



Pastor's Corner

Habemus Papam

Habemus Papam "We have a Pope" announced the Proto Deacon, Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran. And the name of the man to emerge on the balcony in Vatican City is Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Argentina. The 265th Successor of Saint Peter will go by the name of Pope Francis and is the first non-European Pope in modern times, the first Jesuit Pope in history and the first from a developing country. The much-awaited choice is something of a surprise, as the new Pope was not foreshadowed prominently on the short lists of various experts, though the 76-year old was said to be a close second to retiring Pope Benedict in the 2005 conclave.

Cardinal Bergoglio, a Jesuit intellectual who reportedly eschews the ornate trappings of church power he travels by bus was elected in a swift five votes of a conclave of 115 cardinals, and immediately appeared to say the Lord's Prayer to crowds on the Vatican plaza.



We in the Diocese of Agartala welcome our new Pope and pledge our filial love and obedience, as we pray for his Pontificate.

A recent biography "Pope Francis" written by Mathew Bunson makes interesting reading: "On February 11, 2013, Pope Benedict XVI stunned the world when he announced that he was resigning the papacy and that the College of Cardinals would gather in Rome to elect his successor. Halfway across the world, Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, the archbishop of Buenos Aires, Argentina, prepared for his journey to Rome and the conclave. He bought a return ticket, and his friends, aghast at the state of his battered old shoes, implored him to accept the gift of a new pair. Wearing his new shoes, he set out for the Vatican.

Two journeys one for the whole Church and another for one of her members ended in the chapel filled with the frescoes of Michelangelo, beneath the gaze of the "Last Judgment."

On March 13, the College of Cardinals elected Cardinal Bergoglio to serve as the 265th Successor of Peter.

As pontiff, Francis stands now truly as the bridge builder. His origins, his learning, and his own years of service as a pastor over a city that has some of the wealthiest residents in South America and some of the poorest has prepared him for this role. He was a shepherd to them all, and he labored to help everyone in his care encounter Christ. And now he will work to do the same for the world.

We see in the election of Pope Francis the loving and merciful hand of God's providence. As he told the reporters who had been covering the memorable events unfolding in Rome: "In everything that has occurred, the principal agent has been, in the final analysis, the Holy Spirit. He prompted the decision of Benedict XVI for the good of the Church; he guided the cardinals in prayer and in the election." Long live Pope Francis! **+Lumen, CSC**



Editorial

The Size of our Families

While discussing vocations, the subject of 'small families' came up at the recent Pastoral Council meeting of the Diocese. It is a subject that has implications beyond vocations.

A visitor to Tripura seldom fails to note the size of its families. It is small, for sure. Tripura's indigenous communities, especially certain tribes, seem to have proven wrong the notion that tribal communities tend to have large families.

Despite small families becoming the order of the day in most places and countries, it is intriguing that tribal communities here have so vigorously responded to the government-sponsored 'small family happy family' campaign. Intriguing because in the state of Tripura, numbers are everything past, present, future, identity and destiny of its people.



The size of families has a connection with land too. 'Land' has been at the centre of all the ethnic conflicts that happened and still lie latent in this land. The indigenous community needs to realize that land, all land, unless inhabited and cared for, simply goes away. Present-day tribal families, many of which have only one child or two at the most, seem hardly equipped to deal with this challenge.

Although one assumes it to be the result of education and enlightenment, the small family syndrome could in reality be a symptom of a deeper malaise afflicting the community a tendency to hedonism and abandonment. The anti-life base on which small families are often built could wreck the moral fabric of the society and also forfeit blessings of God.

It is highly probable that most children of small families will, finally, turn out to be spoilt brats, but they are still lucky because they got to be born. If only they would extend that chance to whomever God

Bodhjunnagar Parish

Maria Sangho Annual Meeting

The Parish level Maria Sangho Annual Meeting was enthusiastically organized by the Bodhjunnagar Mondoli Maria Sangho group on 24th February at the Parish Centre. 76 enthused women from all over our Parish participated in the meeting. The purpose of the Annual gathering was to reorient them to the service of Maria Sangho and to elect its office-bearers. After the Sunday Mass they began their meeting by praying the Holy Rosary. Fr. Jilson, in his input session {using power point presentation}, explained and highlighted the works, aim, purpose and objectives of the Legion of Mary. The election process resulted in the bifurcation of the Maria Sangho into three zones, from which the Parish level office bearers were chosen respectively. The Executive Body of the Maria Sangho of our Parish comprises the President, Secretary, Treasurer and two other elected members. The men-folk {a handful of them}, volunteering to prepare the lunch for the entire Maria Sangho people, added colour to their Annual Gathering.

Bishop's Visit to St. Andre-Mission

It happened on 10th March 2013. The parishioners of Bodhjunnagar were privileged to have our Bishop Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC, with them, presiding over the Sunday Liturgy. After the children's Mass Bishop gave away prizes to children for their performance in the Catechism Exams. At the end of the Parish Mass, the families who secured the first three places in the Crib-Competition {held during Christmas} were also rewarded with prizes for their spiritually-aesthetic sense. The children and the parishioners were extremely happy to receive their prizes from the hands of their Bishop. The parishioners eagerly await the official visit of the Bishop in May 2013.

Fr. Mariaraj, csc

Mandwi Parish

Welcome to the Gor-Mik Ark

"Every grain of sand and every drop of water goes to make a mighty ocean."



The opening words of Mr. Tarun Debbarma - Land Acquisition Officer.

He was

commenting on the occasion of the inauguration of the *Gor-Mik Ark* Diocesan Youth Centre, on the 17th March 2013 at Mandwi. The makeshift structure (of wood and tin) he said was just a small beginning of the work ahead for youth of Tripura and he said today Mandwi has started that in a very small way.

At the Holy Eucharist the Bishop, Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC, spoke of the need to understand and forgive one another. He called on the people to stand united and work with one heart and mind in the interest of the common good of the parish.

Soon after the Holy Mass the Youth Centre was inaugurated by the Chief Guest Mr. A. Halam CEO of TTAADC. Although he was to inaugurate the three different parts of the centre viz. Boys Dormitory, Girls Dormitory and the Multi-purpose Hall, he unhesitatingly offered his privilege to Fr. Chinnappa of Caritas India Delhi and to Fr. Mariaraj of Bodhjunnagar Parish. The blessing of the centre was then performed by the Bishop. After a short dance performance by the youth, the program ended with lunch.

Pleasant weather (which is always 6* lower than Agartala) and uninterrupted power supply from the electricity board were purely divine intervention, for till 6.30am there was absolutely no power supply, as one of the coils of the transformer had burnt the previous evening. Power failure resumed at 4.30pm but by then the programme had seen a blessed end!

Bro. Philip, SG, Principal of Montfort School at Champaknagar, among others, intrigued by the name given to the centre were explained that *Gor* was the short form for Maria Gorretti, *Mik* was for Mickey Maggone the youngster who turned a new leaf after

meeting Don Bosco and *Ark* was the reference to the ark of Noah where one could take shelter in the midst of the storms of life.

The dormitories can accommodate around 50 youth and the hall around 100. It is meant for conducting small programs on faith and self-development. Our sincere thanks extends to the former Provincial of the Salesians, Rev. Fr. Joseph Almeida sdb., who was instrumental in procuring the help from generous benefactors.

Fr. George Rodrigues
Diocesan Youth Director

Kamaranga Parish

Annual Parish sabha 2013

The second Annual parish *sabha* of St. Raphael Parish, Kamaranga was held on 2nd and 3rd March at Katalotma Mondali. "Make our faith greater" (Lk

17:5)



was the theme.

Delegates from Kanaila

1 Halam

para, Janthum, Adorso and Sanaia Reangpara arrived at Katolotma in the evening. Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC, Bishop of Agartala, was solemnly received by the parish community. Inauguration of the Parish *sabha* and parish level Year of Faith conducted by lighting candles by Bishop and representatives of *mondolis*. After an introductory session, an hour of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament strengthened the parish unity. On the following day opportunity was given for Sacrament of Reconciliation followed by community catechism. One of the main points was the reporting session. Based on the report presented our Bishop shared his observation and exhorted the faithful for greater cooperation and unity in the *mondoli* and in the parish. He also took a session on the "Year of Faith." Thanksgiving Holy Mass was at 12.00 noon followed by a fellowship meal for everyone present. Participants went back rejuvenated.

Fr. Joachim Kullu, SVD

Agartala Parish

St. Joseph and Inauguration of Pontificate

St. Joseph's Parish Agartala celebrated the Feast of our Patron on 19th March. This was also a fitting occasion, with our Bishop,



to celebrate the Inauguration of Pope Francis' Pontificate.

Indeed it was our dream to host one such a great feast in our parish with the spiritual renewal. We prepared with a

Triduum. On 16th March the theme was **Faith: Basis for Christian Life** by Fr. Mariaraj csc. On 17th March the theme was **Eucharist: Source of Christian Living** by Fr. Jeevan Kennedy SVD; on 18th March the theme was **St. Joseph: Our Patron Saint** by Frs. Joe Paul CSC and George Kallungal CSC.

On 19th March we had a candle-light procession with the decorated statue of St. Joseph. Our beloved Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, presided over the Holy Eucharist and 12 priests concelebrated.

After the Holy Eucharist we had fellowship meal. We express our heartfelt gratitude to all those contributed to enhance the feast day celebration, both spiritually and monetarily. We wholeheartedly acknowledge the service done by the religious Sisters in our parish to have a meaningful celebration.

Deacon Pappy Valan, CSC

Khumlwg Parish

Year of Faith being tested!

The Year of Faith has created new zeal and enthusiasm to read the Bible and learn the quotations among the parishioners of St. Alphonsa Phaish, Khumlwg. Few Bible chapters are given to read and learn (by heart) quotations every month. Then there is a Bible Test conducted every month in three categories- children, youth and adults. The highest marks obtained last February were 96 and 90 out of 100! More interestingly, the two prizes for every month are

sponsored by the parishioners themselves. The idea of conducting Bible test is to create an interest in Bible reading, increase knowledge of the Bible and thereby increase faith. It is the need of the hour for everyone of us to equip ourselves with the Word of God.

Fr. Arun Minj, SVD

WOMEN COMMISSION

International Women's Day celebrations at Agartala



Women's Commission, Diocese of Agartala, organized Women's Annual gathering and Women's day celebration from 7th to 9th March 2013 at JUST. The Theme of the Celebration was "Women Sower's of Faith in the Family". The program was initiated with an inaugural session of prayer song, the lightening of the lamp by the Chief Guest Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, csc, Bishop of Agartala, Fr. Jeevan SVD JUST Director, Fr. Roby, csc, Administrator, Fr. George Kallungal csc, Fr. Nabin svd, Fr. Davis sdb, Dr. Purnima Roy Chairperson of Women Commission Tripura. Sr. Susheela Xess Women's Commission Secretary gave the welcome address. Bishop Lumen enlightened the participants on the relevance of the theme. The Resource Persons who gave various input sessions include Fr. Jeevan SVD on Women's role in the family; Fr. Nabin SVD on Women, sower's of Faith in the Family; Dr. Purninma Roy on Women's Rights and Domestic Violence on Women; and Sr. Eva BS on Women Empowerment and Education. Women leaders from different parishes presented the activity report and the action plan for the 2013. In the evening the women participants put up colorful cultural programs and the winners were given prizes.

Sr. Susheela Xess SSpS

Moharpara Parish celebrated Women's Day

Women's Health is Nations Wealth. Health is a socio-economic and

political issue and above all a fundamental human right. Women's Commission, Diocese of Agartala, organized a day's program on HIV/AIDS at Sirduk under Moharpara Parish. The main Resource Persons were Dr. Ashok Debbarma and Sr. Susheela Xess. Dr. Ashok in his talk spoke on HIV/AIDS, how it spreads and the preventive measures. The Seminar was very inspiring and enriching. There were 105 participants who benefited from

RECTORS' Meet at Nagpur Diocesan Minor Seminary

The National Program for Rectors of Minor Seminaries was organized by the CCBI Commission for Vocations, Seminaries, Clergy and Religious from 6th to 10th March at Nagpur. There were 52 Minor Seminary Rectors from all over the country. The Resource Persons Fr. Amirtharaj, O.P., and Fr. John Kulandai the Executive Secretary of the CCBI Commission animated and guided the program efficiently. Various issues were discussed extensively, such as: Importance of Minor Seminary in the whole Priestly Formation; Dimensions in Priestly Formation; Recruitment and Selection; Understanding a Minor Seminarian; Spiritual Formation in Minor Seminary; and Skills in Spiritual Direction. The Seminar concluded with the formulation of national level minor seminary semester-wise curriculum. The Seminar united minor seminaries Rectors from all over the country. It was a great opportunity for the formators to evaluate and make necessary improvement.

Fr. Arun Minj, SVD

Inter Religious Prayer Meet - for Peace

An "Inter-religious prayer meeting for peace" was organized in Nirmal Shishu Bhavan, Agartala on February 26 with the theme, "Know God Know Peace, No God No Peace" by the Ciocesan commission for inter-religious dialogue. Leaders of different faiths from Agartala Town were invited to pray and share peace with the faithful of multi religious group of about 80.

One remarked that an effort of this kind by the Catholic Church 50-100 years ago would not have been possible. The speakers, irrespective of their religious affiliation, appreciated this attempt by the Church. It was a unique opportunity for the “Children of God” to come together, sing together and pray together for peace amidst enthroned scriptures of their religion. A sense of belonging to the same “Kingdom of God” of love, peace, freedom and justice prevailed in the atmosphere. We hope and pray our small effort will pay rich dividend of peace and harmony in our multi faith and culture society.

Fr. Cyprian Pinto SVD

Vandana Mataji dies

Vandana Mataji, a Catholic nun who pioneered Christian Ashram movement in India, died in Pune on Monday following age related illness. She was 92. The funeral of the nun, a member of Society of the



Sacred Heart of Jesus congregation, was held on Feb. 26. Courtesy CRIB

Pope Francis decides to stay in Domus Sanctae Martae

Fr. Federico Lombardi, informed journalists that Pope Francis has decided for the time being to stay in the Domus Sanctae Martae house rather than move into the papal apartments. The cardinal electors reside at the Domus Sanctae Martae during conclave. Once a Pope is chosen, the newly elected Pontiff transfers to a slightly larger room- Suite 201 - until preparations are finished in the papal apartments. Fr. Lombardi stated that now that the Papal apartment is ready, the Holy Father has chosen instead to move to Suite 201 for the time being and will use the the papal apartment for official audiences and for his weekly Sunday Angelus address. Living at Domus Sanctae Martae, Fr.



Lombardi stated, would allow the Pope to live in a communal atmosphere with those who reside there. *Zenit.org*

The tailor who has dressed every Pope since 1922

Making bespoke clothes is tricky when you don't know who will wear them. But Gammarelli, the Roman tailor that has dressed every pope since 1922, gets around that by catering for every eventuality. Unveiled in its window on Monday were three ivory cassocks in small, medium and large a choice which it hopes will keep it covered no matter who emerges from the Sistine Chapel as the next leader of the Roman Catholic church. Alongside the robes would go a white skullcap, a red velvet cape and four or five pairs of red shoes, said Lorenzo Gammarelli, one of the business's owners. "We are providing more than three pairs of shoes because



you can adjust a cassock or a suit but you must wear the right size shoes," he said.

Source: *The Guardian*

Vatican Stamps Commemorate Sede Vacante

The Philatelic and Numismatic Office of the Governorate of Vatican City State has issued four stamps with the image of an angel raising the pavilion (“umbraculum”) of the Apostolic Camera, the work of Italian artist Daniela Longo. The stamps cost: €0.70 for mail to Italy, with a light green background; €0.85 for mail to Europe, with a blue background; €2.00 for mail to the Americas, with a grey background; and €2.50 for mail to Oceania, on a yellow background.

The use of these stamps as postage is only available during the Sede Vacante, ending with the election of the new Pope. Their philatelic use is allowed afterwards and the office will continue to sell them to collectors. *Zenit.org*

Visitors at Bishop's House

- ▷ Fr. Raja from Patna Archdiocese
- ▷ Fr. Santiago from Burunga
- ▷ Fr. Marcel from Badarpur
- ▷ Fr. Francis, MSFS Provincial from Guwahati
- ▷ Fr. Henry, MSFS Bursar from Guwahati
- ▷ Fr. Selvaraj, CMF from Malda
- ▷ Fr. Savarinathan, CMF from Jamshedpur
- ▷ Mr. Girish Peter from Caritas Patna
- ▷ Xavier & Blanch Lobo from New Zealand
- ▷ Fr. Anand Jujur of Society of our Lady of Africa
- ▷ Fr. Thomas OFM Cap from Imphal
- ▷ Fr. Herman Dung Dung, SSP from Jorahat
- ▷ Fr. Chinnappa, Admin of Caritas India from Delhi

BISHOP'S PROGRAMME FOR APRIL 2013

- 02-04: NE Bishops Council, Agartala
- 05-07: Pastoral Programs, Moharpara Parish
- 09-10: CBCI-CARD Meet, Delhi
- 13: Bethany Convent Blessing, Dharmanagar
- 13-14: Parish Sabah, Bagbasa
- 16-18: Globalization Seminar, Guwahati
- 21: Pastoral Program, Nandanagar Parish
- 22-23: GB & Caritas Council, St. John's Bangalore
- 24-26: Standing Committee, St. John's Bangalore
- 27-30: Caritas Field Visit, N. Karnataka
- 30: CDC Meet, Agartala Clergy Meeting & Recollection, Agartala

Agartala Diocese Congratulates:

Sr. Santan Nago FS, Superior General. She is re-elected for a term of six years. Councillors: Sr. Florence Fernandez, Sr. Mabel Figer and Sr. Concepta Jelki.