



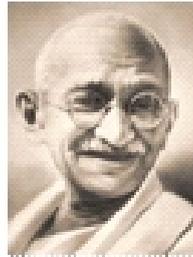
As we remember Mahatma Gandhi

We celebrate the Mahatma Gandhi's birthday on 2nd October. I thought it appropriate to mention pertinent quotes which challenge us as Christians.

When the missionary E. Stanley Jones asked him, "Mr. Gandhi, though you quote the words of Christ often, why is that you appear to so adamantly reject becoming his follower?" Gandhi replied, "Oh, I don't reject Christ. I love Christ. It's just that so many of you Christians are so unlike Christ. If Christians would really live according to the teachings of Christ, as found in the Bible, all of India would be Christian today," he added.

Gandhi's closeness with Christianity began when he was a young man practicing law in South Africa. Apart from being attached with the Christian faith, he intently studied the Bible and was also seriously exploring becoming a Christian, which led him to his discovery of a small church gathering in his locality.

After deciding to attend the church service in South Africa, he came across a racial barrier; the church barred his way at the door. "Where do you think you're going, *kaffir*?" an English man asked Gandhi in a belligerent tone. Gandhi



replied, "I'd like to attend worship here." The church elder snarled at him, "There's no room for *kaffirs* in this church. Get out of here or I'll have my assistants throw you down the steps."

This infamous incident forced Gandhi to never again consider being a Christian. In July 1925 told a group of women missionaries, "...although I am myself not a Christian, as an humble student of the Bible, who approaches it with faith and reverence, I wish respectfully to place before you the essence of the Sermon on the Mount..." He continued to adopt many values he found in the Bible, which acted as a panacea to many of India's problems during its

freedom struggle.

As we remember the Mahatma let us be challenged to live our Christian lives more meaningfully, just as he said, "To live the gospel...not just preach but live the life according to the light... If, therefore, you go on serving people and ask them also to serve, they would understand. But you quote instead John 3:16 and ask them to believe it; and I am sure people will not understand it...the Gospel will be more powerful when practiced and preached... A rose does not need to preach. It simply spreads its fragrance. The fragrance is its own sermon...the fragrance of religious and spiritual life is much finer and subtler than that of the rose." +*Lumen, CSC*



Editorial

Family Matters

A few hours ago Pope Francis set foot on the United States of America on a 6-day tour. As expected, the visit has generated a great deal of hope and euphoria. The world is eager to see what Pope Francis has got to offer the last superpower of

the modern times, and the whole world. We are told his American trip will end with a solemn Holy Mass on 27 September at the conclusion of the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia.

There is no doubt by so arranging his itinerary Pope Francis wanted the world to share his focus on Families worldwide.

The subject of 'families' brings us back to what happens in our own backyards. We are yet to hear what Francis has got to say to families in America and elsewhere. But we can already anticipate that much of what he's going to say will surely make sense to families elsewhere too.

Even in our little corner of the world, 'family' is an oft-heard word. It comes up in our casual talk for a variety of reasons. For it's shrinking size, for example. It's difficult not to be struck by the small size of families one finds in Tripura,



especially among some of the tribes. It is all the more striking because there is a general notion that tribal communities believe in having many children. Most of the tribes in Tripura prove that assumption blatantly wrong.

A family is a 'sanctuary of love and life'. It is the most basic, safest and best sanctuary one can belong to. If there is a crisis in families today, perhaps, it is because we have allowed crass commercial concerns and hedonist tendencies to invade and impoverish the sanctity and warmth of these sanctuaries.

In Tripura, one cannot only see a growing gap between the rural families and urban ones, but also a tendency in the rural populace to migrate to urban areas. Moving into the town is, in itself, perceived as advancement. When a family, already microscopic in size, gets divided due to town-ward movement of some of its members, relationships are affected and ultimately fissures appear in the family.

There is never a dearth of discussion and debate on 'the tribe' in Tripura. Every platform, every party, every peer group seems to have a hundred proposals on how to improve the tribe. Perhaps, it is time we devoted a little bit of our time and attention to something that's much closer to us our families. One just hopes the American engagement of Pope Francis currently underway on the other side of the globe will contribute to this. **J. Pulinthanath, SDB**

St. Mary's Parish, Tuikarmaw

Parish Sabha

On the 4th to 5th of September our Parish organised the annual Parish Sabha in the Parish premises. The Theme was **D u t y a n d Responsibility of Christian Living**. The Sabha began on the 4th evening with an input from the Parish Priest. Later we had the holy hour of adoration. The 5th morning began with Talks on being salt and light to the earth. The Resource Persons were Frs. Cyprian SVD, Robert, CSC, Mr. Paul Darlong and Mr. Arun Debbarma; each one of them stressed the role of Laity in the Church. In the afternoon the Parish Priest Fr. Abraham C, CSC, presented the Parish Report. This year reporting was different; the *mondoli* reports were printed in a book with the income and expenses. The parish Sabha ended with a Community Meal, followed by the cultural evening.

Parish Feast

On the 6th of September St. Mary's celebrated the Parish Feast. The main Celebrant for the Holy Eucharist was Fr. Buban Sarkar. In his Homily Fr. Buban invited people to be responsible Christians and bear witness to the values of Christ in their life. CSC Frs. Valerian, John PKC and Shaiju joined for the feast day celebration. After the holy Mass the Eucharistic procession was organised. The feast day celebration was concluded by the community meal.

Village chapel Feast at, Blessed Mother Theresa Chapel Peratia

On 13th September Blessed Mother Theresa *mondoli* at Peratia celebrated its chapel feast. It was an occasion to all the faithful to come together and worship and praise God. Prior to the feast day, three days of novenas were conducted in the village followed by Holy Eucharist. The children and the youth were given classes on Bible and Sacraments. SCC training was conducted during the novena days.



On the feast day people gathered in large number in worship. After the Holy Eucharist cultural program was organised, the youth and the children performed many cultural dances.

Fr. Alfred, CSC

Environment Day at Holy Cross School

The Environment Day was celebrated at Holy Cross School Tuikarmaw on 13th August. Mr. Arun Kumar DFO of South Tripura District was the Chief Guest. In



his address to the students he invited them to care for the environment. He urged the students to be the spark in bringing awareness to the society in view of protecting the environment. The students exhibited their talents through dances and songs to make the day little more meaningful. Fr. Alfred CSC the Principal of the School welcomed the guests. Ms. Khonowhwari Reang of Class VIII shared her views on ecological crisis and to reduce it. Sr. Anita SABS thanked proposed the vote of thanks. Fr. Abraham C, Secretary of the School, was present for the event.

Fr. Alfred, CSC

St. Arnold Parish, Gandacherra

Our Lady of Vellankanni at JC Para

On September 6th people of JC Para gathered together to welcome their beloved Bishop, Most Rev.



Lumen Monteiro, CSC, with flowers and song. The gathering includes parishioners from other *mondolis* and from the main centre. This new *mondoli* is located right at the extreme border near Bangladesh. After the initial address and the singing of joy and gratitude, Bishop Lumen cut the ribbon and inaugurated the Chapel. He then

invoked the Spirit of God and blessed the Chapel followed by a meaningful Holy Eucharist during which some people received the sacraments of Initiation. The village Chapel will hold its name as 'Our Lady of VellaInkanni' messaging to the people that they have a mother, who heals all their infirmities. The *mondoli* is located in an interior place with frightening road condition due to continuous rain, yet the faithful and their pastors courageously trusting in the Eucharistic Lord, went to the village despite great risk. After the Holy Eucharist, there was a festive meal shared by all. While going two vehicles broke down and one while returning. Despite all these setbacks, it was a memorable and God encountering day. We had no disturbance throughout the day, but in the evening the heavens opened up causing chaos.

Fr. Bennet

Notre Dame Holy Cross, Moharpara

School Diary

After many days of waiting, we were glad to welcome our new principal, Fr. Agi csc on 27th August. From Kumarghat, he was accompanied by a group of teachers and sisters.

On 5th Sept. we celebrated the Teachers' Day. Both the morning and the noon shift gathered together for this program. It was really a wonderful performance by the students with their cultural dances.

On 14th September we celebrated the School Feast. The celebration was held in the school hall with cultural dances of different tribes that made this day more colorful and meaningful.

On 15th September, on our feast day we had a solemn Holy Eucharistic Celebration. Some parishioners, hostellers both boys and girls, joined with us to celebrate our feast.

Bro. Edwin, CSC

St. Paul Parish, Kumarghat

Vocation Camp

On the 6th of September a Vocation Camp was organized for the





Catholic boys and girls of St. Paul's Parish, Kumarghat. 60 students attended. Frs. Arul and Lawrence Darlong coordinated the camp. The Resource Persons were Fr. Iswar Csc, Sr. Mary David FS, and Sr. Karuna MC and Br. Lawrence. The Parish Priest, Fr. Arul, CSC, inaugurated the program followed by Input Session by Fr Lawrence. The Resource persons drew the students' attention to Vocation to priesthood and religious life by sharing about their life. While their joining is unguaranteed, yet follow up and encouragement by the priests, religious and parents would be very helpful in promoting Vocation to Priesthood and Religious life. The program concluded with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist followed by meal.

Fr. Lawrence Darlong

Good Shepherd Parish, Kathalcherra Funeral, Feast, Retreat

- Good Shepherd Parish, Kathalcherra witnessed many events and incidents, ups and downs, during the month. On 1st of September one of our hosteller's Gabriel Reang of Class XI, was found dead in the dormitory for unknown reason. We express our condolences and mourn his loss.
- We had three days of Congregational feast celebration beginning from 13th at the parish level, on 14th at the school level and on 15th at the community level. The parishioners and the local communities from far and near were invited for the Holy Mass and meal.
- Though the Parish began the month with sadness, the mourning turned to joy on 19th and 20th of September with the Charismatic



Retreat in the Parish. A large number of

parishioners participated with enthusiasm and joy. They came with worries and tension but returned back with God's love and care. They came with earthly wealth and pleasure but took back the treasures of life. Fr. George Arackal, VC, and Miss Mary from W. Bengal led the enriching Retreat.

Fr. Ishwar, CSC

Christ the King Parish, Depacherra

Rosary Rally and Girl Child Day

A Rosary Rally was organised on the Feast of Nativity, 8th September, honouring the Girl Child Day with a theme "Mother Guide Us

On Our Way". Nearly 200 faithful from five *mondolies* came to the Church in a candle light procession reciting Rosary



and singing Marian hymns. "We are here today to honour Mary, the Mother of Jesus

and Girl Child and the best way to honour is to allow Mother Mary to lead us to Jesus" said Fr. Bhuban Sarkar during the lively Liturgical celebration. The faithful prayed during the Mass for the Girl Children in our Parish and in the country. The Celebration of Girl Child in the Parish was held after the mass. The purpose was to increase the awareness among the people about all the inequalities faced by the Girl Child in the Society and appreciate and promote them as equal in every sphere of life.

Bro. Praveen

Diocese News Roundup

St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Gachirampara

On 6th of September the Parish celebrated the advance Nativity of Mother Mary and the girl child day. The day was colorful the church, altar and the statue of mother Mary was well decorated.



The Maria s a n g h a m e m b e r s j o i n e d h a n d s t o g e t h e r i n

making the day very meaningful through their singing and in arranging the liturgy well. The Maria sangha members also distributed some gift items to the child children in order to encourage them to study well in the future. Special prayers were offered in order of women and girl child. The day ended with the fellowship organized by the people themselves.

Fr. Prasanna Kumar ofm cap

Auxilium Girls School, Nandannagar

September 8th is a singular day for Auxilium Girls School Agartala as we



join the Church in India to celebrate the "Girl Child Day". The school

management takes pride to celebrate this great day being the only Girls school in the state of Tripura. The enthusiasm of the students who came with posters and placards with thought provoking messages was amazing. The gala began with the assembly animated by Class IX-XII girls who presented a skit on "Daughters are JEWELS".

To raise our voice against the injustice done to girls, students along with sisters and teachers went on a Rally to raise awareness. The posters containing slogans "beti bacho, beti parhao",

"today's women tomorrows future", "save girl child save the nation", "girls are best", "Girls are Gold and not to be sold," etc., were part of the Rally. There was also a competition in drawing and posters depicting the preciousness of every girl child who is and will be born on this earth. Thanks to the School management especially to Sr. Celine D'Cunha our Principal for taking this initiative to celebrate this unique day.

Sr. Kharmuti Margreth, FMA

St. Joseph Parish, Agartala

We began with praying the Rosary after which the Holy Mass was presided over by Fr. Thomas Pereira, CSC, and yours truly gave the homily highlighting the importance of the girl child and associated themes. After Mass there was a short felicitation program. Mrs. Gita Debbarma, from the Diocesan Women Commission gave a speech on the theme: "Girls, the most beautiful creation of God; respect and empower them." The day ended with refreshment. Over 100 people attended the celebrations. *Fr. Harry D'Silva, CSC*

Housing for the Poor in rural Dhalai District

On 14th of September, DM Colony, Ambassa gathered as a faith community to



participate in the inauguration and blessing of their newly built five low cost houses. Bishop Lumen Monteiro along with Frs. Cyprian,

Robert and Ivan blessed and inaugurated these houses. The Diocese of Agartala has already built 40 houses for the poor in Kumarghat, Gandacherra, and Bodhjungnagar Parishes for the past two years with the assistance of Fondazione Fratelli Dimimenticati, Italy. Fr. Ivan D'Silva the Parish Priest deserves special appreciation for his hard work in identifying these five most deserving families and building these houses.

Fr. Robert Mathias, CSC



Medical Camp

In the month of August 2015, Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) conducted 2 medical Camp at Satiram Para and Panchajoy Para under Ganganagar R.D. Block in Dhalai District. Dr. Philip Reang, the medical officer from Ganganagar PHC examined and prescribed necessary medicines to the patients. About 175 people mostly women and children attended the medical camp. The doctors diagnosed the patients after which free



medicines were distributed to the patients. During the medical camp, a malaria case was also detected and referred to hospital for necessary treatment.

IMCP-II

The Malaria control project of JUST conducted 16 mikings, 8 Community Message Disseminations and 8 infotainment activities in the project areas in Khowai & Dhalai Districts. The Field Supervisors along with the community health volunteers organized the programme in the villages covered by the project. During the programme, Awareness on malaria was given to the people; the

main topics discussed during the programme are; malaria signs, symptoms, diagnosis, treatment and prevention.



Community message dissemination on malaria focuses the village panchayat member, MPWs, ASHA, teachers, elders, youths and Anganwadi workers. All the BCC activities are conducted once in a year in each village except miking which is conducted twice in every year in all the target villages. *Mr. Vincent DebBurma*

Tid bits from all over

Catholic Nun receives award for Excellence in Education

An Apostolic Carmel nun based in Pune has been conferred a prestigious award named after a 19th century social reformer for educating girl children. Sr. Marisa, principal of Mount Carmel Convent School, Lullanagar, Pune, received the Kranti Jyoti (light of revolution) Savitribai Phule Award at a function on August 19 in Pune. The award, reserved only for women achievers, comprises a citation, memento, and a book in Marathi on the life of Savitribai Phule, who championed girl children's emancipation. The Catholic nun was selected for her commendable work in empowering the girl child through education, said a press note from Tejaswini Sanstha. *Lijo Thomas of mattersindia.com*



with global trends, Japan is the oldest worldwide. Nationwide one in 10 women is over 80, while 10.2 million people (or 7.9% of the total population, comprising about 126 million people) are over 81. The data was published on the eve of the Respect-for-the-Aged Day, which is celebrated on 22nd September, and is a national holiday in Japan. *(AsiaNews via CNUA)*

Pope Francis in the U.S.A.

Pope Francis is now on his 10th foreign trip since his election in March 2013. This week-long journey (Sept. 21 to 27) takes him first to Cuba and then to the United States and the United Nations and is widely considered "the big one" of the year. He began his global travel last January with a second trip to Asia, visiting Sri Lanka, a mostly Buddhist country, and the Philippines, the continent's most populous Catholic country. In June he made a one-day visit to Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a state on Europe's periphery that is still recovering from war. Then in



July he returned to Latin America to visit three countries on its peripheries: Ecuador, Bolivia and Paraguay. At the end of November, he will go to Africa for the first time, to visit Kenya, Uganda and the Central African Republic.

This first pope from the Americas is universally recognized as a profoundly spiritual and humble man, a true follower of Jesus with unlimited love and passionate concern for the poor, the migrants, people who are suffering, those on the peripheries of society and the excluded. In two and a half years as leader of the Catholic Church, he has shown such an extraordinary ability to express God's love for people in concrete and original ways that he has inspired Catholics

worldwide and gained the admiration and respect of millions of followers of other religions and even of those who profess no faith. After two decades of experiencing dismay, shame and anger at the sexual abuse and other scandals in their church, Catholics are again feeling proud to belong to the church he leads, "a church that is poor and for the poor," a nonjudgmental church that serves as a "field hospital." *(Gerard O'Connell America via CNUA)*

Japan is the oldest country in the world with more than 10 million over 80's

For the first time in its history, the number of Japanese "over 80" has exceeded 10 million units. Comparing the latest national statistics

Bishop's Program for October 2015

- 01: St. Joseph's School Annual Day, Gokulnagar
- 02: ADPC Meet, Agartala
- 03: Koraticherra Chapel Blessing, Kathalcherra Parish
- 04: St. Francis Assisi Feast, Gachirampara Parish
- 05-07: DRR International Conference, Delhi
- 08: Caritas IWG Meet
- 09: Distribution of Sewing Machines, JUST Agartala
- 10: Meet with Students--Education Sponsorship
- 11: Confirmations, St Xavier's Parish, Agartala
- 12: Gender Mainstreaming Workshop, Agartala
- 13: Feast Day Mass-Fatima Sisters, Damdamia
- 16: Multipurpose Hall Blessing, Karbook
- 17: Assembly Hall Blessing, Depacherra
- 18: Silver Jubilee Inaugural, Bodhjungnagar Parish
- 25: Chapel Blessing at Joggothakur, Bishramganj Parish
- 27-29: Caritas GB Meet, Delhi

Our Distinguished Visitors

Fr. Hormis Sisters: Sr. Prestina, CMC from Sudan & Mrs. Mariamma from Kerala
Fr. Arul Paulraj, SVD, from Trichy
Fr. Maliekkal, SDB Provincial from Shillong
Mother Annie and Sr. Vinaya, FCC Provincial Team from Kerala
Fr. George Arakal, VC, from Jallalkali