thanksgiving Eucharist celebrated on the second day for "Tripura A'Chik Katolik Songsal" turning silver. All three days were filled with a lot of activities, input sessions, competitions, adoration and Holy Eucharist.

The annual Convention came to an end with action plan and prize distribution.

**C. Abraham CSC**



## JUST organizes Inter-Ethnic Cultural Exchange Program at Paharpur



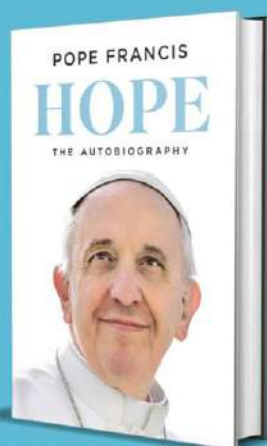
JUST organized a vibrant Inter-Ethnic Cultural Exchange Program at Paharpur, Amarpur Block, on 19th January 2025. The event aimed to foster cultural understanding and mutual respect among diverse ethnic groups while celebrating the unique traditions of the local communities. The program commenced with a warm welcome and an introductory speech by Mr. Robert Lushai, Coordinator of JUST. His address emphasized the importance of cultural exchange in strengthening community bonds. This was followed by a soulful welcome song performed by the women of the community, setting a harmonious tone for the day.

An interactive session led by Mr. Sujoy Uchoi, General Secretary of the Young Tripura Federation (YTF), was the highlight of the event. Mr. Uchoi eloquently discussed several pertinent topics, including Promotion of Traditional Foods and Attire, Balancing Tradition and Modernization, Celebrating Diversity, Fostering Harmony and Passing Down Traditional Knowledge. The attendees showed remarkable enthusiasm, actively engaging in the discussions and sharing their perspectives, reflecting the program's impact. Adding to the festivities, community members showcased two stunning cultural dances, leaving the audience captivated by their energy and grace. These performances were a testament to the rich artistic traditions of the region.

The event concluded with a heartfelt vote of thanks delivered by Mr. Gabriel Darlong. He expressed gratitude to the chief guest, the participants, and the dedicated staff members who ensured the program's success. The gathering ended on a sweet note with the distribution of refreshments and calendars to all attendees, leaving everyone with a token of the day's memorable experiences. This cultural exchange program not only celebrated the diverse heritage of the community but also reinforced the importance of unity, respect, and collaboration in building a harmonious society. It served as a shining example of how cultural initiatives can inspire and unite people across ethnic lines.

**Robert Lushai**

### News bytes from all Over



### Pope Francis 'HOPE' - The Autobiography

Pope Francis originally intended this exceptional book to appear only after his death, but the needs of our times and the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope have moved him to make this precious legacy available now. Hope is the first autobiography in history ever to be published by a Pope. Written over six years, this complete autobiography starts in the early years of the twentieth century, with Pope Francis's Italian roots and his ancestors' courageous migration to Latin America, continuing through his childhood, the enthusiasms and preoccupations of his youth, his vocation, adult life, and the whole of his papacy up to the present day. In recounting his memories with intimate narrative force (not forgetting his own personal passions), Pope Francis deals unsparingly with some of the crucial moments of his papacy and writes candidly, fearlessly, and prophetically about some of the most important and controversial questions of our present times: war and peace (including the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East), migration, environmental crisis, social policy, the position of women, sexuality, technological developments, the future of the Church and of religion in general. Hope includes a wealth of revelations, anecdotes, and illuminating thoughts. It is a thrilling and very human memoir, moving and sometimes funny, which represents the "story of a life" and, at the same time, a touching moral and spiritual testament that will fascinate readers throughout the world and will be Pope Francis's legacy of hope for future generations.

*(Courtesy Random House)*

### Pope Francis appoints first-ever woman to head the Vatican Dicastery



Pope Francis has named for the first time a woman, Sister Simona Brambilla, to head a dicastery of the Roman Curia, continuing to add to the number of

women in leadership roles at the Vatican, a hallmark of his pontificate. The 59-year-old Brambilla, a member and former superior general of the Consolata Missionary Sisters, has been secretary of the Vatican department for religious and consecrated life since October 2023.

Brambilla, who trained as a nurse before entering religious life, was a missionary in Mozambique in the late 1990s. She then returned to Italy, where, with her advanced degree in psychology, she taught at the Pontifical Gregorian University in its Institute of Psychology. She was head of the institute of Consolata Missionary Sisters from 2011 until May 2023.

Pope Francis appointed the Italian sister prefect of the department on Monday. She will lead the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life together with Cardinal Ángel Fernández Artime, who was named pro-prefect on January 6. Brambilla joins several other religious and non-religious laywomen appointed by Pope Francis to important posts in the Vatican, including Franciscan Sister Raffaella Petrini, the first woman to hold the second-ranking post in the government of the Vatican City State. (Courtesy CNA)

### Cardinal Filipe Neri Ferrao takes charge of FABC as its President



Cardinal Filipe Neri Ferrão took charge as President of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) on January 1, after Cardinal Charles Muang Bo, SDB, the President of the Episcopal Conference of Myanmar, lay down his office as the Head of the Asian Church. Cardinal Ferrão, the President of the CCBI and the Archbishop of Goa and Daman was elected the President of the FABC at the last Central Committee Meeting in

Bangkok on February 22, 2024. The FABC comprises Bishops of South, Southeast, East and Central Asia. The Asian Federation includes all the Bishops of India, 277 in total, belonging also to the Latin, Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara Churches. Bishop Pablo Virgilio David of Kallokan, Philippines, was elected the Vice President, while Archbishop Tarcisio Kikuchi of Tokyo was re-elected as the Secretary General of the Federation for a second term. Both of them were made Cardinals by Pope Francis during the last Ordinary Consistory held at the Vatican on December 7, 2024.

*(Courtesy CNA)*





# Events Suggested for the Diocese of Agartala in the Jubilee Year 2025

January 18-25: Jubilee & Unity Octave: (Ecumenism)  
 January 26: Jubilee & Sunday of the Word of God: (Bible Commission)  
 February 2: Jubilee of Consecrated life: (CRI Commission)  
 February 11: Jubilee of the Sick People: (Health Commission)  
 March 8: Jubilee of women: (Women Commission)  
 March 19: Jubilee of Fathers: Parish  
 March 28: 24 Hours for the Lord: Eucharistic Adoration & Sacrament of Reconciliation  
 April 27: Jubilee of Divine Mercy  
 May 01: Jubilee of Workers: (CLT)  
 May 13: Jubilee of Marian Spirituality  
 May 31: Jubilee of Mothers (Women & Laity Commissions)  
 June 01: Jubilee of Communications  
 June 08: Jubilee of Students  
 July 13: Jubilee of Families  
 July 27: Jubilee of Grandparents and Elderly  
 August: 03: Jubilee of Priests  
 August: 17: Jubilee of Youth (Youth Commission)  
 August 31: Jubilee of Teachers  
 September 8: Jubilee of Girl children: (Women Commission)  
 September 28: Jubilee of Catechists & Catechism Teachers (Catechetics Commission)  
 October 05: Jubilee of Migrants: (Justice & Peace Commission)  
 October 19: Jubilee of Missions: (ADPC Commission)  
 November 16: Jubilee of the Poor: (Justice & Peace Commission)  
 December 01-21: Jubilee of Basic Ecclesial Communities: (BEC Commission)  
 December 14: Jubilee of Prisoners: (Justice & Peace & Prison Commission)  
 December 28: Jubilee year 2025 concludes with Holy Mass in the Cathedral (Liturgy Commission)

## Itinerary for journey of the Jubilee Cross

29.12.2024 to 30.01.2025 St. Francis Xavier Cathedral Parish, Agartala  
 30.01.2025 to 08.02.2025 Shantir Rani Parish, Mariamnagar  
 08.02.2025 to 15.02.2025 Don Bosco Parish, Nandannagar  
 15.02.2025 to 15.03.2025 St. Andre Parish, Bodhjunnagar  
 15.03.2025 to 03.04.2025 Mary Help of Christians Parish, Mandwi  
 03.04.2025 to 03.05.2025 Immaculate Conception Parish, Moharpara  
 03.05.2025 to 20.05.2025 St. John Paul II Parish, Baijalbari  
 20.05.2025 to 31.05.2025 St. Raphael Parish, Kamaranga  
 31.05.2025 to 17.06.2025 Good Shepherd Parish, Kathalchaerra  
 17.06.2025 to 03.07.2025 St. Paul's Parish, Kumarghat  
 03.07.2025 to 08.07.2025 St. Ignatius of Loyola Parish, Kailashahar  
 08.07.2025 to 21.07.2025 Holy Cross Parish, Bagbasa  
 21.07.2025 to 31.07.2025 St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Gacchirampara  
 31.07.2025 to 09.08.2025 St. Joseph Parish, Chailengta  
 09.08.2025 to 01.09.2025 Holy Spirit Parish, Ambassa  
 01.09.2025 to 10.09.2025 St. Arnold Parish, Gandatwisa  
 10.09.2025 to 19.09.2025 St. Joseph Vaz Parish, Amarpur  
 19.09.2025 to 30.09.2025 Christ the King Parish, Depacherra  
 30.09.2025 to 08.10.2025 Our Lady of Good Health Parish, Karbook  
 08.10.2025 to 13.10.2025 St. Francis De Sales Parish, Sindukpathar  
 13.10.2025 to 30.10.2025 St. Mary's Parish, Tuikarmaw  
 30.10.2025 to 15.11.2025 St. Joseph Parish, Pitra  
 15.11.2025 to 06.12.2025 Sacred Heart Parish, Bishramganj  
 06.12.2025 to 13.12.2025 Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, Jampuijala  
 13.12.2025 to 20.12.2025 St. Alphonsa Parish, Khumulwng (21.12.2025 return to SFX Cathedral)

## Our Distinguished Guests



- Fr. Pinto Paul, CSC, from USA
- Fr. Suresh Kagoo, CSC, from Jongksha
- Fr. Emmanuel Kallarcakal, CSC, from Rome
- Fr. Clement Amo, CSC, from Sumer
- Fr. Shaiju, CSC, from Sumer
- Mr. Emmanuel Braggs from Pune
- Bishop Salvatore Lobo from Baruipur, WB
- Relatives of Fr. Peter Chittayath from Kerala
- Bro. Chacko Andrews, CSC, from Bangalore
- Archbishop Peter Machado from Bangalore

## Bishop's Program for February 2025

- 04: CCBI Assembly ends
- 05: Bhubaneswar to Agartala
- 08: CRI Agartala Unit gathering
- 08-09: Kathalcherra Parish Sabha
- 11: Clergy Meeting @ Bishop's House  
Consulters Meeting
- 13-15: CHAI Board Meeting @ Secunderabad
- 15-16: Chailengta Parish Sabha  
Installation of new Parish Priest
- 20-21: SDFI Convention, Delhi
- 22-23: Kailashahar Parish Sabha
- 24-03: NE Bishops Meet @ Bongaigaon