



Pastor's Corner

The Purpose of Life

Editorial

Questions of 'RITE' and WRONG



This is an absolutely incredible short interview with Rick Warren, 'Purpose Driven Life' author and Pastor of Saddleback Church in California. The interview by Paul Bradshaw is a great lesson for all pastors. +Lumen, CSC



Catholics of Tripura know well that there are numerous Christian denominations in the world. Some of them are eminently found in Tripura. It is therefore, not surprising that the entry of the Syro-Malankara Rite into Tripura is at first understood by many as the arrival of yet another denomination.

Rick began saying, People ask me, What is the purpose of life? And I respond: In a nutshell, life is preparation for eternity. We were not made to last forever, and God wants us to be with Him in Heaven. One day my heart is going to stop, and that will be the end of my body-- but not the end of me. I may live 60 to 100 years on earth, but I am going to spend trillions of years in eternity. This is the warm-up act, the dress rehearsal. God wants us to practice on earth what we will do forever in eternity. We were made by God and for God, and until you figure that out, life isn't going to make sense.



In fact, the presence of the Malankara Rite has been the topic of occasional chitchats in many places especially in areas close to such presences. The content of some of these animated discussions, when looked at from an ecclesiological perspective, vary from inspiringly precise postulations to laughably comical assumptions.

Life is a series of problems: Either you are in one now, OR you're just coming out of one, OR you're getting ready to go into another one. The reason for this is that God is more interested in your character than your comfort; God is more interested in making your life holy than He is in making your life happy. We can be reasonably happy here on earth, but that's not the goal of life. The goal is to grow in character, in Christ likeness. No matter how good things are in your life, there is always something bad that needs to be worked on. And no matter how bad things are in your life, there is always something good you can thank God for.

The Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches defines "rite" as follows: "Rite is the liturgical, theological, spiritual and disciplinary heritage, distinguished according to peoples' culture and historical circumstances, that finds expression in each autonomous church's way of living the faith."



You can focus on your purposes, or you can focus on your problems: If you focus on your problems, you're going into self-centeredness, which is my problem, my issues, my pain. But one of the easiest ways to get rid of pain is to get your focus off yourself and onto God and others.

Thus defined, "rite" concerns not only a people's liturgy (manner of worship), but also its theology (understanding of doctrine), spirituality (prayer and devotion), and discipline (canon law).

We need to ask ourselves: Am I going to live for possessions? Popularity? Am I going to be driven by pressures? Guilt? Bitterness? Materialism? Or am I going to be driven by God's purposes (for my life)?

It also follows that all the rites of the Catholic Church are of equal dignity and equally valid. The Catholic Church is truly universal since it unites so many diverse rites, whose members share a common faith.

When I get up in the morning, I sit on the side of my bed and say, God, if I don't get anything else done today, I want to know You more and love You better. God didn't put me on earth just to fulfil a to-do list. He's more interested in what I am than what I do. That's why we're called human beings, not human doings!

The argument that Christians in their infantile stage of faith would find these fine distinctions confusing perhaps needs deeper examination. The buoyancy and resilience of our people will ultimately show that the crux of the confusion, if at all there is confusion, lie not so much in the fact that people are neophytes, but in the unchristian interests and objectives that individuals and groups would find opportune to take advantage of, in such a situation.

It would be a sad day for Tripura Church when inter-rite ill feeling and sheep stealing rears its ugly head in our ranks. It would sadly signal that we have forgotten a whole lot of things who we are, where we are, what we are about.

In a place like Tripura that has the lowest Christian percentage in the whole Northeastern Region, simple logic of numbers say the urgency and enormity of mission should make us rise above smaller interests pertaining to rite and rituals.

The clergy, more than the laity, perhaps have the greater role here. It should, among other things, unveil to the people of God the infinite riches of its Holy Mother, the Church.

J. Pulinthanath, SDB

Diocese of Agartla Congratulates:

Fr. Jilson Mathew Kakkatupikkil, VC, the newly elected Provincial Superior of Vincentian Congregation, St. Joseph Province

Sr. Jolly Kottathil, FS, newly elected Regional Superior, Fatima Sisters



His Eminence Cardinal Ivan Dias died on 19th June in Rome. The Exscqual Mass was held at St. Peter's Basilica on 21st June as per the wish of the deceased Prelate. It was presided over by Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the Dean of College of Cardinals, joined by several Cardinals, including the CBCI President, Cardinal Baselios Cleemis, Cardinal Oswald Gracias, Cardinal Telesphore Toppo and others. The final prayers of the funeral Rites were offered by His Holiness Pope Francis. The Diocese of Agartala mourns the death of the revered Cardinal and we raise our hearts and minds in prayer for the departed soul.

Bro. Joe Dias, Founder & General Secretary of The Catholic Secular Forum writes: *If I was asked, to describe Cardinal Ivan, I would not be able to do so, even with words double than what my write-up holds. And what strikes me most? He was a spiritual father to me those days. **What's his Dream for India?** That this wonderful megapolis of Mumbai and the whole Indian sub continent may progress and flourish in human, humane and spiritual values, and that their overall progress which may be gauged, not so much by the economic sensex, but rather by the rise and fall of their civic sense and moral values.*

AMBASSA PARISH Pentecost Sunday celebrated

Indeed it was a great and joyful moment for the faithful of Holy Spirit church, Ambassa. Parishioners celebrated the Parish feast on Pentecost day. It was a long awaited desire of the people to have



this gathering. It was the culmination of nine days Novena to the Holy Spirit starting from 26/05/2017. The program began with a huge gathering of the faithful from different villages packed in the Church. Priests were led to the Altar by group of dancers with beautiful devotional entrance dance.

The heavy rain did not stop faithful to come to come to the Church for the celebration. The long pouring and absence of electricity has not hampered the enthusiasm of the parishioners. It was spirit-filled feast not only for the people of Ambassa Parish but also for the Diocese and more so for our dear Bishop Lumen whom we missed this year on our parish feast. It was on the Pentecost day on May 26, 1996, that the Diocese was erected and Bishop Lumen was ordained the first Bishop of Agartala. People prayed to the Holy Spirit for the Diocese and Bishop Lumen to lead the Church onward. The feast was more colourful because of the meaningful liturgy, melodious choir, inspiring homily and sumptuous meal after the Mass.

The miracle is there was no rain during the Mass and meal. The cool weather helped people to enjoy the meal and to interact with one another.

News Desk, Ambassa

KAMARANGA PARISH Installation of new Parish Priest at Kamaranga Parish

The faithful of the Parish and the concerned people from each community were present at 10.30 am for the Installation of the new Parish Priest at Kamaranga Parish on June 18, 2017. It was Rev. Fr. Hormis John CSC the Vicar

General of the Diocese who representing the Most. Rev. Bishop Lumen Monteiro DD installed the new Parish Priest Fr. Jomon, SVD. On the other hand Fr. Jeevan Kennedy SVD, the vice Regional was delegated to represent Fr. Maxim Rodrigues, the Regional Superior of the SVD India, Guwahati Region. It was Fr. Jeevan who read out the appointment letter first and then Fr. Jomon took the oath and then the installation of new parish Priest was done by for Hormis. It was a grace-filled moment for the faithful and the people gathered as they received the new Parish Priest. Present were Fathers Joachim Kullu, SVD, Cyprian Pinto SVD, Jaibu Mathew SVD, and Benjamin Minj, SVD, along with many religious and faithful to grace the occasion. was the main celebrant to preside over the Eucharist. In his homily Fr. Hormis, CSC, explained the importance, meaning and significance of the ceremony. He also emphasized upon the duties



and responsibilities of the Parish Priest. After Mass there was a felicitation program, followed by a sumptuous lunch.

Fr. Benjamin Minj, SVD

DEPACHERRA PARISH Vacation Bible School Program

On 22nd May 2017, Depacherra Parish organized three day long VBS program for the school going children. The aim of the program was to make the children familiar with the Bible and how the word of God can bring transformation in their lives. About 250 children



attended the program. 12 Teachers from our Catholic community availed themselves to teach the children. All of them were divided into four groups and various competitions like, Bible skits, quiz, devotional songs and dances were conducted and prizes were given to the winners. Daily Mass, rosary, adoration and devotional hymns were the daily routine besides the classes. On the last day a picnic was organized.

Leadership Training



64 Parish Leaders from all our villages gathered for the daylong Seminar on 27th May at the Parish Hall. Theme of the Seminar was "Christian Leadership". Fr. Prasad, Parish Priest welcomed the Leaders and expressed his happiness over the participation. Fr. Bhuban who was the main Resource Person spoke at length on family life, leadership in the church and outlined ways in which they can help the villages that are vibrant and strong in faith. At the end of the session Fr. Prasad chaired the Meeting and discussed with the leaders the impact of the pastoral program of the Parish. The Leaders expressed their enthusiasm over the rapid growth in the Catholic community of the parish.

Sr. Roshini, SRA

Well done all Catholic Schools in Tripura



The TBSE, CBSE, and ICSE Results are out. All our Schools have done very well, some with excellent GP Average and deserve our hearty Congratulations and appreciation. We wish you well dear Students as you pursue newer avenues for your higher education. *LINK News Desk*

CONGRATULATIONS to Dr. Fr. Emmanuel

It is a matter of joy and pride to know that Dr. Fr. Emmanuel, CSC, Principal of Holy Cross College Agartala, has been awarded the 'Rashtriya Vidya Gaurav Gold Medal for Outstanding Achievements in the Field of Education' by the International Institute of Education & Management, New Delhi. We at LINK congratulate Fr. Emmanuel, CSC, on being bestowed this high award. *LINK News Desk*



JUST News Roundup

Capacity Building

In the month of May JUST organized a documentation training program for the SHG



leaders and animators at JUST Training Hall. The Training began by words of welcome and introduction by our Director, Fr. Jeevan Kennady, SVD. It was followed by introduction of all the participants. The aim of the Training was to develop record keeping skills of the SHG Members along with proper maintenance of Minute Book in the groups. The training was guided by two SHG Leaders, Mrs. Sashi Rani Debbarma and Mrs. Shivani Debbarma

who were recently trained at IVDP Krisnagiri on documentation. The Coordinator Mr. Nelson Debbarma, Mr. Robert Lushai and IHDP project Manager Sr. Amali were also present for the Training and guided the Team for completing the two days training program.

Health Camp

On 24th May JUST organized a Health Camp at Kolabari under Ganganagar R.D Block, Dhalai Tripura. The Health Camp started at about 10:30am. The aim of the Health Camp was to help in improving the health condition of the people of the target Village. Dr. Philip Reang (M.O. of Ganganagar PHC) examined the patients who came for the Health Camp. About 92 patients were examined and diagnosed by Dr. Philip Reang and distributed free medicines. The patients were mostly women and children. Most of them had complaints of fever, headache, cough, stomachache, skin disease, etc. But the maximum numbers of patients were suffering from fever and cough and many were also malnourished. The Doctor advised the patients to stay indoors during extreme heat and not to consume water without boiling. *Mr. Vincent Debbarma*



Our Readers Views

This is to say that it is great to see the Link month after month reaching the people. It is an achievement. We who had served the Diocese earlier too are linked. *Bro. James, Kolasib, Mizoram*

Thank you dear Bishop, for the June LINK. *Fr Anthuvan, SDB, Guwahati*

Thank you Bishop for the June LINK...You are always on the dot! *Sr. Celine, FMA, Agartala*

What a good bishop you are...So regular in sending the LINK! Congrats for being a techno-bishop. Though I write rarely but I follow your LINK regularly. *Mallika, Bangkok*

Thank you for the newsletter Link June Issue. You keep linking with the millions through LINK without fail on the first of every month. I must say super effort. I wonder sometimes how you are able to manage distribute TIME with so many Pastoral works and other appointments besides travel still able to send the LINK on the 1st of every month which I wait for eagerly. *Fr. G.P. Amalraj, Guwahati*

National News Roundup

Indian priest appointed member of Pontifical Academy for Life.



Indian Missionary Society priest Fr Tomi Thomas, a former director-general of the Catholic Health Association of India (CHAI), has been appointed a member of Vatican's bioethics advisory board. Pope Francis on June 13 appointed 45 new members of the Pontifical Academy for Life, having eliminated all of the Academy's

members earlier this year. Pope Francis has revised the statutes of the Pontifical Academy for Life and encouraged a new approach that gives less direct attention to the "culture of life" issues that has previously been the focus of the Academy. Three of the new members are from Asia, one from India and two from Japan.

Via CNUA

World News Clips

Aleppo Bishop: '1 Minute for Peace initiative is important for Syria'

Men and women of goodwill across the globe responded to Pope Francis' call to join in prayer to participate in the "One Minute for Peace" initiative on June 8, 2017. The Pope's appeal for prayers and international participation in the initiative came during his Wednesday General Audience when he recalled that the initiative represents a short moment of prayer on the recurrence of the meeting in the Vatican between the Pope, the late Israeli President Peres, and the Palestinian President Abbas in 2014.

Bishop Antoine Audo of Aleppo, in Syria says it is important and he expresses his admiration for Pope Francis, whom he said, "uses little things to not forget peace and to say that everybody is able to build peace in the world". Bishop Audo says "I admire this initiative: it helps us a lot. But at the same time as bishop living in Aleppo and Syria I have to say we are very tired about the perspective of peace; we wait, we wait, we wait, and at the same time our families and young people are leaving to emigrate and this is a very big sadness for us" he says. The bishop says the situation, in particular of Christians in Syria, who are a small minority is difficult, but "we continue to stay rooted in the faith and in the truth and after that, we will see." *Vatican Radio*

Making the Digital World Safer for Children

Children make up over a quarter of the 3.2 billion Internet users worldwide. This generation of over 800 million young users is vulnerable to entirely new forms of harm and abuse such as trolling, cyberbullying, sextortion, and grooming for sexual



exploitation. The international congress "Child Dignity in the Digital World", will focus on the latest scientific research and technical understanding in this field, bringing together global experts and decision makers to discuss the risks and challenges of the digital age and its

impact on the dignity of children. The congress will be hosted by the Centre for Child Protection of the Pontifical Gregorian University.

This pioneering congress on the fight against online child sexual exploitation and abuse will be held 36 October, 2017 at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. The focus of the congress is scientific and technical, with a view to promoting appropriate action. The Centre for Child Protection and its partner WePROTECT Global Alliance have invited more than 140 internationally recognized experts from academia, business, and civil society as well as political leaders, and religious representatives from across the globe.

With a mix of keynotes, plenary sessions, workshops and a discussion forum, the congress will focus on the fields of Cyber Protection, Cyber Education and Cyber Responsibility and examine the role of business, media, civil society, politics and religions. *Zenit Staff*

Christians are concerned over Hindu leader's hard-line ideology



BJP's presidential nominee Ram Nath Kovind (left) with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi, June 19. Christian leaders have criticized the ruling pro-Hindu party for nominating as its presidential candidate a hard-line Hindu leader who reportedly once described

Christianity and Islam as "alien" religions in India. The Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) that rules the federal government and various Indian states, named Ram Nath Kovind, who is considered a leader of socially oppressed Dalit groups, as its candidate for President of India. Father Z. Devasagaya Raj, Secretary the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India's office of Dalits and backward classes, told ucanews.com that the idea of appointing a Dalit person for the coveted post is largely positive but not if "the person holds a [pro-Hindu] right-wing ideology." "The selection of president is based on the political parties' whims and fancies" but it would be better if we have a President, who is "secular, neutral and can speak for everyone," Father Raj said. In 2010, Kovind, who was a BJP leader before being appointed Governor of the East Indian State of Bihar, said "Islam and Christianity are alien to India." *Ucanews.com*

Our Distinguished Visitors

Sr. Berchmans SRA Provincial Superior from Mumbai
 Sr. Sheetal SRA Provincial Councilor from Mumbai
 Fr. Mario from Imphal Diocese, Manipur
 Fr. James Valanarasan from Bhagalpur Diocese, Bihar
 Sr. Gracia Antony SCC Provincial Superior from Guwahati
 SCC Srs. Alice Mathew & Betsy Devasia Councilors from Guwahati
 Fr. Roshan MSFS from Guwahati

Bishop's Program for July 2017

- 01: Confirmations, Dupcherra Village under Mariamnagar Parish
- 02: Confirmations at Mariamnagar Parish Centre
- 04: Consulters Meet, Agartala
Clergy Meet, Agartala
- 08: Chapel Blessing, Kakracherra Village under Moharpara Parish
- 09: Confirmations, Chakmaghat Village under Moharpara Parish
- 11-14: Caritas PSC, Delhi
Regional Chairmen & Forum Directors Meet, Delhi
- 15-16: Confirmations Karbook, Depacherra Parish
- 22-23: Parish Pastoral Program
- 25-27: Caritas DDC Valedictory Function, Goa
- 29-30: Parish Feast, Khumulwng