



India's freedom was won at a price!

The Catholic Church commemorates the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mother Mary on 15th August, and India celebrates its 74th Independence anniversary on that very day.

**Mother Mary's Assumption** into heaven is a feast in the church since the



6th century. But only since 1950 Pope Pius XII made this a dogma that "the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory." Since Mary is associated with all the mysteries of Jesus' life, it is not surprising that the Holy Spirit has led the church to believe in Mary's share in his

glorification. So close was she to Jesus on earth, she must be with him body and soul in heaven! Her life was one of praise and thanksgiving. We pray that ours to be the same!

**India's Independence Day** will be celebrated on August 15, this year being the 74<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We will do well to remember that our freedom was won at a price, with much struggle. And even though after these 73 years of Independence we cannot say we are totally free, we must confess that the country has made great strides. To keep our freedom alive we must continue the arduous quest for justice. When we take a look at the various indices, we see that India has improved slightly on the global index but climbed one spot down in the Human Development Index, and is very low in the Happiness Index and the Hunger Index. Rupali Pruthi says that India's HDI value for 2017 is 0.640, which put the country in the medium human development category. As per the 2018 Global Hunger Index (GHI), the level of hunger and under-nutrition worldwide fell

to 20.9, down from 29.2 in the year 2000. As per the index, India was ranked 103rd out of 119 qualifying countries. And as for the Global Peace Index 2018 India was ranked 136th among 163 countries.

**Saint John Vianney** was a French parish priest who is venerated in the Catholic Church as a saint and as the patron saint of parish priests. He is often referred to as the "Curé d'Ars" (i.e. the parish priest of Ars), internationally known for his priestly and pastoral work in his parish in Ars, France, because of the radical spiritual transformation of the community and its surroundings. On the 150th Anniversary of his death in June 2009 Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI declared John Mary Vianney, the Patron Saint of parish priests worldwide saying that the Curé d'Ars is "a true example of a pastor at the service of Christ's flock." His Feast Day is on 4th August.

+Lumen, CSC

Freedom Thoughts

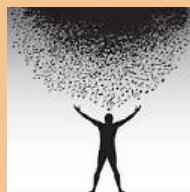


"*Ponero Agost*" (15<sup>th</sup> August) is something most of our students look forward to, for the simple reason it is a holiday. Never mind, the celebrations seldom go beyond the flag hoisting and the *laddu* eating that religiously follows it, it brings with it an undeniable feeling of something profound in the air. In any case, "Into that heaven of freedom my father, let my country awake," kind of invocations seldom fail to evoke appropriate sentiments, whatever the occasion.

The freedom that our forefathers fought for and won at great cost more than seven decades ago, we leave for speech makers to rant about and elucidate. We would rather, turn our attention to the students we began this piece with and to young people in

Editorial

general. It's kind of risky to make general statements about young people as a whole because experience shows that the exact opposite of every such statement is also true. Speak of any aspect of life and the best and worst specimen of that will be found among the young. That makes pieces such as this a gamble. Nevertheless...



It is often heard that the gap between urban youth and rural youth is widening. In a place like Tripura with a fast growing capital and a laid back countryside, it is easy enough to understand that phenomenon. A slightly more intriguing thing is who do we mean by urban youth? And who do we have in mind when we say rural youth?

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LINK wishes all our Readers a Happy Independence Day and Happy Feast of our Lady of the Assumption on August 15.

LINK welcomes CMC Sisters Poonam & Shalini to the Diocese of Agartala. They begin their pioneering work in Tripura by taking shelter at Mariamnagar and involving in the pastoral and healing ministry.

LINK condoles the untimely death of Sr. Suman B.S, Superior of Bethany Convent, Kathalcherra and offers prayers for the departed soul. We thank God for her service to the people of Tripura.

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People would surely have different takes on that. Be that as it may, but there is a growing segment of young people that conceals a peculiar vulnerability. They are rural youth in every way, but are found in the town. Whatever the reason they migrate to town, within a short time, they catch up with the rest of the townsfolk and in some cases even beat them hollow in matters of appearance, dress, cosmetics and other embellishments of life. But that is all there is. In most cases it is a pity because the appearance proves to be deceptive. Ask them to open their mouth, speak two words on any topic, give an opinion on something, write a simple application - and the citadel crumbles. Moving up in social strata for them seems to mean nothing more than becoming more photogenic, using costlier attires and perfumes, straightening their hair and maybe even coloring it and loitering about in the town - all the while exposing themselves to graver dangers and pitfalls that lurk yonder. With the passage of time they end up misfits both in the town and in the village, victims of a pseudo, unreal world that mercilessly traps and reduces them into objects and playthings for others.

There is somewhere in all this a craving for freedom sans responsibility. There is also a great deal of misunderstanding on the side of parents. What the school dropout badly needs is high motivation, self discipline and some serious classes may be, not the unbridled freedom that an unknown town offers.

While we proudly recall and celebrate the sacrifices of those who valiantly fought and won freedom for our country, we remind ourselves that true freedom is the capacity to do what we ought to do, not a no-holds barred wallowing in things that our whims dictate. **J. Pulinthanath, SDB**

## TUIKARMAW PARISH

### New Village Chapel at Kalaban

A village Chapel was blessed on 7th July 2019 at Kalaban a sub center of Tuikarmaw Parish by Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro CSC. Dedicated to St. Monica, this village Chapel fulfils the long awaited dream of the members of this *mondoli*. Around 250 faithful witnessed this ceremonial event. I thank Bishop Lumen for his presence in spite of



the hostile weather on that day. In spite of all odds and many difficulties the faithful organized a meaningful liturgy and decorated tastefully the little Chapel. A short felicitation program was also organized after the holy Mass in gratitude to the benefactors and many other people who contributed towards the construction of the village Chapel under our Tuikarmaw Parish. I thank Fr. Abraham CSC in a very special way who initiated the construction of this village Chapel.

*Fr. Sojan Augustine CSC*

## BODHJUNGNAGAR PARISH

### Inner Healing Charismatic Retreat



St. Andre School, Bodhjunnagar organized a five-day (10 to 14 July) Inner Healing Retreat for the Catholic Students of our Parish. The theme of the Retreat was "JOY- Jesus Owns You". Bro. Ian Vicky from Living Word Ministry Kolkata, was the Resource Person. Bro. Rajiv accompanied with charismatic music. The Retreat began with the novena Mass to St. Andre. More than 600 students participated and experienced God's mercy. Every day at 8am the Retreat began with the Holy Rosary followed by Biblical classes which dealt with various topics like: Child of God, Holiness of the body, Fear of God, Virtues, Talents, Charity, etc. In the afternoon the Session began with holy hour of Adoration. On Friday Confession was arranged. Special thanks to all the Fathers who helped in the Sacrament of Confession and the Holy Eucharist. On Sunday the

faithful from the Parish also joined the Retreat benefited from it. Many healings were witnessed. On the closing day Fr. Binoy CSC Parish Priest thanked all those who helped, especially Rev. Fr. Sijo CSC the Principal of the School, for realizing the need of the hour for the students.

*Fr. Amalraj*

## KUMARGHAT PARISH

### Family Day Celebrations



As part of its Golden Jubilee celebrations St. Paul's Parish, Kumarghat, has been organizing various activities such as Fathers' Day, Mother's Day, Youth Workshop, Renewal program, etc., to deepen the faith of the laity and to make the Catholic community more vibrant.

On 7th July 2019 the Parish organized Family Day (*Paribar Dibosh*). About 120 families representing 20 *mondolis* were present. There were over 500 people who attended. The Families were asked to sit as one family unit in the Church for holy Eucharist and it was such a beautiful experience for the families and the Celebrants. The holy Eucharist was very lively with the whole community singing and praying together. Fr. John Bosco, Secretary Family Apostolate, was the main celebrant for the Eucharist. After the holy Mass he gave an hour long instruction on Christian Family life. Food after the program was sponsored and prepared by the Parish Council. Kudos to the Parish Council, its energetic secretary Mr. Roithua Darlong, and our very enthusiastic Parish Priest Fr. Lancy CSC, for their creative leadership.

## Marriage Preparation & Rectification

Marriage Preparation and





Rectification for twenty two couples were done as part of Golden Jubilee of St. Paul's Parish Kumarghat and Silver Jubilee of the Diocese of Agartala on 20th and 21st July 2019 at Kumarghat. On 20th Saturday the Couples were prepared with Instructions on sacramental life and by clarifying their doubts on various issues. Some of the candidates were to be baptized and a few from other denomination were received into Catholic faith. Mr. Sankunga Darlong from Kanchancherra helped to prepare these couples. On 21st the marriages were blessed by Fr. Lancy D'Souza CSC, the Parish Priest. Though the response was great, there are still a few more families whose marriages are yet to be rectified. Special thanks to the Catechist Mr. Subia Debarma and all *mondoli* Presidents. *Fr. James, SJ*

**GANDACHERRA PARISH  
SCC Animation for the Parish**

The two days of Pastoral Visit of our dear Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, was a memorable time for the Gandacherra Parishioners and the whole campus family. He reached on 13<sup>th</sup> evening and was accorded a

warm welcome by our hostel children with a welcome song and flowers. His visit coincided with the Parish Animation program on SCC. On the following day which was Sunday the Bishop celebrated the Holy Eucharist where the faithful had gathered from all the different *mothas* of the Parish in spite of the incessant rains. The people warmly welcomed our Bishop



with song and dance. Later there was a short felicitation program in honor of Bishop Lumen during which he unveiled the Jubilee flag of the Diocese. This was followed by the animation session to the whole group of parishioners on SCC and how to be united as one church community by Rev. Fr. Lancy D'Souza the Vicar General of Diocese. After the lunch break the faithful from the different *mothas* gathered to elect their own *mondoli* president and the secretary under the guidance of Fr. Prasad the Parish Priest. Then the Meeting came to an end at 4.00pm with a Marian song. *Fr. S. George*

**AMBASSA PARISH  
Charismatic Renewal for Women**



Ambassa, 21 July, 2019: Ambassa Parish Women Association had one day Spiritual renewal program guided by Fr. Abraham VC. Few months back Women Leaders from Ambassa Parish had decided to organize a renewal Retreat for women only of the Parish and contacted Vincentian Fr. Abraham from Mariamnagar Parish for the animation. More than 150 participated. The music and singing by Fr. Philip VC helped people to participate better. One day Retreat began with the Holy Mass followed by Talks on family and holiness, followed by Adoration with Praise and Worship. The Priests blessed the people and prayed for healing. It was decided to have similar programs every second Friday of the month in Ambassa Parish. The enthusiasm to participate in the Charismatic Renewal programs will help people to renew themselves spiritually. *New bureau, Ambassa*

**JUST News Nuggets**

**Development of Business Plans for SHGs**



In the month of June under SFOORTI Project JUST organized Trainings on 'Development of Business Plan' for SHGs and JLGs in six different Federations. The purpose of this Training was to plan and implement the Business Plan for SHGs and JLGs. Through the Training the Groups will be able to learn the key role in allocating

Resources throughout the planning process, so that the objectives that are set in the Plan can be met. During the Training Chief Coordinator of JUST Sr. Mary David FS, explained how business planning is made, what is the importance of business planning, and what kind of plans need to be implemented. There were 126 SHG Members who participated in the Trainings.

**JUST organizes free Medical Health Camp**

Two Medical Camps were organized by JUST at Gumsing Para and Saphairai Para a very remote village under Ganganagar R.D Block in Dhalai District in the month of June. Altogether 188 Villagers got benefitted from the Health Camp. JUST Ganganagar Project Staff led by the Project Coordinator Mr.



Lilmohan Reang along with Dr. Subrata Debbarma, Medical Officer from Ganganagar PHC, examined the patients and distributed free medicines to the Villagers. The Villagers who attended the health camp were mostly women and children. Most of them had complaints of fever, headache, cough, stomachache, skin diseases, gastric complications, etc., and the maximum number of them were mal-nourished. Vitamin-B Complex was also distributed to all those who were mal-nourished. *Mr. Cyril Darlong*

Your July calendar looks action packed as always. It takes a lot of energy to get through Christian Action each month that is for sure. Always look forward to the Link each month! *Peggy, USA*

Your short reflection along with the Link is very inspiring. Hearty congratulations for bringing out the Link in time very faithfully since its beginning. It is truly inspiring.

*Shaji ML, CSC, Agartala*

Thank you for updating me through the 'LINK' with the news from the Diocese.

*Marina BS, Siliguri, Bengal*  
Thank you for the beautiful and realistic message of Maulana Rumi. Very true and very inspiring...!!! *Sr: Celine, FMA, Agartala*

Even before I read and enjoy LINK, I am delighted by the Quotes from Maulana Rumi... That is a real inspiration! You

deserve Guinness World record for your fidelity to remind us the new month has come with the always so interesting news from the Diocese and the Parishes. *Conrad CSC, Canada*  
Thank you Bishop for the thought-provoking message, and for LINK. As usual, always on time and up to date. Congrats.

*Rihun FMA, Agartala*

Thanks for the July Link. You had to work extra hard the day you returned from your overseas trip to ensure that the Link hits the readers inbox. Hats off to your level of great commitment. *Fr. Jolly CI, Delhi*

Thanks to LINK, I am able to keep in touch with what is happening in the Diocese and to renew my bond with the priests, religious and people of Tripura. Your reflections on the eco-democracy and our responsibility in helping life to blossom into love, compassion,

spirituality, etc., is thought provoking. The new definition of democracy is more inclusive and will take care of the welfare of all species.

*Bro. Varghese, SG, Guwahati*

Thank you very much for the Link I have received, full of news of people and places that I know so well.

*Fr. Joachim, SVD, Udalguri Assam*

Thank you for the LINK. I am happy to go through it on the first of July in Lourdes, France. I wonder how you manage to keep it to the schedule in spite of your travels and engagements. Congratulations and best wishes.

*Fr. Emmanuel CSC*

Thank you for the Link. The insight of the water drop is a rich one.

*Fr. Thomas K, SDB, Agartala*

## India News Nuggets

### Assam and Bihar Floods

Caritas India is reaching out to 7,000 flood affected families in Assam where, according to Assam State Disaster Management Authority 4,128 villages are affected and a total of 2,12,122,74 hectares of crop area is destroyed. Major rivers in Assam have crossed the danger mark and embankments breached at Biswanath, Nalbari, Cachar, Baksa, Bongaigaon, Udalguri, and Darrang. Almost 12,333 people were evacuated by the NDRF, SDRF, Indian Army and Local Administration from the worst affected areas. "Water enters our houses and destroys everything. We stay in the same difficult situation without food and water. If someone falls sick, women suffer in labour pain or someone gets in serious condition, we call people and wait for them for help. Every year we face these challenges", shared Pabitra Chetri from Dejo Sapori village under North Lakhimpur District of Assam.

Similarly, a flash flood in 12 Districts of

north Bihar created havoc. More than 2.5 million people from 77 Blocks were affected. The water has breached embankments, snapped roads, washing away bridges and has destroyed standing crops.

Caritas India Executive Director, Fr. Paul Moonjely has appealed to all to come out openly and support the cause of the victims who are affected by this massive flood, both in Assam and Bihar. "Caritas India with its on-ground presence has assessed the situation and initiating the relief operation for 5,000 families in Assam and 2,000 families in Bihar with Water, Sanitation and Hygiene support", shared Fr. Paul. He further added that Caritas India will come out with more support in the days to come to reach out to more families with livelihood and shelter support. The situation is grim, and people are in immediate need of food, Medicine, WaSH, and Shelter. *Source: Caritas India E-Newsletter*

### Church-run Training changes lives for young Indians

Skills save the vulnerable from falling into the

hopeless underbellies of big cities. At the age of 35, Renu Chouhan had already been married for 22 years. But then she got divorced. Unskilled, unemployed and with no source of income, Chouhan joined her parents at a shanty on the outskirts of Indore town in Madhya Pradesh State. But she fell into depression because her presence exacerbated their "hand to mouth" reliance on meager daily wages. Chouhan, who had previously studied up to grade 11, was told by a friend that she might be able to get help from the Catholic Church-run Jan Vikas Center. "She was dead right," Chouhan recalls. Upon completion in December of a three-month 'beautician' course, she began working for a private firm in Indore, the business capital of this central Indian State. With salary and incentives, she takes home about US\$350 a month. The Jan Vikas classes also developed her communications skills, including basic English.

Chouhan is among 624 formerly unemployed women and men that Jan Vikas assisted through skills training to obtain jobs during the past 18 months. Just one month into her employment, Chouhan radiates self-belief. "Now, I will lead my life happily and support my elderly parents too," she says.

Divine Word priest George Payattikattu established the center in 2001 to help rag pickers, who were not covered by government welfare schemes largely because of their lack of documents to prove their identity. Father Thomas said the center strives to bring struggling urban youths into the mainstream of society in order to prevent them from slipping into hopeless city underbellies.

*Source: UCAN*

## Bishop's Program for August 2019

- 03-04: Pastoral Program: Karbook & Depacherra
- 06: Clergy Meeting, Agartala
- 08: Nurses Meet, Agartala
- 09-10: Kerala Floods 2nd Phase, Kochi  
Field Visit, Hassan Karnataka
- 11-13: Standing Committee Meeting, Bangalore
- 15: Assumption & Independence Day
- 18: Pastoral Program, Gachirampara Parish
- 19-21: DDC Inaugural Program, Mangalore
- 22: MC Feast, Kumarghat
- 23: JUST GB & AGM, Agartala
- 25: Bible Sunday & Parish Feast, Mariamnagar
- 26-28: CBCI-CARD Meet, Delhi
- 30-05 September: NERPC & NE Bishops Meet, Guwahati

## Our Distinguished Visitors

- Fr. Paul Olphindro, SDB Provincial from Shillong
- Dr. Dipankar De, Neurological Surgeon from Chittagong
- Mr. Solanki, IFS, Principal Conservator of Forests Tripura