

Pastor's Message



Gandhi - Inspiration for our times

On October 2 we celebrate the birth anniversary of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, also called Mahatma Gandhi and the Father of the Nation. His method of winning Independence for India was unique. He preached and practiced non-violence and non-cooperation to achieve his goal. He campaigned to uplift the downtrodden, to ease poverty, expand women's rights, and build religious and ethnic amity, end untouchability and more. Dr. R. Balasubramaniam, founder of the Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement says, *"For Gandhi, the ideals of ahimsa and satya were not just something he borrowed from the scriptural wisdom of ancient India. For him, practice of these values was spiritual sadhana on the one hand and political action on the other. Gandhi's demanding expression of these ideals that he believed in, made him someone easily admired but rarely emulated. He redefined political morality and public probity with such high standards that the politicians of today pale in comparison to what he stood for. Gandhi believed that morality was not a fancy aspiration but an essential ingredient for the exercise of political leadership."* Gandhi is internationally esteemed for his doctrine of nonviolent protest (satyagraha) to achieve political and social progress. In the eyes of millions of his fellow Indians, Gandhi was the Mahatma ("Great Soul"). The name Mahatma Gandhi is now one of the most universally recognized on earth. Gandhi envisioned a world *"of neighborliness and openness to strangers"* says Gyan Prakash, a history Professor at Princeton University. He says, *"The message Gandhi stood for was that public service or politics was not just about power, but about something larger."* Dr. R. Balasubramaniam says, *"His birthday is an apt time for us to go beyond mere intellectualization of Gandhi and his message of building a Swachh Bharat. It is time for our politicians and people to pause and reflect on what made Gandhi, the Mahatma. We need to be constantly aware of our commitment to love, peace, non-violence and truth on an individual level and strive to live it in the small actions we perform. Living his message on a daily basis for all our lives is the only way to realize the India of Gandhi's dreams. And that can happen only when we awaken the Mahatma in each one of us."*

St. Francis of Assisi - A Legacy of Peace, Love, and Care for Creation

Another great personality whom we remember in October is Saint Francis of Assisi. His story continues to inspire and challenge us centuries after his death. He reminds us to see the divine in all creation, to embrace simplicity, and to extend compassion to all beings. What truly sets Francis apart is his deep connection with nature. He saw God's presence in all creation – from the majestic mountains to the tiniest insect.

He famously preached to birds, calling them his "little brothers and sisters." This reverence for all living things continues to inspire environmental movements today. St. Francis of Assisi (born in 1181/82, died on October 3, 1226 and canonized on July 16, 1228), was the founder of the Franciscan orders of the Friars Minor, the women's Order of St. Clare, and the lay Third Order. His evangelical zeal, consecration to poverty, charity, and personal charisma drew thousands of followers. Saint Francis's appeal transcends religious and cultural boundaries. His message of peace, love, and care for all creation offers a timeless guide for living a more meaningful and compassionate life. Whether through social justice work, environmental activism, or simply a renewed appreciation for nature, his legacy continues to inspire positive change in the world.

We pray the prayer he taught us:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy.

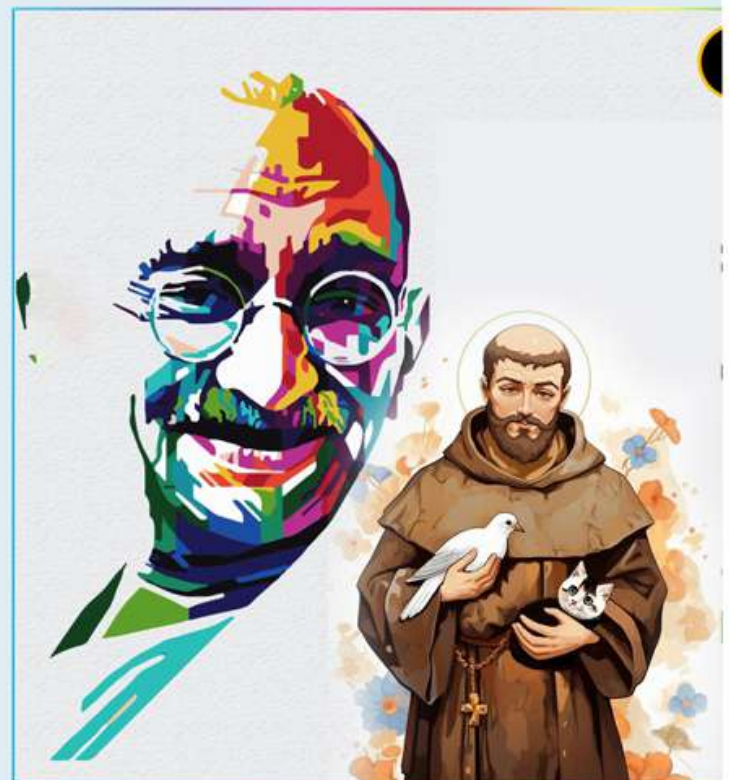
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;

to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

+Lumen, CSC



EDITORIAL

Culture, Faith, Interface



In Tripura, it isn't easy to think of October without associating it with the Pujas, one way or another. Even those of other faiths like us who have nothing to do with the pujas are somehow affected because they quite determine everything that happens here in October, from load-shedding schedules to spiritual retreats. The impact of this event is overarching and seeps down into every aspect of October life. In other words, the October Pujas have a way of seeming to be more than a religious affair, an integral aspect of the culture of the community.

In our State, there seems to be a lack of clarity about the relationship between culture and faith. At best, one has a blurred vision about this, one that goes back many decades, even centuries. I remember suppressing the surprise I felt years ago on hearing people of various ethnicities enumerated as tribal, Bengali, and Muslim, betraying thereby the hopeless mix-up of ethnicity and religion that had become so normal in the minds of people. One could point it out only at the risk of appearing 'out of touch' with facts.

Attempts to include religion, any religion, as part of the identity of an ethnic group are specious and at best motivated. In Tripura, members of the Jamatia Hoda seem to consider that belonging to a particular religion is part of being a Jamatia. Therefore, a Jamatia who embraces another faith betrays his cultural identity. Such an argument overlooks the fact that ethnicity or culture is a given but faith by definition is something acquired. Such thinking not only negates the freedom of choosing one's religion guaranteed by the Constitution of the country but also impinges on God-given freedom to choose what to believe or not to believe.

At a time when many are publicly professing that they are 'nones', meaning, unattached to any religion, thereby taking a bit too far the God-given capacity to choose, attempts to 'religionize' culture 'en masse' are equally detestable.

The spirit of celebration, joy, and brotherhood that surrounds big religious festivals like Christmas, Eid, and Durga Puja happily spills over into all communities and religions. The camaraderie and kindness such occasions emanate strengthen bonds of brotherhood within society. The capacity to reach out in brotherhood to people of all dispensations and yet retain and respect religious beliefs and practices that differentiate one from another is a sign of maturity. It is an affirmation that we uphold the strand of commonality that we all share as human beings and yet respect the freedom that God has given to each individual.

J. Pulinthanath, SDB

WINNING SPREE BY OUR TRIPURA SCHOOL BOYS



Fr. C.V. Jose writes:

Kowai District has won the inter district Tripura Schools State Football Championship. Nine players of the team are from Notre Dame School, Moharpara.

Fr. Davis writes:

Two of our students Mr. Rupesh Debbarma, Class X and Jamesh Debbarma, Class X, are selected to represent Tripura U-17 category Boys Football in the National School Games to be held in Srinagar from October 17-24, 2024.



Depacherra Parish

Church Blessing at Nandaraipara



On 1st September 2024, the faithful of Depacherra Parish were full of joy especially the faithful of Nandaraipara, because the new Church in Nandaraipara was inaugurated and blessed by Rev. Fr. Thomas Pereira, C.S.C, Parish Priest of Tuikarmaw Parish, in the absence of our dear Bishop. Before the Holy Mass, Fr. Amalraj, the Parish Priest, welcomed the faithful from different villages. After Mass there was a cultural program performed by the villagers, and they narrated the history of their church. Fr. Amalraj thanked Bishop Lumen Monteiro for his helping hand to get the new village Chapel. Fr. Lawrence said the church is a place of worship and for prayer of the community and not for anything else. The day ended by a common sharing of meal that was prepared by the faithful of the Village.

Dn. Daleiki Shylla

Kamaranga Parish

The Mission gets a new Presbytery



It was a dream come true when the new presbytery was inaugurated by Fr. Jeevan Kennady SVD, the Regional Superior of SVDs North-East India and blessed by Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, on 7th September at Kamaranga mission. We had a dream of a new presbytery since long time.

Our old existing presbytery was dilapidated and uncomfortable. We were in need of a decent house to regain and recharge our energy after tedious pastoral and educational works.

We had no proper accommodation for the guests and visitors.

Now the beautiful new presbytery is comfortable and welcoming. We are grateful to the SVD Society for the financial assistance and support to realize the project.

Fr. Arun Minj SVD

Girl Child Day celebrated at Kamaranga



It was apt to celebrate the girl child day to recognize and appreciate the contributions of women to the humanity when atrocities against women is on rise. We celebrated the girl child day on 8th September on the feast day of the Nativity of the Mother Mary. We thanked, appreciated and congratulated them for their immense sacrifices and contributions to the humanity. We acknowledged that it is difficult to run a family without a woman. Special prayers were offered for their good health, well-being and God's protection at the holy Eucharist. We brought awareness of the atrocities against women in the society and decided to say 'no' to any type of atrocities against women.

Fr. Arun Minj SVD

Ambassa Parish

Inauguration & Celebration of Sesquicentennial Jubilee



Ambassa (Tripura) September 8, 2024: India Guwahati Region inaugurated the 150 years of Jubilee of SVD Congregation at Ambassa. It was a celebration with a large crowd of people from all over the Diocese of Agartala. On September 8th at 9:00 am the faithful had gathered under the tent in the school grounds for the Holy Mass, over 1800 of them! The day began with the hymn to the Holy Spirit and honoring Mother Mary with flowers by Bishop, Priests, Nuns and faithful. After that all the priests and representatives of different communities of Sisters and Brothers were called on the stage to give away the newly blessed Mass stole which was locally stitched with a tribe's attire on it. It was prepared by the Parish Women and sponsored by the ADW, the SVD lay associates of Tripura. There were around 50 Priests, 20 Sisters and few religious Brothers participating in the Holy Eucharist presided over by the Local Ordinary Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC. There was a beautiful entrance dance taking the celebrants to the Altar and the melodious choir added to the solemnity to the Holy Mass. September 8th also celebrated as Girl Child Day and the little girl children solemnly brought the Bible in procession to the Altar for the enthronement. After the Mass there was a short cultural program and felicitation to Bishop and Fr. Roy Joseph SVD who celebrated his priestly Silver Jubilee. A sumptuous meal was prepared by the parish leaders for everyone. The parishioners of Holy Spirit Catholic Church, Ambassa, worked hard for the inauguration and celebration of the Jubilee.

Fr. Ivan DSilva, SVD

Tuikarmaw Parish

Feast of St. Mary's Parish



In preparation for the Feast of St. Mary's Parish Tuikarmaw, nine days Novena was conducted from 30th August to 7th September 2024. Each day of the Novena had a special theme related to Mother Mary's Life and her Virtues. We are grateful to all the Priests who came on different days of the Novena to offer Mass and break the word of God. The faithful from different mondlis came in big numbers to animate and participate in Novena Prayers and Mass. The Feast was celebrated on Sunday, 8th September 2024. Fr. Lancy D'Souza CSC the Vicar General of the Diocese was the main Celebrant for the Holy Eucharist. More than 550 faithful from all mondlis joined the joyful celebration. On this joyful occasion 40 children received the first Holy Communion. After the Holy Eucharist we had the Eucharistic Procession. It was followed by a festive meal. On Saturday 7th September, on the eve of our Parish Feast, we had a cultural night where all the mondlis rocked the stage with dances and songs to add colour to our festive celebration. The entire Novena, Eucharistic Procession and the Feast day celebrations were well participated and appreciated by all.

Mr. Jagdish Uchhoi, Parish Secretary

Karbook Parish

Parish celebrates the Feast of its Patroness



The feast of "Our Lady of Good Health" is celebrated every year on September 8 on the day of Nativity of Mary our Mother. Our Lady of Good Health is our parish patroness. This year's festival began on September 12 due to incessant rains that impacted the lives of the common folk. Fr. Lawrence Darlong hoisted the flag of Blessed Virgin Mary as a symbol of the beginning of the triduum and presided over the Holy Eucharist. On 13th Fr. Leenus VC and the Team from Mariamnagar led the parishioners to feel the presence of God by their retreat preaching which ended with the Holy Eucharist. On the 14th there was a Marian procession carrying the statue of Our Lady of Good Health. The Chariot was decked with flowers, decorated and surrounded by a large number of faithful. On the same day Fr. Allwin the Principal of St. Joseph's School, Gokulnagar, presided over the Holy Eucharist and prayed for the people of Karbook Parish. On 15th, the day of feast, the parish church was packed with parishioners from all the mothas and the Mass was celebrated by Fr. Amalraj PP of Depacherra Parish. Soon after the Mass the festival flag was lowered and a sumptuous meal was served to all.

Dn. Jojappa Pamisetty

Diocesan Youth Sunday



Agartala: The Agartala Diocese Youth Commission (ADYC) celebrated Diocesan Youth Sunday with great enthusiasm and fervor on 4th August 2024. The event held at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral Agartala, brought together around 450 young people from various parishes and different YCS/YSM units. The theme of the day was "Be rooted in the Living Word."

The celebration began with a vibrant Holy Mass led by Dean of Agartala Deanery, Rev. Fr. Christopher Warlarpih, S.D.B. After the Mass, an inspiring Talk was given by Mr. Suhel Debbarma, the Executive Member of TTAADC, who was the chief guest of the day. Engaging cultural programs were showcased by different YCS/YSM units and by different parish youth. One of the highlights of this Diocesan Youth Sunday was the opportunity for young people from various localities of our diocese to come together, interact, and build relationships. Despite their diverse backgrounds and cultures, the Youth shared a common bond – their faith and enthusiasm for the church. Therefore the event energizes and motivates the youth to deepen their faith, to take leadership roles, and to work towards a just and a compassionate society.

*Priyanka Debbarma
Secretary, ADYC.*

Women Commission



On the 18th of August 2024, a deanery meeting took place in Depacherra, followed by another meeting on the 25th of August in Ambassa. Sr. Veronica Fernandes, the Secretary of the Women's Commission, convened the meeting with President Mrs. Rita Uchoi and all the office bearers, in the presence of parish priests Fr. Amal Raj and Fr. Ivan D'Silva from Depacherra and Ambassa respectively. The Meeting involved a review of ongoing activities and the planning of future endeavors. Sr. Veronica provided an overview of the CBCI Synodal process, emphasizing the importance of engaging in active listening to the word of God, one another, and creation. Furthermore, she outlined the action plan of the Women's Commission from 2025 to 2033, urging women to organize various activities in their respective parishes, focusing on spiritual growth, such as reading the Bible, conducting Bible Quiz, pilgrimages and arranging Retreats.

Mrs. Sabita Reang discussed legal aid, addressing the Kolkata rape case and providing guidance on safeguarding ourselves and our daughters. She outlined available rights and laws and advised on necessary actions. She also shared the helpline numbers 1091 for women and 1098 for children. Following the meeting, Sr. Veronica conducted a session on candle making, phenol production, and surf powder manufacturing. She guided the attendees on starting up small businesses. Depacherra PP Fr. Amal Raj and Ambassa PP Fr. Ivan commended the Women and encouraged them to take the lead in small businesses and leadership. Additionally, Sisters from neighboring parishes participated and contributed to the day's success.

*Sr. Veronica, FS
Secretary
Commission for Women*



MISSIONARY MONTH - OCTOBER 2024

World Mission Sunday: October 20, 2024

GO AND INVITE
Everyone
to the banquet &
Mt. 22:9



THE
PONTIFICAL
MISSION
SOCIETIES

JUST outreach to the most vulnerable during the recent floods in Tripura

455 PP Shelter Kits provided to 455 most vulnerable families



On September 15, 16, and 17, the teams successfully distributed the shelter kits in the targeted villages. These kits, donated by Amazon through Donatekart and implemented by Caritas India and JUST, included essential items such as blankets, bed sheets, soap, sanitary pads, mosquito nets, and tarpaulin sheets to support the affected families.

Observer Reporter

Agartala: Sept 18. The state of Tripura has been battling heavy rainfall that has led to widespread flooding and landslides across several districts since August 18, 2024, creating a large-scale humanitarian crisis. In response, Caritas India, in partnership with Janna Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) conducted a rapid needs

assessment in six villages within the Amarapur and Karbook blocks of the Gomati district. The assessment report highlighted that shelter and hygiene (WASH) were the most critical areas requiring intervention. Based on these findings, Caritas India and JUST proposed a plan to Donatekart to secure 455 shelter kits for the most vulnerable residents in 13 villages.

The pp shelter kits consisted of (Blanket x1, bed sheet x 1, bathing Soap x 4, Cloth Wash Bar x 2, Sanitary Pads x 2 (14 pcs), Nylon Mosquito Net x 1, Recycle Plastic Ground Sheet x 1, Recycle Plastic Tarpaulin Sheet x1, Dental kit x 4, Bucket x1, Rope x1).

The swift action provided much-needed relief to those impacted by the devastating floods in the Gomati district.

JUST organized Health Camps at remote villages under Ganganagar




Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura organized health camps at Panchajoy Para under Ganganagar R.D Block, Dhalai Tripura on 23rd September. The health camp was organized in the remote village and more than 120 people, mostly women and children, were diagnosed from various health ailments by Dr. Joshua Debbarma, Medical Officer, Ganganagar PHC. From JUST Mr. Lilmohan Reang along with three Animators were present in the health camps. There was no malaria positive case after testing around 25 people. Two more health camps will be organized this month at different remote villages with the support from the Ganganagar PHC.

Robert Lushai


TRIPURA OBSERVER

THURSDAY, 19TH SEPTEMBER 2024

PAGE 3



LINK Wishes Our beloved
Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC
On His
43
Priestly Ordination
Anniversary



Happy
Ordination Anniversary
Dear Bishop

Our Distinguished Guests

- Fr. John Kandathinkara VC, Superior General from Edapally, Kerala
- Sr. Philo SCV, Superior General from Vincentgiri, Kerala
- Sr. Vincensa SCV, General Councillor from Vincentgiri, Kerala

Bishop's Program for October 2024

- 01: Clergy Meet, Agartala
- 05-06: Parish Feast Day, Gachirampara
- 07-19: Theological Conference @ ORIENS, Shillong
- 09-10: DFNEI Biennial Conference @ ORIENS, Shillong
- 13: Parish Day & Confirmations, Sindukpathar Parish
- 20: Mission Sunday. Confirmations @ Jampuijala Parish
- 21-23: NE Formators Meet @ Mt. Tabor, Kohima
- 26: Auxilium Convent Blessing, Mandwi
- 27: Confirmations @ Ambassa Parish