



Pastor's Corner

Worthwhile Objectives

The Easter Season that we are just entering is a reminder of newness. Nature itself is filled with sights and sounds of new life new buds, new blossoms, new life in nests. We too have received new life at Easter and a promise that God is with us. But as St Jane Frances de Chantal says, "We think not enough of this truth, that God is present with us, that He sees our thoughts, even long before we have them. That He knows what we think and shall think better than we ourselves, that He sees the folds and recesses of our heart and of this other truth, that nothing happens to us but by the order of Providence... Here is a little model of what we should do when we are taken by surprise as we row peacefully in our little boat. When all our emotions arise to stir up a great internal storm that seems certain to overwhelm us or drag us after it, we must not wish to calm this tempest ourselves. Rather, we must gently draw near the shore, keeping our will firmly in God, and coast along with the little waves;



by humble knowledge of ourselves, we will reach God, who is our sure port. Let us go gently along without agitation or anxiety and without giving in to our emotions. A refreshing thought from a great saint!

But then there are times in our lives when we are busy and agitated and run after the wrong things in life. Are our objectives worthwhile? Here is a story by Frank Mihalic in *Tonic for the Heart* which explains our situation: In a little country community, a farmer had a dog that spent part of his time sitting by the side of a large highway waiting for big red trucks. Whenever the dog saw a truck come round the corner, he would get ready, and as it passed him, he would take off after it down the road. One day the farmer's neighbour said, "Sam do you think that hound of yours is ever going to catch a truck?" "Well Bill" Sam replied, "That isn't what worries me. What does worry me is what he would do if he caught one!"

The problem with many of us is that we run wildly after things we could not use if we caught them. Unfortunately, sometimes we are passionate about the wrong things in life and go after them! Wishing you a very **HAPPY EASTER**. +Lumen, CSC



Editorial

On this house, Your blessing Lord!

By the time you get to read this, Easter would be over, probably. Which means its Easter time now! And one of the activities most pastors and co-pastors are busy with during this time of the liturgical year is the annual blessing of families. Blessing of a family, we are told, is the symbol of the family's renewal in Christ. *The Christmas season, especially the feast of the Epiphany, and the Easter season are traditional times when homes are blessed. While the structure of the rite and its chief elements are always to be maintained, 'the Catholic Book of Blessings' permits the minister to so select the individual parts of the rite in such a way that the celebration is better adapted to the season and the other circumstances. The indigenous communities of Tripura are not unfamiliar with 'home cleansing' ceremonies conducted in homes in the belief that they purify homes of defilements. They*



focus mainly on a set of rituals, which they believe ward off evil power and restore purity to the home.

The annual blessing of families for us Christians is centered on the Lordship of Jesus over our hearths and homes. It's a ritual through which we annually renew our selves, homes and everything we possess in Christ, the Lord of life and creation.

When the Book of Blessings insists that a home should not be blessed unless those who live in it are present, it's perhaps trying to tell us about the 'renewal' dimension of the rite.

In this season of house blessings we would do well to take cognizance of the favorable disposition our people have towards the practice and ensure they do not get reduced to mere 'purification' ceremonies but become a faith-strengthening exercise that revitalizes and renews their commitment to the Lord as a family.

There is also a need to be cautious about distractions that easily come at house blessings the tendency to reduce it to a social get-together centered on food and other unimportant matters.

J. Pulinthanath, sdb

**St. Francis Assisi Parish,
Gachirampara
Triple Celebration**

Pastoral Visitation February 21-22

Most Rev Bishop Lumen visited the Parish especially the three villages at Damchera area bordering Mizoram. His visit to the parish was a time of renewal, blessing and reinforcement to the parishioners. People from all the centres participated in the seminar and holy Eucharistic celebration.

Seminar on family at Piplechera For the first time Rev. Fr. Buban Sarkar visited the parish to conduct a seminar on



family. His visit was a great boon to the people; to renew their family life and promises and faithfulness. These were the highlight of the seminar; what are family, maturity, faithfulness, sacra mentality, sacredness, and responsibility. A special thanks to Rev. Fr. Buban Sarkar for accepting my request and for facilitating the seminar on family.

Blessing a new church building site at Kudunsei

On 22nd Most rev Bishop Lumen also blessed the building site at kudunsei village. All the parishioners we had gathered for the seminar along with bishop travelled to Kudunsei village to bless the church building site. The construction will be undertaken very soon. Thanks to Most Rev. Bishop Lumen for recommending the project to build chapels to the catholics in Kudunsei village and for his gracious visit the parish.

Fr. Prasanna, Ofm Cap

**Immaculate Conception Parish,
Moharpara
School Sports Day**

Notre Dame Holy Cross School had its sports day on the 4th & 5th of March 2015.



Unfortunately those two days were rainy days and it is no exaggeration to say that the sun did not shine during those two days; but the weather conditions did not cloud the enthusiastic and ever smiling faces of children. Sports events went on smoothly from the lighting of the lamp and march past to the time of prize

distribution on the next day. The SDPO of Teliamura sub-Division, Mr. Ajit Pratap Singh had agreed to come for the inaugural function; but cancelled it as he had to rush to Agartala urgently. All the students were divided into four groups namely Moreau group, Helena group, Andre group and Leoni group. The Champion Trophy was secured by Helena group this year by securing the highest points. Congratulations to all the winners and to all the participants.

International Women's Day

International Women's day was celebrated on 8th March with a solemn H. Mass in which about 45 women had participated. After the H. Mass the women gathered in the church itself for an animation session.



Animation was done by Sr.Punita SJA & Sr.Rose S.Sp.S. This years' theme, "Equality for women is progress for all" was emphasized from the very beginning. Some inputs on gender equality, empowerment of women etc. made them realize their worth and the ways they could further enhance their own lives and the lives of others.

Sr. Jeevanlata, S.Sp.S

**Holy Spirit Parish, Ambassa
Media Training Program for Women**

Ambassa: March 15, 2015, Ambassa Parish organized half day seminar on Media Training for the leaders of women. There were more than 70 women participated in the training program on Media. Ivan D'Silva, svd the main resource person explained the reach of different mass media has increased in the recent times. He said, "There is lopsided nature of news reporting in-favour of the elite sections of society and against or sidetracking the marginalized especially the tribal. In the press the rural poor almost never speak. The people who make news are usually public persons, responsible for the governing and policy making of the country or state". Therefore he urged the women leaders to critically analyze the media and whatever they present in the media.

He cautioned the participants to come out boldly and speak to the media about the problems of tribal women. Particularly speak about the rape case, eve teasing, and complain the police and get the help of the social activists.



Women were enthused to speak for the ones who cannot speak and train the other women in the

village too.

News desk, Ambassa

**Christ the King Parish,
Depacherra.**

Pastoral Program at Durgaram village



On March 22, 2015, Depacherra Parish as part of Jubilee year program, has organized a Pastoral Program for two of our

mondolies - Durgaram and Chellagang. On this occasion, Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC was welcomed at the entrance of the village with flowers and in a procession he was lead to the Chapel. It was a memorable day for about 200 people to see their Shepherded in their midst. During the Holy Eucharist 48 people received the sacrament of Confirmation and 8 people received first Holy Communion. During the Homily Bishop urged the people of these villages to deepen their faith and lead an exemplary catholic life, witnessing to the Gospel values. A short cultural program was organized after the mass to felicitate His Lordship Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC. This was followed by fellowship meal.

Sports Day at Holy Cross High School, Depacherra

The Annual Sports occupies a prominent place in the calendar events of Holy Cross High School, Depacherra. This year too, the traditional fervor and enthusiasm was at its peak on 21st March 2015. His Lordship Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC, Bishop of Agartala was the Chief Guest and Mr. S. Prabu, IFS, DFO of Gumti District was the Guest of Honour. The opening ceremony began with colorful choreographed drills, Olympic torches, March past and Sports Meet Declarations which was a great sight to the onlookers. Chief Guest in his Address congratulated the students and wished them very best. After the competitive events the winners were given the medals and certificates and the program came to an end with Chief Guest unfurling the school flag. A big crowd of parents and well wishers thronged to see this sporting spectacle of the school. *Sr. Benny, BS*



European Union Council Visitors

An eleven member delegation of



European Union Political Council to India visited JUST on 24 February, and Bishop's House. The delegation was led by Ms. Anne Marchal, first Councilor and Head of Political Affairs. The delegation interacted with the director of JUST Fr. Jeevan, SVD, who made a power point presentation on JUST's activities and interventions in Tripura. The E.U. delegation then made a courtesy visit to Bishop's House and met with Bishop Lumen Monteiro.

George Fernandez

Nun's rape condemned with silent march

The Diocese of Agartala organized a silent candle light rally on 20th March 2015, at 5pm from North Gate (Vivekananda Stadium) to Circuit



House, condemning the brutal rape of a nun at

Ranaghat, West Bengal. Earlier Bishop Lumen had expressed his grief and condemned the incident: "I, as head of the Catholic Church in Tripura and on behalf of all people of goodwill, condemn the heinous crime against 72 year old Sr. Gladys, the desecration of consecrated hosts, and ruthless incidents at Ranaghat School against the Jesus Mary Sisters. I ask the Chief Minister of West Bengal to take appropriate measures to bring the perpetrators to justice and provide adequate protection to the Sisters and other religious institutions." Around 300 faithful from the town Parishes of the

Diocese took active part and the Women Religious led the silent march. Fr. Cyprian SVD, gave an introductory speech expressing the pain inflicted to a consecrated woman. Fr. Sunny SDB and Sr. Isabella BS offered prayers for the victim of this heartrending tragedy. Fr. Harry CSC articulated his gratitude to all who collaborated for its success. *News desk*

Tripura's first Catholic Hospital Inaugurated

Agartala, 19 March 2015: Health Care services in the northeastern state of Tripura got a much-needed impetus with the inauguration of St. Joseph Hospital at the capital city of Agartala on 19th March 2015. Shri Pabitra Kar, the Local MLA and Deputy Speaker of the Tripura Legislative Assembly inaugurated the Hospital and called it a 'boon for the people of Tripura'. Built, managed and owned by Sisters of St. Joseph of Anncy (SJA) Bhubaneswar, St. Joseph's has become the first Catholic hospital in the Northeastern state of Tripura.

The inauguration was immediately followed by blessing of the newly built hospital building by Most Rev Lumen Monteiro, CSC, DD, Bishop of Agartala. Bishop Monteiro had stood at the same spot and laid the foundation for the structure in May 2012. The plot of land on which the Hospital today stands was donated by Bishop Monteiro to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Anncy for the purpose of a hospital.

Addressing the gathering Bishop Monteiro said that St. Joseph's Hospital added 'a new dimension to the ministry of the Church' and is undoubtedly a 'welcome addition to the many developmental activities' the Church is engaged in. He called it a red-letter day in the annals of the Catholic Church in Tripura, a day on which its much awaited dream became a reality. He hoped the

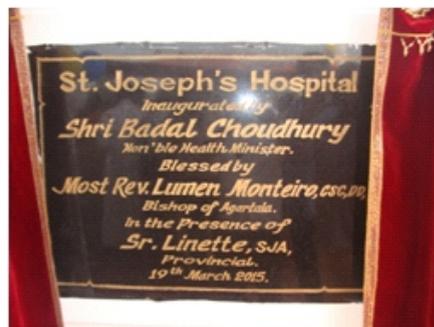
Hospital that began in a humble manner would grow and become an institution whose contribution will bring about significant improvements in the lives of the people of Tripura.

Shri Tapan Chakrabarty, Minister for Education, Government of Tripura, thanked and congratulated those who have taken this wonderful and immensely relevant initiative and wished it all success. He was all praise for the work of the missionaries in the State of Tripura.

Sr. Linette, the Provincial Superior of the Sisters of St Joseph of Anncy, Bhubaneswar Province said they hope to provide 'quality patient-centred health care at affordable rates' at St Joseph Hospital.

The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Anncy had its origin in France and came to India in 1849 with the noble mission of providing education, health care and social service to everyone, especially to the poor and disadvantaged sections of the society. They run hospitals and dispensaries in a number of places in urban and rural India. They arrived in Tripura in 2010 in response to the invitation of Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC. Ever since preparations have been afoot for the start of the Hospital.

Sr. Linette expressed happiness at being able to collaborate with the Government and other NGOs and private Hospitals in the State to provide better health care facilities to the people. The services made available at St. Joseph Hospital will be guided by highest professional and ethical standards and also make health care cost-effective and accessible to all, she assured. The Hospital is dedicated to the people of Tripura. At the moment the following facilities will be available at St. Joseph Hospital: Critical Care Unit (Casualty), Out-Patient Department (OPD), General Medicine, General Surgery, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Laboratory (Pathology, Hematology, Biochemistry), and Holistic Nursing Care. *Spokesperson J. Pulinthanath, SDB*





On Wednesday March 25, 2015 the Holy Father:

- Erected the Eparchy of St. John Chrysostom in Gurgaon of the Syro-Malankars, India, appointing Bishop Jacob Mar Barnabas Aerath, OIC, as its first Eparchal Bishop.
- Erected the Apostolic Exarchate of St. Ephrem in Khadki of the Syro-Malankars, India, appointing Bishop Thomas Mar Anthonios Valiyavilayil as its first Exarch.

Our Distinguished Visitors

- Sr. Milly Fernandes, Ursuline Provincial
- Srs. Mary & Juliana, UFS from Dimapur
- Sr. Pushpa Gomes, CSC Area Coordinator from Dhaka
- Sr. Parbati, CSC Regional from Shillong
- Anne Marchel, Delegation of the European Union to India
- Dr. Sebastian Domzalski, Embassy of Poland
- Laure Huberty, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg
- Jan-Jaap Gerards, Embassy of Netherlands
- Georg Zehetner, Austrian Embassy
- Anna Ugglä, Embassy of Sweden
- Seija Kinni, Embassy of Finland
- Blaz Salmic, Embassy of Slovenia
- Dirk Augustin, Embassy of Germany
- Beatriz Lorenzo Didic, Embassy of Spain
- SJA Srs. Vianney & Linette and Sisters

Bishop's Program for April 2015

- 02-05: Easter Triduum, Kathalcherra Parish
- 09-10: International Women's Day, Agartala
- 11-12: Church Blessing, Gaachirampara
- 17: Maria Sangha celebrations, Depacherra
- 18: Silver Jubilee of Sr. Casilda, AC, Gokulnagar
- 19: Pastoral Visit, Khumulwng Parish
- 19-21: Caritas GB Meet, St. John's Bengaluru
- 22-24: SCM Meet, St. John's Bengaluru
- 26: Anniversary, Baijalbari Parish
- 27-29: JUST Strategic Planning, Agartala

JUST News Roundup

JUST donates Water Pumps to Farmers' Clubs

24th February 2015, Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) with the support of Caritas India distributes 6 pump sets



to the farmers clubs under Hezamara R.D Block with a view to increase food security.

The distribution program started at 2:00pm at JUST, Agartala. Most Rev. Bishop Lumen Monteiro, the president of JUST accompanied by Fr. Jeevan Kennady, the Director of JUST handed over the pump sets to the farmers. 82 farmers belonging to 6 farmers' clubs will benefit from this.

Exposure Visit

Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) organized an Exposure trip in the month



of February-2015 for 20 Bru IDP youths of Naisingpara under SOUL project

assisted by IGSSS. The youths first visited a Dairy Pvt. Ltd, (NEST & Crest) factory at Budhjunnagar, Tripura West. Mrs. Puja Roy (Technologist) and Miss. Suleta Debbarma (Assistant Quality controller) welcomed them and explained the process of milk processing to the final stage. The second visit was made to Tripura Bamboo and Cane Development Centre (TRIBAC), Gandhigram, Agartala. Mr. Salim Raza, coordinator and Mr. Haripada Roy, Assistant Coordinator received the youths and explained about various products produced by TRIBAC. The exposure visit was learning for the youths for taking up self employment by using their skills for livelihood. **Mr. Deepan Gurun**

Our Readers Write

➤Greetings from Aachen and for faithfully sending me LINK every month! It keeps me connected with you and the church in the NE. Many thanks, too, for the many valuable comments and reflections. **Rosskopf, Germany**

➤I am delighted to know that your 'Algebra of mission;' is helping the Diocese to pave the way to effective pastoral and social ministries. **Arul Raj, CSC, Bengaluru**

➤Thank you for the LINK which keeps me connected with friends. More glad to find a parish in the name of St. Andre in the North East. **Biju Mathew, Calicut**

➤Thank you for the LINK and the invitation to 'admire'. Since charity begins at home, let me first and foremost express it to you. Congratulations for not only bringing it our regularly but also for providing some food for thought thus making the LINK as means of proclaiming the Good News. **Thomas Manjaly, Shillong**

➤Thanks a lot for all the news, so many things happening in the diocese... but also to remind us of Pope Francis saying. «...When we share our treasure with others it multiplies...» **Conrad, CSC, Montreal**

➤Thank you for continuing to send me the Link, which I read always with great interest and pleasure. Perusing the Pastor's corner and the editorial has become a pleasant and inspirational monthly habit for me - the universal notions and principles that you constantly deal with are applicable beyond your own Diocese and they are certainly welcome and well received also here in far away Milan. **Marco Lombardi**

➤I received your kind email and the attached "LINK". Great work. **+Andrew Marak, Bishop of Tura**

➤I appreciate your LINK a lot; though I'm not in the place it opens my eyes, heart and mind. May God keep you enthusiastic and loving as ever. **Mallika, Bangkok**

➤Thank you for your Link March 2015. Your message is very beautiful. Congratulations. May God bless you and your diocese of Agartala. **+Victor, Bishop of Nongstoin**