

Editorial



'A reason for our Hope'

It's a season of celebrations. The New Year celebrations burst into the air even before we were done with Christmas related festivities. Between the two grand occasions, Agartala witnessed yet another solemn event at the Cathedral Church in Agartala - the Sacerdotal Ordination of three Diocesan Priests: Fr. Jojappa Pamisetty, Fr. Daleiki Shylla and Fr. Sebin Thampy. Understandably, for the new priests, the awesome significance of the day cannot be over-rated. A very decisive milestone, indeed, in their journey of life and a culmination of many years of preparation and study. For the Diocese too the Ordination of three priests by Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro CSC, its Pastor, seemed a fitting finale of a year filled with many activities and blessings. LINK wishes the new Priests all joys of holy priesthood.

We have just stepped into a New Year which also promises to be special. Pope Francis has designated the year 2025 as a Jubilee year centered on the theme, 'Pilgrims of Hope'. The Pope's own thoughts about this special year help us to understand better the burden underlying the Year of Hope: "We must fan the flame of hope that has been given us, and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and far-sighted vision."

It's fitting indeed that we usher in the New Year like we generally do, with grateful hearts and optimistic minds. That is because every New Year is a bundle of opportunities, an unwritten book, unopened account and another chance to right the wrongs we had no time or inclination for, in the year past.

However, we are also aware the future that lies before us, however promising, is also hugely uncertain. It only takes a little for the tapestry of life, woven with threads of uncertainty to go awry and our meticulously laid out plans to be relegated to the realm of what might have been. It's a thought that rightly makes us solemn, somber and pensive.

Pope Francis also seems to have at the back of his mind this widespread ailment of humankind when he says the Year of Hope is a "time for renewal, where we can find strength in faith, rekindle our hope amidst challenges, and work together to build a brighter future for all." He emphasizes the importance of hope, especially in times of difficulty. He encourages us to engage in acts of kindness and compassion towards others, recognizing that we are all connected in this shared journey of hope.

As a Diocese, we join the universal Church on this pilgrimage of hope, confident that the hope we have placed in Jesus our Lord will not disappoint but help us navigate life's uncertainties and arrive at the glorious shore, yonder. Happy New Year!

J. Pulinthanath, SDB

Pastor's Corner

New Year Blessings in the Jubilee Year 2025



The New Year 2025 that begins today is a Jubilee Year. The concept of jubilee originates in the Book of Leviticus chapter 25, where every fifty years a sacred time was set apart for the people of Israel to rest their lives. The land would rest, debts would be forgiven, and those enslaved would be freed. "Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee year for you." (Lev. 25,10). This passage encapsulates the spirit of reconciliation and restoration, emphasizing that relationships should be healed, debts should be settled, and freedom should be restored.

Jubilee 2025 is a call for both personal and communal transformation. Pope Francis' exhortation in *Spes non Confundit* challenges us to not merely celebrate this Jubilee as a symbolic year but to embody its spirit in our actions, interactions, and intentions. As he often reminds us, our faith is not one of passivity but of active love and hope. As we enter into the Jubilee Year 2025 let us be reminded that this jubilee is not only a celebration but a divine intervention to encounter God's mercy anew, and renew our commitment to share Christ's love with a world in need. I wish you a joy-filled and peace-filled NEW YEAR 2025.

With this issue we have entered the 29th year of the existence of LINK and this is the 331st issue of the Diocesan Newsletter. This humble Newsletter has been coming to you on the first day of the month, month after month, for the past 28 years – this is no small feat! Over the years LINK has become a 5-page Newsletter covering snippets from our Parishes and Institutions with the sole intention of keeping in touch. I have purposefully limited the Newsletter to five pages keeping in mind that brevity enhances curiosity.

As we enter another year, sentiments of gratitude well up in our hearts to God Almighty. My gratitude extends also to all who have helped me in various ways, but especially to all those who have helped me with LINK. Fr. J. Pulinthanath SDB has always been there with a thought-provoking Editorial month after month. Another person is Fr. S. George who has taken up the task of designing the Newsletter with appealing graphics and colors. I like to thank you too, dear Readers for your support and encouragement. THANK YOU.

+ Lumen, CSC

JANUARY 1

*LINK Wishes Happy New Year 2025
&
Happy Feast of Mary Mother of God*



Gonda Twisa Parish

Leadership Training Program at Ratan Nagar. A journey towards Jesus' model of Leadership



On December 1, 2024, a transformative Leadership Training program was conducted at Ratan Nagar under Gondatwisa Parish. The event witnessed the active participation of 47 leaders representing all the villages within the parish. Organized with the goal of fostering effective and faith-driven leadership, the training brought together diverse minds united in their commitment to community service and spiritual growth.

The resource person for the day, Fr. Amalraj, the parish priest, guided the participants through the theme, "Jesus' Model of Leadership." Drawing inspiration from the life and teachings of Christ, Fr. Amalraj emphasized the values of humility, service, and selflessness as cornerstones of true leadership. Through engaging sessions, interactive discussions, and practical examples, he encouraged the leaders to embody these qualities in their roles within their communities.

The program left a lasting impact on the attendees. All the leaders expressed their joy and gratitude for the enriching experience, noting how the training provided them with not only spiritual insights but also practical tools to lead with integrity and compassion. This leadership initiative marks a significant step towards building stronger, Christ-centered communities within Gondatwisa Parish, laying a foundation for collective growth and shared faith.

Dn. Sebin Thampy

Karbook Parish

School Annual Day Leadership



The celebration of fifth Annual Day of Holy Cross School, Karbook began on the theme "TOWARDS THE NEW HORIZON OF PEACE, HOPE AND HARMONY" with vibrancy and life

propelled into magnificent and reverberating celebration on 30 November 2024. The Annual day was presided over by chief guest Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro CSC, DD, the Guest of Honour SDM, Karbook Shri. Shyam Jamatia and SDPO Karbook Shri Gamanjoy Reang, Fathers, Sisters and our proud parents.

Entailing the formal welcome by Rev Fr Antony Balan the Principal followed by the prize distribution ceremony to the students who excelled in academics and thereafter the progressive annual report was presented by Sr. Rosita Kinny SRA the Headmistress. The program was an amalgamation of various hues benefiting the theme wondrously. The thematic show of talent, imagination and organization was the essence of the evening. Our students danced to the tune of songs with colourful props. The audience was enthralled by a colorful and very well directed Kokborok drama based on the theme "PARENTING AND FAMILY VALUES". Addressing the gathering the Chief Guest Rev. Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC appreciated the management for the quality education and holistic development of our students in the village school. The Guest of Honour Shri. Gamanjoy Reang, SDPO, delivered his powerful message on the importance of love and care for our students and instructed the parents to be vigilant on drugs, child marriage and POCSO Act. The exhilarating show was an unforgettable experience and left a lasting impression on the minds of everyone present. It was indeed a spectacular display of talent and fervor.

Sr. Rosita, SRA

Inauguration and Blessing of Holy Trinity Chapel



Holy Trinity Motha at Ichchacharri was inaugurated and blessed on 1st December 2024. It is the oldest chapel under the Karbook Parish. It was a long-awaited dream of the people to have their own decent chapel and through the initiative of Fr Antony Balan their dream has become a reality, which in fact brought back the faithful together. The event commenced with a grand floral welcome to our Lordship Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC with a procession of Tripuri Dance. Fr Antony Balan gave the introduction and welcomed everyone for the event. After the formalities were done the new chapel was inaugurated and blessed by Rev Bishop Lumen Monteiro. Soon after the blessings by our dear Bishop the people gathered for the Holy Eucharist which was

presided by the bishop along with six con-celebrants – Frs. Antony Balan, Lawrence Darlong, Janardhan CMF, Telephore CMF, Babu Stephen SDB, Suman SDB and Juel, SDB. We were also privileged to have sacrament of Confirmation and first Holy Communion. We appreciate the effort taken by the Catechist, Deacon Jojappa, and SRA Sisters to prepare the children. On the previous day the candidates were given special classes along with the sacrament of reconciliation. 78 candidates received Confirmation and 28 candidates received first Holy Communion. The newly confirmed were given certificates. The day's celebration ended with a short felicitation program followed by fellowship meal.

Sr. Rosita, SRA

Ambassa Parish



Ambassa (Tripura) December 22, 2024: Holy Spirit Catholic Church, Ambassa inaugurated one more village chapel at Tangboul. Faithful from the parish more than 500 people gathered to welcome Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC and Bishop's brother and his wife Mr. Emmanuel and Mrs. Alice Monteiro along with Fr. Jeevan Kennedy the SVD Regional Superior from Guwahati. They were welcomed with the flowers and loud applause by the people and took them Mr. Nijjala's house where the earlier village chapel was there. Bishop blessed the statues of Divine Mercy Jesus, St. Joseph & Mother Mary and they were taken into procession to the new chapel. After placing those statues on the elevated pedestal Fr. Jeevan cut the ribbon inviting all the local community people and inaugurated the newly built village Chapel. Then the parish council secretary Mr. Kamal Debbarma invited Bishop Lumen to Bless the Chapel. Faithful entered the chapel for the Holy Mass and girls from Tangboul village community led the celebrants to the Altar with an entrance dance. Mr. Pannalal Haram, the secretary of the village community read the history of the village Church and after that with the entrance hymn Bishop began the Holy Eucharist. It was also an occasion for the parishioners to come together and celebrate the advance Christmas as the tradition of the parish. During the offertory people offered the home made sweets along with home grown vegetables, rice etc. and the Bishop blessed them. After the Mass there was a short felicitation program, honouring Bishop and his relatives, Fathers, Sisters and Parish leaders by traditional home woven shawl and thanking efforts put by so many people to build the village Chapel especially the donors who helped financially to complete the village Chapel. A meal locally prepared for all was a grand finale of the event.

Ivan D'Silva, SVD

Ambassa Parish

Blanket Distribution to the Poor Families



Ambassa (Tripura) December 22, 2024: As tradition of the Holy Spirit Catholic Church Ambassa to distribute clothes and blankets for the poor families this year also before Christmas 50 families received blankets and clothes. Prior to this event, the parish council in the meeting had discussed this matter and collected Rupees twenty thousand to buy the blankets from Agartala in a wholesale rate. During the discussion, the 50 beneficiaries from three villages are from Bolaram 15 families, from Raipasa 25 families and from Dhanchara 10 families both Catholics and non-Catholics. Bishop Lumen distributed the blankets for fifteen families at Tangboul on the advance Christmas day of the parish and blessing of the new village Chapel at Tangboul on 22nd December. Bishop Lumen blessed the poor families and appreciated the parish for such noble work. For Raipasa and Dhanchara the village leaders distributed the blankets to the beneficiaries. Families expressed their gratitude for organizing such an event and donating the blankets. Certainly it is a drop in the ocean to reach out the poorest during this Christmas season.

Ivan D' Silva

Pitra Parish

Inauguration & Blessing of Sts. Peter and Paul Village Chapel at Dak



On December 26th, the village of DAK in Pitra parish witnessed a joyful celebration of faith as a new chapel dedicated to Sts. Peter and Paul was inaugurated and blessed by Bishop Lumen Monteiro. The ceremony was graced by the presence of several Salesian priests, brothers, sisters, and a large gathering of faithful. The villagers, part of the Molsom community, embraced the Catholic faith in 2010. Though small in number, they have grown significantly over the years, and the construction of this

beautiful chapel stands as a testament to their unwavering faith. Despite facing numerous challenges, including an acute shortage of water, poor road connectivity for most of the year, and a lack of educated leadership, the chapel was successfully completed with the support of leaders from neighboring communities. The inauguration was a heartwarming event, with the villagers, guided by catechists, working tirelessly to prepare for the occasion. The presence of priests, sisters, and lay faithful from various mondlis, including those from distant areas, brought encouragement and inspiration. The mutual cooperation and solidarity displayed in building up the faith as a parish community were truly commendable.

It is hoped that this chapel will not only strengthen the local community but also serve as a catalyst for transformation and development in the entire region.

Fr. Sunny, SDB

What is the Jubilee?

The Jubilee is a year-long, grace-filled celebration when we are called to reflect on our faith and renew our commitment to God and experience His mercy. The Jubilee is celebrated every 25 years.

Since the year 1300, each Holy Year has held profound spiritual, ecclesial, and social importance for the Church and its followers.



'Pilgrims of Hope', the motto of the Jubilee Year 2025, where Pope Francis invites the Church - the men and women of our time, and above all young people - to rediscover the theme of hope.

VATICAN II Lumen Gentium (Light of the Nations) Dogmatic Constitution on the Church	VATICAN II Dei verbum (Word of God) the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation	VATICAN II Sacrosanctum Concilium (This Sacred Council) the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy	VATICAN II Gaudium et spes Joy and Hope the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World
--	---	---	--

DECEMBER 2024

24 December
Opening of the Holy Door of Saint Peter's Basilica



JANUARY 2025

24-26 January
Jubilee of the World of Communications

FEBRUARY 2025

8-9 February
Jubilee of Armed Forces, Police and Security Personnel

16-18 February
Jubilee of Artists

21-23 February
Jubilee of Deacons

MARCH 2025

8-9 March
Jubilee of the World of Volunteering

28 March
24 Hours for the Lord

28-30 March
Jubilee of the Missionaries of Mercy

APRIL 2025

5-6 April
Jubilee of the Sick and Health Care Workers

25-27 April
Jubilee of Teenagers

28-30 April
Jubilee of People with Disabilities

MAY 2025

1-4 May
Jubilee of Workers

4-5 May
Jubilee of Entrepreneurs

10-11 May
Jubilee of Musical Bands

16-18 May
Jubilee of Confraternities

24-25 May
Jubilee of Children

30 May - 1 June
Jubilee of Families, Grandparents and the Elderly



JUNE 2025

7-8 June
Jubilee of Ecclesial Movements, Associations and New Communities

9 June
Jubilee of the Holy See

14-15 June
Jubilee of Sport

20-22 June
Jubilee of Governments

23-24 June
Jubilee of Seminarians

25 June
Jubilee of Bishops

25-27 June
Jubilee of Priests

28 June
Jubilee of the Eastern Churches

JULY 2025

28 July - 3 August
Jubilee of Youth

SEPTEMBER 2025

15 September
Jubilee of Consolation

20 September
Jubilee of Justice

26-28 September
Jubilee of Catechists

OCTOBER 2025

5 October
Jubilee of Migrants

8-9 October
Jubilee of Consecrated Life

11-12 October
Jubilee of Marian Spirituality

18-19 October
Jubilee of the Missions

30 October - 2 November
Jubilee of the World of Education



NOVEMBER 2025

16 November
Jubilee of the Poor

22-23 November
Jubilee of Choirs

DECEMBER 2025

14 December
Jubilee of Prisoners

**Feast of St. Francis Xavier
&
release of Kokborok Bible Diary 2025**



On December 3, the Diocese joyfully celebrated the feast of St. Francis Xavier, its patron saint, with a solemn Holy Mass at the Cathedral. The Eucharistic celebration, presided over by Bishop Lumen saw the participation of priests, religious, and faithful from across the diocese. In his homily, Bishop Lumen called upon all present to emulate the missionary zeal and dedication of St. Francis Xavier. He encouraged everyone to embrace their faith actively and share the love of Christ within their families, communities, and beyond.

Following the Holy Eucharist, a significant milestone was marked with the release of the Kokborok Bible Diary 2025 by Bishop Lumen. The Diary, a vital resource for spiritual enrichment, was the result of dedicated efforts by the diocesan Bible Commission. The first copies were presented to prominent clergy members, including Rev. Fr. K.J. Abraham CSC, Provincial of the Holy Cross North East Province; Rev. Fr. Hormis John CSC; Rev. Fr. Lawrence Darlong; and Rev. Fr. P. Joseph SDB.

Fr. Amalraj, the Secretary of the Bible Commission, expressed heartfelt gratitude to all who contributed to the successful creation of the diary. He acknowledged the collective effort of the team in ensuring this valuable resource would strengthen the faith of the Kokborok-speaking community.

Fr. P. Amalraj

Health Camp in the Community



Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura organized a health camp at Satraiphang Para under Amarpur R.D Block on 7th December 2024. The health camp was organized in the remote village and more than 150 people, mostly women and children, were diagnosed from various health ailments by the Doctors of Chellagang PHC. From JUST six project staffs were present in the health camp. The aim and scope of the health camp includes propagation of health care and facility in the given locality, promotion of health care detection of disease and reaching the unreached community. The health camp is to create awareness and educate people about health care, to identify and address health issues, and to reduce the incident of diseases. The most common diseases that were found during the health camp were fever, lose motion, cough and cold, joint pain, skin diseases and headache.

Robert Lushai

Our Distinguished Guests

- Fr. Benjamin SJ from AICUF Chennai
- Sr. Leena SJA Provincial from Bhubaneshwar
- Sr. Nirmalini AC Superior General from Bengaluru
- Fathers, Sisters and family members of our new Priests from Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Meghalaya

Bishop's Program for January 2025

- 01: New Year Day Mass @ SFX Cathedral
- 02-10: Closing Ceremony of SFX Exposition @ Old Goa
- 11: Garo Sabha @ Kathalcherra
- 12: Parish Sabha, Bishramganj Parish
- 15: Kochucherra Chapel Blessing, Ambassa Parish
- 16: Peretia Chapel Blessing, Tuikarmaw Parish
- 25: Archbishop Peter Machado arrives
- 25-26: Parish Sabha @ Kumarghat
- 27-04: CCBI Plenary Assembly @ Bhubaneshwar