



Pastor's Corner

God speaks... sometimes whispers... hear Him!

There once was a farmer who discovered that he had lost his watch in the barn. It was no ordinary watch because it had sentimental value for him. After searching high and low among the hay he gave up and asked the help of a group of children playing outside the barn. He promised to reward the finder. Hearing this, the children hurried inside the barn, went through and around the entire stack of hay but still could not find the watch. Just when the farmer was about to give up, a little boy went up to him and asked to be given another chance. The farmer thought, "Why not? After all, this kid looks sincere enough." So the farmer sent the little boy back in the barn. After a while the little boy came out with the watch in his hand! The



farmer was both happy and surprised and so he asked the boy how he succeeded where the rest had failed. The boy replied, "I did nothing but sit on the ground and listen. In the silence, I heard the ticking of the watch and just looked for it in that direction."

MORAL: Allow a few minutes of silence to your mind every day and see how sharply it helps to set your life the way you expect it to be!

And then there is this other story about a little girl who threw a brick on a passing car. When the driver stopped and caught the kid asking 'why did you do it', the girl was apologetic and said: "I threw the brick because no one else would stop." And with tears dripping she pointed to a spot just around a parked car. "It's my handicapped brother; he rolled off the curb and fell out of his wheelchair and I can't lift him up." Moved beyond words, the driver hurriedly lifted the handicapped boy into his wheelchair.

It was a long walk back to his car; the damage was very noticeable. But the driver drove away and never bothered to repair the huge dent. He kept it to remind himself "Don't go through life so fast that someone has to throw a brick at you to get your attention!"

MORAL: God whispers in our souls and speaks to our hearts. Sometimes when we don't have time to listen, God has to throw a brick at us.

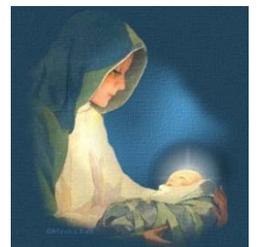
Christmas is round the corner. Let us keep the spirit of Christmas as Charles Dickens said, "I will honor Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all the year." I want to wish you a Joyous Christmas and grace filled New Year 2015. +*Lumen, CSC*



Editorial

Warmth of December

Despite a fall in temperature, December brings with it a warmth seldom experienced in other months of the year. Quite simply, it is the showpiece month of the year for us Christians - the month when our identity and presence seem to become most visible to those around us. The season has an uncanny knack of striking a chord in the hearts of everyone, even those generally un-enamored by religion-related matters the remaining eleven months.



And for us Christians the first twenty-four days of December are perhaps the most anticipated days of the entire calendar. As Christmas gets closer, pastors and priests routinely caution congregations against the impetuous consumer madness that seems hard to resist at this time of the year.

In a place like Tripura, where Christmas is still a relatively small scale event and almost exclusively confined to the Christian community, we are at a peculiarly advantageous position to tell our largely uninformed, rarely interested and slightly confused non-Christian brethren, the true meaning of one of the most central truths of our faith.

Do we fritter away that advantage by succumbing to the universal tendency to enjoyment the season characterizes? Or by mindless indulgence in euphoric celebrations in which 'the Christ factor' does not figure at all?

It is disheartening to see how in many so called Christian areas and countries, the centrality and role of Jesus Child in the Christmas celebrations is getting minimal. If we do it that way here in Tripura, we would be dismissing him, without ever having given him a chance!

Keeping a tab on the nature of our numerous 'pre Christmas' celebrations and Christmas related events, would surely make it easier on the wallet. More importantly, we would have, perhaps unwittingly, told thousands of curious onlookers what real Christmas is all about. Merry Christmas to you dear LINK reader!

J. Pulinthanath, *sdb*



LINK wishes all its readers
**Merry Christmas
 &
 Happy New Year 2015**

Amarpur Parish

Newly erected Blessed Joseph Vaz Parish Amarpur

16th November was a memorable day for the Diocese of Agartala as it



inaugurated its 20th Parish at Gamakubari in South Tripura. The Parish is dedicated to Blessed Joseph Vaz. The Fransalians have accepted the Parish at Amarpur a remote area in Gomati District. During the Holy Mass the New Parish was erected by Most Rev Dr. Lumen Monteiro CSC and Fr. Pratap Kerketta MSFS, was installed as its first Parish Priest in the presence of Fr. George Panthenmackal MSFS, the Provincial of North East Province.

It was a memorable event as many Priests and Sisters were present including Fr. Hormis the Vicar General, Fr. Lancy, Fr. Binoy, Fr. Joy MSFS, Fr. James MSFS, Fr. Donsuk MSFS, Fr. Prasad, Fr. Robert CSC Asst. Provincial, and a large number of faithful of the eleven villages. Rev. Bishop also installed Fr. Joy Kaniyammattel MSFS as the Parish Priest of Sindukpathar Parish, in the presence of Fr. George Panthenmackal, the Provincial of North East Province, F.C.C. Sisters and the Parish leaders of Sindukpathar. **Fr. Joy, MSFS**

Immaculate Conception Parish Moharpara

Global Room Teachers

On 4th November, Notre Dame Holy Cross School Moharpara was pleased to receive and welcome two of our Global Room Teachers from Ireland. That was a wonderful occasion for twenty of our teachers who are under going global room training. Those two



observers were happy to see the progress of our teachers in their planning and progress in studies. In their sharing they said that a teacher needs to *know* the student like a mother knows her child. Notre Dame Holy Cross School has trained many teachers in the past who are effectively and actively teaching in the school.

Pastor's Pastoral Visit

The Moharpara Parish community was happy to welcome Bishop Lumen Monteiro who was on a pastoral visit to Nupangrua village where a large crowd had gathered from the nearby villages of Toidu, Gondek and Sontang. After Holy Mass and catechetical instruction they moved on to Nelsy village where people from neighboring Dhonlekha village also joined the celebration. Bishop Lumen developed the theme of 'Unity amidst diversity' in both the places.



SCC Leaders Training



On November 15th we had S.C.C. training for village leaders here in the parish. About fifteen village leaders from different *mandolis* of the parish participated. Fr. Lancy D'Souza, csc, the Diocesan Secretary for Small Christian Communities, animated the sessions. The difficult sessions were interspersed with some magic show that kept the participants interested. **Deacon Iswar Happa, csc**

St. Paul's Parish Kumarghat Leaders Meeting to form Family Commission

During this Year of the Family there was a one day of Input Session and Meeting on 21st September 2014 at Kumarghat Parish. The Session started with the Holy Eucharist. The Resource Persons were Fr. Arul, Fr. Agi, Mr. Lala Darlong, Mr. Vandanga Darlong and Mr. Sangunga Darlong. 42 representatives from different villages of the parish attended the program. The Resource Persons spoke on the vision and role of Family Commission, the responsibilities of family commission, the challenges of family and the situation of family life in Tripura. It was decided to conduct a day of training program in every village of our parish in order to strengthen Christian family. **Mr. Santosh Hrangkhawl**



Mariasango Annual Sabha

The Women's Association of our Parish had their Annual gathering at Kanchancherra from 17th to 19th October. The theme of the Sabha was based on the family. Fr. Bosco of the Diocesan Family Commission was the Resource Person. He has taken two classes on family and its role. Sr. Eva BS spoke on responsible parenting. Next day every village presented their report on the activities of Mariasango. Fr. Jose Sarpathil, csc offered Holy Mass on the last day. In his homily he insisted on the mission work of the church and how he has been a missionary to many people. **Ms. Saumiliani Darlong**

St. Arnold Parish Gandacherra

New *mondoli* at Babusai:

On 1st November the people of Gandacherra Parish gathered at Babusai camp for the blessing and inauguration of a new chapel. There was a simple but very meaningful prayer service. Our beloved Bishop Lumen Monteiro blessed and inaugurated the new chapel. The highlight of making this church is that other *mondolis* from the Parish put together their labor and contributed financially to make this chapel. This indicates the unity and love for the Parish as a whole.

Baptism, Confirmation and First Holy Communion: On November 2 it was a special day for the parishioners. Bishop Lumen Monteiro celebrated the Holy Eucharist and administered baptism to 50 people and first Holy Communion while six of them were administered Confirmation. The liturgy was lively and prayerful with the good singing by the hostlers with the parishioners. After the Holy Mass there was a Parish Council meeting in the presence of Bishop and at the end, the joy of the day was shared with an agape.

Children's Day Celebration: On November 14 Children's Day was observed at St. Arnold School. There was a two hour long cultural program organized by the Teachers. It was so colorful to watch how our young and old teachers put together their talents and all children enjoyed it fully. **Fr. Bennet**

St. Joseph Parish Agartala Clothes and Rice distribution

On 2nd November 2014, Maria Bodol of St. Joseph Parish Agartala, distributed clothes and 225Kgs of rice to 82 families at Bilaiham Kami under Teliamura sub-division. The village lies very interior and far from market with no proper road communication. Women and children are the sufferers in the case of major illnesses. The President of Maria Bodol Mrs. Gita Debbarma, Secretary, Mrs. Rina, Treasurer, Mrs. Priti, Advisor Sr. Bastian along with Maria Bodol members, Parish Secretary, Mr. Vinod Debbarma, All Indian Catholic Union president, Mr. Rakhil Debbarma were present for the program. The long awaited dream of Maria Bodol finally comes to reality by being one with the poor and marginalized. **President Mrs. Geeta D/B**



Christ the King Parish Depacherra

Parish Feast, Foundation Stone for Parish Church

With pomp and gaiety we celebrated the



Our Readers Write

Delighted to hear from you. When the skies opened over Agartala, we were thinking about you. Loved those beautiful maxims you included -- all were true and inspirational. Thank you. **Nap & Afra, LAX, USA**

Thank you very much indeed for the November issue of LINK. I was very happy to go through the newsletter and learned about several beautiful things happening in the Diocese of Agartala especially about the 75th Jubilee celebration of Holy Cross in North East. God Bless you the Shepherd, the Missionaries and the Laity of the Local Church in Tripura.

Fr. Jolly, Caritas India, Delhi

Congratulations! Another good shot. **+George, SDB, Miao, Arunachal Pradesh**

Thank you for "LINK NOVEMBER 2014". Thanking you for your kind concern. **+Andrew, Tura Meghalaya**

Thank you for the November. I found it interesting and informative, as usual. It is one of the few means for me to know what goes in the Agartala Diocese and in the North-East. United in the Mission we all share.

Fr. Descary, csc, Montreal, Canada

Thank you Bishop for the November 'Link'. I enjoyed reading all the good things that happen in our Diocese.

Fr. Ivan, SVD

Thanks for the Link and the exciting news of the 150th anniversary being more about the present and future than the past. **Fr. Willy, CSC, USA**

Prompt as always; the N.E. seems a different part of the world--such amazing work you are doing is incredible!!! **Lilian, Pune**

I've just received the November Link and was reminded of the milestone of Holy Cross in North East India. Congratulations and best wishes to you and all the Holy Cross community! May the Good Lord continue to bless your efforts!

Alan, CSC.

World's largest bible factory publishes 125 millionth copy in China:

The world's largest bible factory, operated by the Amity Foundation in Nanjing, has just published its 125 millionth copy amid a surge in demand in China over the past decade. Just two years after recording its 100 millionth bible, Amity has now sold 65.7 million copies in Chinese languages and exported 59.3 million to 70 countries. Christianity is the fastest-growing religion in China with up to 100 million followers including 12 million to 21 million Catholics. **UCAN-India**

annual Parish Feast of Christ the king on 23rd, November. Prior to the Feast 9 days of Novena was organized and the fathers; Robert, Hormis, P.J. Joseph, Lourdh, Bhuban and Cyprian preached on various themes focusing on the family. On the day proper before the Eucharistic celebration, Bishop Lumen amidst the hundreds of faithful laid the Foundation stone for the new Parish Church. The Feast was made solemn and jubilant through the meaningful Liturgy. Fr. Prasad the Parish Priest welcomed the gathering of over 1200 parishioners, 8 priests and 10 religious sisters along with Bishop Lumen and highlighted the importance of the day saying it is a historic event when the Parish is at the threshold of the silver years all parishioners from all the *mondolis* have gathered to celebrate the Feast as one family. Special welcome was accorded to 2 new *mondolis* - Bhagyaprasadpara and Nobin



para who for the first time are participating in the celebration. Bishop Lumen in his homily stressed the role of a Good Shepherd and the responsibility of the sheep to keep oneself connected to the sheepfold. He

called upon the parishioners to make use of every opportunity provided for their spiritual growth. During the Mass 46 children received the First Holy Communion and 15 children received the sacrament of Confirmation. Towards the end Bishop Lumen inaugurated the Jubilee year of the Parish by symbolically lighting the Jubilee lamp. After the mass, Eucharistic procession was held up to Shantinagar village. The faithful joined the procession with devotion singing and praising the Eucharistic Lord. It was followed by a short felicitation program and fellowship meal. **Sr. Benny, BS**

Eucharistic Procession enthalls Tripura's Capital City

The city of Agartala witnessed an overwhelming manifestation of faith in Christ on 8th November 2014 when hordes of faithful thronged its streets and took part in the Diocese level Eucharistic Procession. The Annual Procession, predominantly a spiritual event, is aimed at deepening faith and bearing witness to Christ. It is also arguably the largest gathering of its believers in the diocese in any given year. The procession, started six years ago and organized meticulously since then by the Catholic Lay people of Tripura under the aegis of All India Catholic Union, has been improving in organizational aspects and ambience with each passing year.

This year's edition, which had for its theme "I am the Bread of life", brought together over six thousand Catholics from all parishes of the Diocese. It began at the Vivekananda Stadium in the city with a preaching and healing session in the morning. Preaching of God's Word in Bangla, English and Kokborok interspersed with scripture readings in various languages, preceded the healing session that Fr. CR Paul CSC led.

The procession route this year included some of the most important junctions and streets of the capital city. As those walking in procession sang lustily praises of the Lord, large groups of onlookers stood on either side of the road and watched with great curiosity and admiration. The congregation, consisting of the young and the old, from an array of tribes and communities, and dressed mostly in traditional attire, transformed the bustling streets of Agartala town into a riot of colour and pageantry. For the onlookers of a town that routinely keeps witnessing processions and rallies with a political hue, the Eucharistic procession and its prayerful ambience proved to be a surprise. The Blessed Sacrament was most



Glimpses from the Diocese

reverently placed in a beautifully decorated float and flanked by children dressed as angels.

While addressing the gathering at the end of the Procession, Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro CSC, DD, Bishop of Agartala Diocese urged the Catholic faithful of Tripura to make daily prayer and reading of the Scriptures a custom in every family in the Diocese. Bishop Monteiro, who spoke in English, Bangla and Kokborok also emphasized on the need to foster unity in the diocese, a gift for which Christ himself prayed.

Mr. Paul S. Darlong, the Sate Secretary of All India Catholic Union (AICU) who oversaw the arrangements of the Procession proposed the vote of thanks

**J. Pulinthanath, sdb, Spokesperson
Public Relations Office (PRO)
Seminar**

A Seminar on PRO for Parish Priests, School Principals and School PROs, Hostel In-charges and Religious Superiors was organized by Fr. Ivan D'Silva SVD, Secretary Diocesan Commission for Social Communication at Bishop's House on 4th November. Media Meet was a great learning; and we were fortunate to see and hear the eminent PRO from Delhi and a prominent media person seen in Times Now and CNN IBN Fr. Dr. Dominic Emmanuel, SVD. He brought to light Jesus' style of communicating and expounded the Church's teaching in using media to evangelize. *Our institutes are the windows to educate, enlighten and empower the neglected masses of the society.* Fr. Dominic commissioned each of us to relate in simple words and simple

One Human Family Food for All

JUST observed the International campaign for "One Human Family, Food for All" on 19th October at Bidyalachan Para under Hezamara R. D. Block. 53 farmers took part in the program. The Resource Person, Mr. Vincent D/B spoke on the campaign which is conducted by Caritas India to help the needy and the poor who suffer without food. There are millions of people around the world who die of hunger though we have enough to feed them; but this doesn't reach them. A video clip related to hunger was screened which helped to better understand the situation. The farmers have pledged to contribute their wages for poverty mitigation.

Government certifies JUST SHGs

On 10th October 2014, 24 members of SHG formed by JUST received Certificates from the Ministry of Micro Small & Medium Enterprise (MSME), Govt. of India, after successfully completing 3 months Entrepreneurship Skill Development training on value added jute products. The program was organized by the SHGs of JUST in collaboration with the MSME Govt. of India. The Certificate distribution program was conducted at Sankhola, Khowai District. After the distribution program, the MSME Officer shared regarding the demand of jute products in the market. He advised the trainees to make full use of the Certificate and skill which they have acquired from the training.

Mr. Deepan Gurung

Two new saints are Indian

More than 4,000 Indians were at the Vatican on the last weekend of November to see Pope Francis officially declare two Indians a mystic nun and a social reformer priest as saints. Blessed Father Chavara Elias Kuriakose (1805-1871) and Blessed Sister Euphrasia of Sacred Heart of Jesus (1877-1952), both from the Syro-Malabar Church based in southern Kerala state, were canonized on November 23.



Global News Tidbits

Our Distinguished Visitors

Fr. Dominic Emmanuel, SVD, from Delhi
Fr. George Panthanmackel, MSFS Provincial from Guwahati
Fr. Donsuk, MSFS, from Manikbond
Mr. Luigino from Fratelli Dimenticati, Italy

BISHOP'S PROGRAMME FOR DECEMBER 2014

- 01: Inauguration of Year of Consecrated Life, Agartala
Clergy Meet & Recollection, Agartala
Meet AC Provincial
- 02-06: 10th Tsunami Remembrance, Colombo
- 07: Parish Feast, Moharpara
- 13: Jamatia Catholic Hoda Meet, Burburia
- 14: Ultacherra *mondoli* inauguration, Kumarghat Parish
- 18: Christo Mela, Kamaranga
- 19: JUST GB Meet & Christmas Program, Agartala
- 20: Christo Mela, Khumulwng
- 21: Chakumapara Church Blessing, Mandwi Parish
- 22: Molsom Catholic Rumun Na, Tuichilong
- 24-25: Christmas Program, Gondacherra Parish
- 28: Chapel Blessing, Bodhjungnagar Parish
- 31: New Year Eve, Agartala

ways making use of every opportunity to proclaim the love of God and also not to shun away from the anti-conversion brigade. He gave some practical tips on how to face media, like, 'be calm, prudent and on guard'. At the end of the Seminar we were charged to be proactive and media friendly.

Later Bishop Lumen briefed us on how to adopt a Low Carbon Lifestyle through a Power Point presentation from the Federal Government's Centre for Environment Education. *Sr. Joanita Fernandes, FS*

Inter Religious Meet at Durjoynagar

The Commission Secretary of the Diocese, Fr. Joachim Kullu, SVD, organized an Inter Religious Meet at St. Joseph Church campus. We were very happy. Bishop Lumen Monteiro presided over the function and gave a nice reflection on the theme 'Serve God in Neighbor'. Mr. J. L. Chakraborty Chairman of IARF, Mr. Kartik Chakraborty of Sanathan Dharma, Dr. Debdas Singha of Bahai faith, and Dr. Mrs. Leela Emeritus University Professor spoke on the theme, explaining how their respective religions stressed this great truth of service to neighbor is service to God. A sizeable number of participants attended the Meet which ended with a prayer followed by refreshments. We especially thank Fr. Kullu. *Mr. Chakraborty*

Ferrando 'special' children at the 'special' National Games

National Games for all categories of disabilities was held at Kallinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, from 1st to 5th November, organized by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports Govt. of India, in association with Special Olympic Bharat, Tripura. 800 disabled children from different parts of the country participated in various events. The State of Tripura was represented by five students of Ferrando School for Speech and Hearing Nandannagar. They returned with a sense of pride and jubilation for having secured three Silver and one Bronze medal. Awareness of their capability incited them to say: "We are determined to turn this silver and bronze into gold in the coming year and we grateful for the spiritual and material assistance which made it possible." *Sr. Reena, MSMHC*

Catechists get renewed

A renewal program with the theme "Family: the source/spring of Christian life" was held from 11th to 13th November at Pastoral Centre, Champaknagar. The full-time and part-time catechists of the Diocese attended. The program began with a Recollection Talk by Fr. Arun Minj SVD, in which the catechists were reminded of their call to be joyful evangelizers with commitment and zeal in spite of their domestic responsibilities. Bishop Lumen celebrated Holy Mass and exhorted the catechists to be sincere and obedient to the Parish Priests. Fr. Jeevan SVD in his talk emphasized the importance of the role in catechesis and guiding families. He appreciated their contribution and hard work. He proposed a 3-point action plan for them. Fr. Joachim SVD, Director of the catechists emphasized on the "weapons" each catechist must be equipped with during his village tour and visits- (1) The Holy Bible (2) The liturgical calendar (3) The Logesong/Prayer book (4) Rosary (5) A Diary to note the report of the activities (6) A Mosquito net, torch light, umbrella etc. (7) Medicines for minor sicknesses. The catechists' renewal program ended with an Evaluation. The program renewed their drooping spirit and strengthened their zeal to preach the Good News.

Fr. Arun Minj SVD

