

## A Personal Reflection

Now that we have celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Diocese, it is time to move on, as our motto says, Lead Us Onward. Recently during my Retreat I was reflecting on the past 20 years and realized that we are all working through life the way we know best. And it is important to recognize how far we have come from where we once were but that we still have a distance to go! Asking for help or opening yourself up to work alongside another person can make you feel vulnerable, but it is imperative to know that we do not have to be alone through our journeys and that growth thrives in love. I can do nothing outside of the strength and guidance of the Lord and the support of others in my life. This is something I have come to understand more and more through my spiritual



journey, and it continues to encourage and motivate me to serve and do better.

There is a point that resonates with **Brenna Neimanis** who is a Good Shepherd volunteer at a juvenile justice residential detention facility that serves adolescent girls in New York City. She was sharing about her life and work with these juveniles in which she aptly mentions that the growth of these girls "is not always on the forefront of my thinking when items are being hurled across the room or when curse words are aggressively thrown about. But growth takes time and it takes patience, and we all need people to have grace with us in our challenging seasons. We need people to notice the positives in us and the ever-so-subtle changes

being made for the better, each tiny blossom beginning to bud from our winter season.

I can relate to what Brenna says.



Pastor's Corner

Nothing in this Diocese, from personnel to money to relationships to people to infrastructures has come easy. It has been a continuous effort at every step of the journey with the help of the Holy Spirit. LEAD US ONWARD was my prayer then, is my prayer now, and will be my prayer always. Let us tow the line together.

The Vincentian Fathers, who step into the Diocese for the first time, will be welcomed during the Holy Mass at Mariamnagar on 3rd July. Yet I want to welcome them through this issue of LINK. We look forward to their ministry not just at Mariamnagar Parish, but to bring the Lord's anointing in every nook and corner of the Diocese. +Lumen, CSC

## Enough is enough!



The *Madhyamik* results declared by the Tripura Board of Secondary Education early this month shows huge disparity between

the pass percentages of ST and SC students. The former registered a meager 40.98 percent pass while the latter recorded a 73.63 percent pass. Such a screaming gap between two groups designated as 'scheduled' indicates that either one is very dull in comparison to the other or that there are other factors that unequally affect the two groups.

Having sat through, the other day, a session of interviews of *Madhyamik* failed ST students of *Bangla* medium schools from interior parts of Tripura, I am quite sure one of those 'other factors', perhaps the most important one, is the Bengali language in which education is imparted to them.

Language is always a touchy issue, one on which even the most nonchalant usually have vigorous opinions. Hence there has

never been a dearth of views on language related issues. For instance, I have myself heard a thousand reasons why the tribal student should have Bengali as the medium of instruction, and how, in fact, it is to his advantage! And so on... I even,



half believed it, at a time.

The interview changed it all. The blank faces of those young people and their vacant eyes seemed to me

like a much-asked question, "Why do you keep supporting a system that so evidently offers an unequal playing field to the parties involved?" Despite trying to be politically correct, I knew the accusation was spot on.

And often, the ensuing silence that followed the unasked question was enough to shatter a soul. On the one hand, the teary eyed mother seated near her child, head bent -half in shame, half in

sorrow; nervously fingering a mark sheet with only single digit entries, and on the other hand, the claims of a 'State fully literate, the foremost in the country' resounding somewhere yonder, at the backside of memory!

Language, we have heard it said, is a mere tool, a vehicle, and inconsequential, in a way. Year after year in Tripura, the tribal student, clutching someone else's tool, has proved it is consequential, in every way. One must at least concede, under the circumstances, it is naïve to expect a tribal student to perform on par with his of her friend from the community that has Bengali language as mother tongue.

Decades of silence and make-believe has not helped the cause of our young students unequally yoked to a language, which for one is the mother tongue, and for the other is an imposed burden; imposed on the basis of some illusory and outdated feeling of superiority.

Do we dare dismiss these considerations, saying they are mere 'linguistic matters'?

**J. Pulinthanath, SDB**

## A Half Way Mark



Looking back at the six months of the Year of Mercy in our Diocese, we can only thank God for the initiatives taken by many of the Priests and the laity to observe the year as the Holy Father Francis has invited us. The many activities connected with this Jubilee Year continue in the Parishes. At the Don Bosco Church Nandannagar, we have had a number of groups which made very prayerful pilgrimages bringing many graces on themselves and on the Diocese as a whole.

The people of Kathalcherra Parish braved the heavy downpour and made the day of pilgrimage a memorable one on 21<sup>st</sup> May. They had to go through all the inconveniences brought about by the incessant rains and the bad roads but were happy to have made it. Congrats to Fr. Lancy and his Team.

For the young people of Mariamnagar Parish 28<sup>th</sup> May was a wonderful day of animation, prayer and reconciliation as the group led by Fr. Ronald, made a devout pilgrimage to the Church of Don Bosco Nandannagar.

On 10<sup>th</sup> June, a lively group from Ambassa parish led by Fr. Ivan, had a beautiful day of prayer, reconciliation and Eucharist. Fr. Cyprian SVD animated the group and they were deeply engrossed in prayer.

On 14<sup>th</sup> June, Fr. C. Abraham CSC accompanied a group of lively young children from Tuikarmaw Hostel. It was beautiful to see young children praying and making their Confessions. The holy Eucharist, celebrated by Fr. Abraham was also lively.

**Fr. Sunny, SDB**

## KUMARGHAT PARISH Youth Fellowship Meet 2016

Indeed it was a great and memorable event for St. Paul's Church Kumarghat as it organized a Youth Fellowship Meet. The Meet was held from May 20 to 22. The theme of the Meet was "Let Your Light Shine". The programme commenced on 20<sup>th</sup> evening with the Ice-breaking Session by Fr. Jilson, CSC, the Assistant Parish Priest and Principal of Holy Cross School. On 21<sup>st</sup> the Session was inaugurated with an Input by Fr. Arul J, CSC, the Parish Priest of Kumarghat, in which he presented the challenges and the problems that the youth face today. The purpose of the Meet was to motivate the youth to become vibrant and responsible leaders of the church and to participate in the activities of the parish. More than 100 youth participated. The Input Sessions were on Catholics at the crossroads and Youth lay leadership. In the Group discussion the youth spoke about the problems and challenges they face in their own villages. As a result the youth were motivated to solve the problems and take responsibility at parish level. On 22<sup>nd</sup> after the Holy Eucharist the youth were divided into Zonal level groups and Zonal leaders were selected. Election was held for Secretary, President, and Treasurer at Parish level from Zonal level and an Executive Committee was formed. The Meet ended with the lunch.

**Br. S. George**

## BODHJUNGNAGAR PARISH Ripples of Tidings from St. Andre Parish

25<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> May: Charismatic Retreat was conducted at the Parish animated by the members of the Jesus and Mary Crusaders, a lay organization from Goa.

It was a spiritual renewal for the students and local *mondoli* people. The second day was organized in Borokwthal church as part of the Silver Jubilee spiritual preparations.

28<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> May: Bishop's pastoral visit to



St. Andre Parish: The pastoral visit encouraged the parishioners especially the Bodhjunnagar *mondoli* during this year of the Silver Jubilee of the Parish. He presided at the solemn Mass on the occasion of the feast of 'Corpus Christi' and exhorted the



people to grow in faith and experience the presence of God in the holy Eucharist. After Mass the Bishop was accorded a warm welcome by the parishioners and the Parish Council members. He addressed them and emphasized the importance of leadership in the church. He also joined the celebration of the Feast of the Sisters of Adoration (SABS).

7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> June: There was a Marriage Preparation Course for the to-be-



married couples. There were 8 couples who attended the

Course. The Course was conducted by Mr. Raju, Catechist Anando and Fr. Binoy, CSC. The two days of preparation helped the couples to receive the Sacrament of the Marriage with proper disposition and understanding of Christian marriage.

10<sup>th</sup> June 2016: Laying of Foundation Stone for the extension of the school. It



was a red letter day for the St. Andre school community at Bodhjunnagar. The foundation stone was blessed and laid for the extension

of the school building. The blessing of the stone was done by Fr. Arun D, CSC, the Rector of the Minor Seminary at Bodhjunnagar amidst Fathers, Sisters, local guardians, managing committee members, Teachers and students.

12<sup>th</sup> June 2016: Joseph Sango get-



together at Borokwthal. This was in preparation of the Silver Jubilee of the parish. There



were 40 Joseph Sango members present from different *mondolis* of the Parish. The day began with holy Mass followed by Talk given by Mr. Tarun Kanti on the Theme, "The role of Joseph Sango in building up of the Family and Church." The members had an open discussion on many issues of faith. After lunch Quiz competition was conducted and there was lot of enthusiasm found among the members.

**15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> June:** Village teachers' Training: On the request of the many village *motha* schools, the parish priest along with the parish councilors decided to organize two days' of Training to the Teachers of the village schools. 21 Teachers from different village schools attended the training. The programme was conducted at Radhanagar. The Resource Person was Fr. Binoy C.S.C, along with Miss Nangiapa Hrangkhawl, a trained teacher of St. Andre School. At the end of the Training, a Certificate was issued and the teachers expressed their great satisfaction for the new learning that they received.

**17<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> June:** English Coaching to Bengali medium students: The parish priest organized English coaching to Bengali Medium students who are studying class IX to XII from 11 am to 4.30 p.m. 18 students came regularly and attended the class. It was very interesting to note their eagerness to learn English and effort they made.

**Fr. Binoy, CSC**

### **KHUMULWNG PARISH** **Women Empowerment at Maria Sangha Seminar**



At least thirty Women of the Parish attended the leadership training programme guided and organized by Sr. Punitha SJA and Fr. Arun Minj SVD at St. Alphonsa Parish Khumulwng on 19<sup>th</sup> June. Various themes such as Women involvement in the Church, leadership in family prayers, participation in mission and evangelization, etc were dealt in the Seminar. The important outcome of the Seminar was two fold-- women leadership in group family prayers and

visiting different villages and pilgrimage centres during 'Year of Mercy' to strengthen faith. The Seminar has strengthened the zeal and enthusiasm of women's participation and involvement in the Church.

**Fr. Arun Minj, SVD**

### **KATHALCHERRA PARISH** **Final Profession**

On 1<sup>st</sup> May Sr. Therese Darlong made her final vows in the Congregation of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany. To mark the event there was a thanksgiving Mass at Puranbari *mondoli* on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the same month. Fr Lancy, the parish priest, celebrated the Mass along with other six priests of the Diocese. He spoke on the occasion and thanked God for the vocations of our parish. All the parishioners congratulated Sr. Therese and wished her well in her future mission.

### **Pilgrimage**

56 Women of our Parish were happy to enter the Mercy Door at Nandannagar on 21<sup>st</sup> May and receive the blessings of the Merciful Savior in this Year of Mercy. They are grateful to Fr. Lancy CSC and Fr. Cyprian SVD who offered spiritual nourishment and to Sr. Suman and Parish Priest who made this day possible for them. They were filled with Joy of the Lord even though they had to bear the brunt of the nature as they returned back to their own nests.

### **Fathers' Day & Mothers' Day**

It was rare occasion on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June to see the Couples entering the church with the candles lit in their hands to offer the Holy Mass. It was the triple celebration of Fathers Day, Mothers Day and the Family Day. Youth made their parents proud by their lively liturgy. Mr. Chandrojoy spoke on the Holy Family of Nazareth and enthused all to build their family on prayer and love. Mr. Piangloma, giving the example of his own family, explained how each need to swim across through love, pain, suffering and sacrifice. Fr. Lancy highlighted the gift of forgiveness to be shown by each and everyone in the family. Thanks to the *Maria Sangha* who made the parents and children feel great on this occasion.

### **100% Results**

Holy Cross Higher Secondary School Kathalcherra secured 100% results in both Madhyamic and Class XII. Kudos to all the students and the Staff for their hard work. **Sr. Suman BS**

### **Nuns, priests in Tripura learn tribal language during holiday**

June 13, 2016 Story by: Joseph Pulinthanath (donboscoindia.com)



Twenty-three priests and nuns working in different parts of

Tripura used the summer holiday season to gain proficiency in Kokborok, the local language of the northeastern Indian State from May 27 to June 10.

Kokborok is one of the two official languages of Tripura and is spoken by large groups of its tribes. The "Intensive Kokborok Learning Course for Priests and Religious" was held at Don Bosco Peace Centre Agartala. The language course is among several annual programs conducted by the Peace Centre. Its objective is to familiarize the basics of the Kokborok language to new comers to the State. This year five priests and 18 nuns attended the course. Bishop Lumen Monteiro of Agartala, who opened the course, called it an "absolutely significant and relevant initiative" and urged the participants to try their best to learn the language, which he thought, would help them in future.

The dawn to dusk Intensive course has been specially designed to suit the needs of Church personnel who need to interact with people in the villages on a variety of topics and matters. The teaching methods adopted gave a great deal of emphasis on language used in realistic situations and on making the learners aware of how the language works. In addition to basic grammar, the text of the New Testament, the Mass and various prayers became resource material for students to pick up new vocabulary and usages. The highlight of each day was a "speech" each student made in Kokborok. The exercise, according to a participant, helped her to "overcome inhibition" and "feel more confident" in talking Kokborok.

### **SCC North Zone Meeting at Kathalcherra**

SCC North Zone Meeting was held on 18<sup>th</sup> June at Kathalcherra Parish. Five Parishes representatives (27 participants) took part in the Meeting. Mr. Lokoram Reang of the Good Shepherd Parish Kathalcherra conducted the Bible enthronement service. Mr. Piangloma Darlong welcomed the participants. Mrs. Jamunna Darlong animated the Bible



sharing by using the seven steps method. The minutes of the previous Meeting were read by Mr. Vandanga Darlong the Zonal Secretary. During the Meeting

participants spoke about the SCC leadership training programme which was held in the month of April from 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> at Kumarghat Parish. It was well organized but many of the participants were new to SCC because of which most of the modules have to be changed. Many of the old participants felt that it was a repetitive session. The Meeting was animated by Fr. Arul CSC the Zonal Animator. Fr. Lancy CSC the Diocesan Coordinator was present for the Meeting. He thanked all for the whole hearted service in promoting SCC in the respective Parishes. Action plan: in parishes of the Zone where SCC does not function well, members will visit those parishes and discuss on how to improve SCC in their parishes. The Meeting concluded with veneration of the Bible and a fellowship meal.

**Mr. Piangluma Darlong**

### Bishop's Program for July 2016

- 01: Confirmations at Pitra, Bishramganj Parish
- 02: Pritilotha Pastoral Visit, Mariamnagar Parish
- 03: Installation of Vincentian PP, Mariamnagar Parish  
Blessing of VC Community, Mariamnagar Parish
- 04: B.Ed. Fresher's Day, Holy Cross College
- 05: Clergy Meet & Reflection, Agartala
- 06-07: Meeting with Architect, Agartala
- 09: Blessing Assembly Hall, Depacherra  
Confirmations at Dalaksingpara, Depacherra Parish
- 10: Confirmations, Nandannagar Parish
- 16: Blessing Holy Cross Sisters Convent, Twithampwi
- 17: Confirmations at Twichakma, Moharpara Parish
- 19: All India Forum Directors Meet, Bengaluru
- 20-21: Caritas India National Assembly, Bengaluru
- 22-28: Caritas Field Visit to N. Karnataka
- 30-31: Parish Sabah & Feast, Khumwllwng

## Bharatavani : India's largest multilingual online dictionary launched

The Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) on 25<sup>th</sup> May launched India's first and largest multilingual knowledge portal [www.bharatavani.in](http://www.bharatavani.in) that has more than 130 dictionaries, glossaries and terminology books in text and PDF formats. "All the content in print and other formats will be completely digitized and put onto the portal in the form of searchable text. The portal has been launched in 22 scheduled languages, which eventually will be extended to 100 more languages," a statement by the ministry in New Delhi said. Bharatavani aims to foster national integration by emphasizing on multilingual and cross-lingual learning tools and technologies.

## Muhammad Ali My trust with the Greatest

Story by Rajiv Theodore

It was the winter of 1980 and we were scrawny amateurs learning the ropes of boxing in New Delhi's Dhyana Chand National Stadium. Our coach Surender Sharma called it a day after couple of hours of grueling work-out. As he debriefed in the failing light, he mentioned that Muhammad Ali, yes the man whom we worshipped, would come visiting right here, at this stadium the following week. The news exploded in our ears and, although it was tough to comprehend, I went home as if a bolt of lightning had hit me. The next day, the coach asked for volunteers among us to be with the "Greatest" during his time in the stadium, my hand shot up like an arrow and I was among the chosen few!

The day arrived and I was in a room with him just me, him and Jimmy Ellis, his long-time sparring partner. I was in a trance, speechless, wonderstruck and almost transformed into a stone by the sheer enormity of my situation. There was no paper around for asking for an autograph, no camera for a shot with the icon, no pen. It was just a mad dream. When the trance loosened its tentacles I quickly ripped off my



volunteer badge on my shirt. I spotted a ballpoint lying around and thrust both of it upon the most celebrated athlete the world had ever produced. Yes, I got his autograph and took Ellis too.

**Muhammad Ali at Rajghat, New Delhi**

Ali's penchant for sweets was also on display. He pointed out to me to fetch him some *desi* sweets placed in boxes for him in the room at the stadium where we were. I gave him a box and he started munching the sugary creations with a certain relish. My day was more than made. Later friends and relatives poked me for not getting a snap with him and many other things but I was guilt free, I was happy with what I got; rather I was mesmerized and stoned by the aura of Ali.

He had an unorthodox style to say the least in boxing and out of the ring too. In



that life of 74 years, he had two names but we all know it was one man, an artist, a

magician, who always broke new grounds wherever he went and paradoxically kept intact that almost childlike innocence and a sense of wonder. **Rajiv Theodore**

## Cloistered Nun awarded Doctorate in aerospace engineering :

A cloistered nun, who researched on scramjet engines, was among 23 people who were recently conferred PhD degrees in aerospace engineering. Dressed in the habit of her religious order, Sister Benedicta of the Holy Face received the Degree at the 8<sup>th</sup> Convocation of the Defence Institute of Advance Technology (DIAT) in Pune on May 31. She had obtained special permission from her Superiors to attend the Convocation ceremony as outside contact is forbidden in her Order. "I had joined the religious order post my final viva last year and this was the first time I came out after that. The Rules of our Order forbid us from going out of the Convent and I was given special permission to attend the Convocation," she said. Born Roschelle R. M. in Kuwait just before the Gulf war, Sr Benedicta had finished her graduation from the St. Xavier's College in Mumbai and acquired her Master's degree in Space Science from Pune University.

**Mattersindia.com**

### Our Distinguished Visitors

- **Sr. Ventura, FS Regional Superior from Rangia**
- **Fr. Nelson Tellis, Delhi Archdiocese**