



LINK

News Bulletin of the Diocese of Agartala

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Pastor's Corner



5th September - Teachers' Day

Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan's birthday, September 5, was chosen to celebrate Teachers' Day in India. When he became the President of India in 1962, his students and friends approached him with the idea of celebrating his birthday as Teachers' Day. Dr. Radhakrishnan graciously suggested that the day should be dedicated to all teachers, rather than being just a personal celebration. This gesture highlights his deep respect for the teaching profession and his belief in its critical role in society. Teachers' Day is an opportunity to recognize and appreciate the vital role that teachers play in shaping the future of students and the nation as a whole. Celebrating Teachers' Day also helps foster a culture of respect and appreciation for teachers.

Teachers' Day in India is a significant occasion that celebrates the dedication, hard work, and impact of educators. Through various activities and recognition, the day honors teachers and reinforces their vital role in shaping the future of the nation. As we celebrate Teachers' Day let us support and invest in teachers, ensuring they have the resources and encouragement needed to continue their invaluable work. The respect and appreciation shown on Teachers' Day contribute to a positive educational environment, benefiting both teachers and students alike.

Teaching in India is both a challenging and rewarding profession. Despite the difficulties faced by teachers, there are significant efforts underway to address the issues and improve the educational landscape. By continuing to support and invest in teachers, by enhancing professional development opportunities and leveraging technology, India can create a more effective and inclusive education system that benefits both educators and students. **HAPPY TEACHERS DAY.**

5th September - St. Mother Teresa

On September 5, we celebrate the feast day of St. Mother Teresa of Kolkata. She was a Catholic nun, who in 1950

founded the Missionaries of Charity. She was canonized on 4th September 2016, and the anniversary of her death on 5th September is her Feast Day.

Mother Teresa recognized that true poverty went beyond just physical needs; it encompassed loneliness, abandonment, and spiritual emptiness. She sought not only to alleviate suffering but also to offer solace and companionship through her presence. In her interactions with those living in extreme poverty, Mother Teresa displayed incredible humility and respect. She treated everyone equally regardless of their background or circumstances. This unwavering commitment to treating all individuals with love and compassion became one of her defining principles. Through her selfless dedication to helping others, Mother Teresa inspired people from all walks of life to get involved in charitable endeavors themselves. Her message was simple yet powerful: *"We can all make a difference by extending a helping hand towards those less fortunate than us"*, she used to say.

Mother Teresa's legacy lives on through organizations such as the Missionaries of Charity who continue her mission today – caring for marginalized populations worldwide without discrimination. The impact she made during her lifetime cannot be measured solely by numbers or statistics but rather by the transformed lives she touched along the way. I was one of them who was touched by her life and my life has changed!

Let me end with a story told by Mother herself. *"When once a chairman of a multinational company came to see me, to offer me a property in Bombay, he first asked: 'Mother, how do you manage your budget?' I asked him who had sent him here. He replied: 'I felt an urge inside me.' I said: other people like you come to see me and say the same. It was clear God sent you, Mr. A, as He sends Mr. X, Mrs. Y, Miss Z, and they provide the material means we need for our work. The grace of God is what moved you. You are my budget. God sees to our needs, as Jesus promised. I accepted the property he gave and named it Asha Dan (Gift of Hope)."* **HAPPY FEAST DAY.**

+Lumen, CSC



EDITORIAL



Foundations Destroyed

The penultimate week of August saw the State of Tripura reel under the biggest flood it experienced in recent times. As per reports, more than 1700 thousand people were affected, about 128 thousand were shifted from their homes, and over 10 thousand houses were destroyed at least partially. Saddest of all, 24 people lost their lives. It is reported that the total loss was estimated to be around 5000 crores. In many places, areas that were thought to be generally immune to flood got inundated catching unaware so many residents. Incessant rains caused landslides, thereby compounding the situation further.

The disaster that struck Tripura was not a stand-alone calamity. It was the latest in a series of natural disasters that took place in various parts of our country - prominent among them the Wayanad and Uttarakhand ones. Besides the pain, sorrow, and irretrievable loss that such tragedies bring about, the common thread that runs through all these is man's greed and his irreverence of our common home, the Earth. Experts often explain natural calamities as nature's way of reclaiming its rightful share when human greed thoughtlessly denies it.

In matters of climate and environment, it has become fashionable to make politically correct noises about how the bird population is declining in Hawaii, crabs are vanishing in Alaska, or the Amazon Rainforest is getting depleted. While being so vocal about matters global, it is intriguing how we fall silent when they're about similar things in our locality. Not just silent but dangerously complicit many times!

The neck-breaking speed at which change happens in some facets of life often makes us tolerant of even blatant

violations that harm nature and the environment in the long run. I live in an area that has witnessed amazing changes in recent years. Vast stretches of uninhabited land have changed into a densely populated residential area. Plots of land, earlier thought far-flung, and inconvenient have today become prized locations. This is true, we know, of most places where our institutions come up. Most families in these new settlements are, interestingly, grappling with boundary-related problems: *their garbage is dumped onto our land, their toilets are too close to our wall, their boundary wall is preventing us from turning our car, etc.*

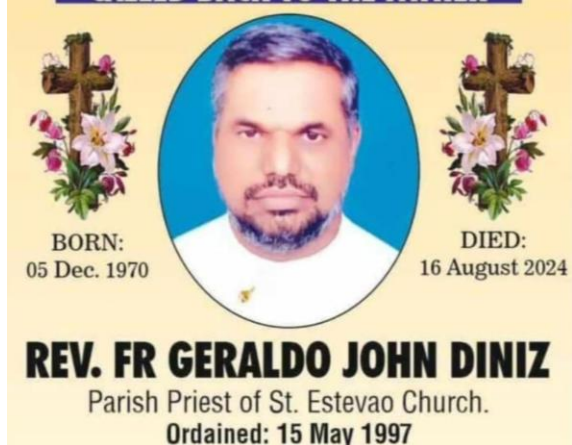
And regarding drainage – well, it seems so unreasonable and uneconomical to waste space for simply water to go, when all we have is 2 *ghantas* bought for a fortune. The truth is that when economy takes precedence over environment, the matter is no longer a neighbor-issue, but a nature-issue, and the recent floods in these settlements were perhaps a grim reminder of that from the side of Mother Earth.

The takeaway is that we should become more sensitive to the harm we do overtly or covertly to the environment and nature by our selfishness and greed. As long as we feel no qualms of conscience about smelly dustbins right under our noses spilling onto public spaces, plastic and debris piling up in our backyards, and used statues of deities filling up our water bodies, there isn't much hope.


And we as a Church, could think of *Laudato Si* to become part of our relief package for flood-affected victims.

J. Pulinthanath, SDB

CALLLED BACK TO THE FATHER



BORN:
05 Dec. 1970



DIED:
16 August 2024

REV. FR GERALDO JOHN DINIZ
Parish Priest of St. Estevao Church.
Ordained: 15 May 1997

CONDOLENCES

We offer our deepest condolences to the Archdiocese of Goa at the passing away of Fr. John Diniz. Fr. Diniz had worked as a *fidei donum* priest in a few parishes in our Diocese for over 7 years, and was the PP of Depacherra at the time of his departure to Goa. We thank God for his beautiful life. We pray for his soul that God grant him eternal life.

AMBASSA PARISH

National Youth Sunday

Ambassa (Tripura) August 11, 2024:



Holy Spirit Catholic Church, Ambassa, organized a one-day youth seminar on National Youth Sunday.

There were 107 youths from different substations of the parish. The theme was 'Those who hope in the Lord, will run and not be weary.' (Is. 40, 31). There was a special Holy Mass arranged for the youth in the Parish Church at 9

in the morning. This was followed by the input session. The youth president of Ambassa Deanery Mr. Lalengmoy Haram asked the youth to introduce themselves and then Mr. Haram welcomed the resource person Dr. Asok Debbarma. Dr. Debbarma enlightened the youth with the burning topic for Tripura, namely, 'DRUGS'. He elaborately spoke on the subject with many examples. He cautioned the youth saying, "In the coming years many young people are going to die because of HIV, which happens because of sharing of syringes among the drug addicts". The second session was taken by Fr. Ivan D Silva, SVD the Agartala Diocesan Social Communication Coordinator. He spoke on social media and Media in Education. This was followed by Bible Quiz in village groups. Fr. Ivan conducted the Quiz based on the gospel of St. John. Towards the end of the Seminar cultural dances were performed by the youth of different substations.

Fr Ivan D' Silva, SVD

AMBASSA PARISH

Basic Ecclesial Community Seminar



Ambassa (Tripura) 18 August 2024:

Holy Spirit Parish organized a half day seminar for the leaders of the parish, on Basic Ecclesial Community. It was planned and organized by the Evangelization

Committee of the Parish. It was a Sunday, and faithful from different villages had gathered for the Holy Mass at 9:00 am offered by Fr. Ivan the parish priest. After the Holy Eucharist, Mr. Kamal Debbarma, the parish pastoral council secretary, welcomed 108 participants to get involved in the class on BEC. Fr. Ivan took the practical class on BEC elaborately explaining the meaning of church. He called volunteers to come and hold the placards to describe the different stages of the Church. He said, "When the Basic Community is affected negatively then the parish and whole Diocese gets affected". The Parish Priest expounded through the pictures the four models of Church. There were few queries and authentic cases from the participants to be clarified. The session got over with the late lunch.

Ivan D' Silva, SVD

KUMARGHAT PARISH

Parish Youth Seminar

From 27th to 28th July our Parish Youth gathered at Sunaimuri village under Kumarghat Zone for two days of animation. Afternoon at 2pm registration began and at 4pm



football competition for Boys and Girls was organized. It was a very enjoyable event. At 6pm and light rosary precession was organized followed by an hour-long Adoration and the youth actively participated in it. There was short cultural program organized. The next day began with the Morning Prayer and breakfast, followed by animation program by Catechist Subia, Mr. Roitua Darlong, Sr. Gerald M.C and Fr. Lancy CSC. They stressed the need to read the Word of God and prayer. The theme was "Word of God and Praying Youth". The day concluded with the Holy Eucharist and fellowship meal. All were happy with the camp.

Sr. Margret, FS



KUMARGHAT PARISH

Couples' Day celebration

On the 4th of Aug the Parish Council organized Couples Day in the parish. The day began with the registration, Rosary, and an hour-and-a-half-long animation on the Role of Couples and their responsibilities in the family and to

each other as husband and wife. During the Holy Eucharist after the homily, eighty couples renewed their Marriage vows and it was a very holy and touching moment. Special prayers were said for the Couples. They all enjoyed the whole program.

Sr. Margret, FS

KUMARGHAT PARISH

Mother's Day celebration

On the August 11, 2024,



The Maria Sango of the Parish celebrated Mothers' Day in the Parish. 110 Mothers attended the celebration. The day began with the reciting of the Rosary followed by the Holy Eucharist. In the homily Fr. Lancy CSC emphasized the

role of the mother in the family, society, and the Church. The whole liturgy was conducted by the mothers. During the animation, Mrs. Hunsangi Darlong the local hospital nurse, highlighted the role of the mother in the family. She has a multi-task role in the family. Due to that she has to look after her health well. She has to be healthy for four levels: Physical, Psychological, Spiritual, and Societal level. Fr. Lancy CSC in his talk conducted a meditation on 'Talking to your mother' and saying sorry to her for not validating enough, asking for her forgiveness, saying I love you, and thanking her for being a good mother. He also highlighted the Biblical characters of a mother. There was a lot of interaction during the session. It was a blessed day for all the mothers.

Sr. Margret, FS

KHUMULWNG PARISH

Parish Feast celebrated



The Feast of St. Alphonsa was celebrated with great devotion and joy on 27-28 August 2024. The celebrations began with the Parish Sabha on the 27th afternoon with reporting of the village *mothas* about their faith community. This was followed by Bible skit and Group singing competition followed by Eucharistic Adoration along with sacrament of reconciliation. The presence of Bishop Lumen Monteiro and Frs. Cyprian and Babu Paul for the celebration added joy and enthusiasm.

On the feast day the faithful from all *mothas* of the parish gathered together for holy Mass presided over by our dear Bishop. The Bishop administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to 13 young members of our parish. It was a moment of immense spiritual significance.

In conjunction with the feast, we celebrated Grandparents Day, acknowledging the invaluable role grandparents play in our families and community. Special prayers and blessings were offered for all grandparents, and a small token of appreciation was presented to them.

Five villages who were part of the Khumulwng parish, and who now were part of the new Jampuijala parish were given a loving farewell.

As part of our commitment to environmental stewardship, we too observed Green Sunday by planting saplings around the church premises. This initiative not only beautified our surroundings but also served as a reminder of our responsibility to care for God's creation. The celebrations concluded with the festive meal for all the people.

Fr. Joshy Abraham SVD

Feast of the Patron Saint of Priests



The feast of St. John Mary Vianney, the patron saint of all priests was celebrated at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, Durjoynagar, on 4th August 2024. Three Masses were celebrated in different timings and different languages with the intention to pray for all the priests especially those serving in the diocese of Agartala and also for the Vocation to Priesthood. Fr. Ajit CSC, Fr. Valan CSC and Fr. Bosco were the main celebrants During the Masses, the significance of the life of St. Vianney in the modern world was explained. The importance of priesthood and its challenges in today's world was emphasized. After each Mass, the priests were honored with traditional *risha* by the parish council members. All the faithful and religious wished the priests a meaningful feast day and priestly life and assured their prayers.

Fr. Bosco Lathees



THE NATIVITY
OF THE BLESSED
VIRGIN MARY

September 8th

**LINK Wishes its
Readers
A Happy Feast of
Nativity of BVM**

Inter-School Sports Meet for Peace



JUST organized a series of Inter-School Sports Meet for Peace under peace program, bringing together students from twenty (20) different schools at three (3) different venues to showcase their sportsmanship and promoting peace in their school campus. The event featured a range of competitions, including football, throw ball, and kabaddi, with enthusiastic participation from different schools. Principals, Headmistress, Teachers and students from different Schools expressed their appreciation for the well-coordinated events, noting the importance of such activities in the holistic development of students. After the competitions, winners were honored with trophies, and all participants were recognized for their involvement, emphasizing the inclusive spirit of the meet.

Awareness Programs on different Government Schemes

A series of Awareness programs on different Government schemes available for the SHGs was organized by JUST in the month of June, 2024 at different villages under Ganganagar R.D Block in Dhalai District. Mr. Lilmohan Reang and the 3 animators were the facilitators in the programs. They explained various schemes available for the SHGs such as Tripura Rural Livelihood Mission (TRLM) which is a state plan scheme being implemented in Tripura since 2019-20 that has a provision for providing soft loan maximum of rupees 25,000 at the rate of 4 percent interest and equal amount from



Tripura State Co-operative Bank. Financing of Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) is another scheme where the members who are engaged in similar economic activities and are willing to jointly undertake to repay the loans taken by the group from the Banks can avail the loan. They also explained to them about PMAY-G scheme under PM-JANMAN for the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) which is a housing scheme for the Reang tribe who does not have any government job in the family members can avail. SHG members are now more knowledgeable of government programs and welfare schemes which they can access to improve the situation of their household.

Mr. Robert Lushai

Tripura Floods Update

Flood update as on August 24, 2024: Till date, 24 persons died, 2 injured, 2 missing, damages upto 5000 crores

Due to very heavy and continuous rainfall since 19th August 2024, Tripura faced unprecedented floods in the State. According to the Tripura' disaster management

RESCUE OPERATIONS BY SDRF



authority (TDMA) Gomati, South Tripura, Unakoti and West Tripura Districts have been severely affected. The situation is being closely monitored by the Chief Minister, Tripura. Today, Chief Minister conducted aerial survey and made physical visit to the flood affected areas at Khilpara in Gomati and Bokafa in South Tripura Districts along with senior officials Kiran Gitte, IAS and Abhishek Singh, IAS of the State Administration.

National disaster response force (NDRF), along with State disaster response force (SDRF) jawans have been engaged in the rescue of flood victims in the state non-stop for last 96 hours! It is reported that Tripura's own disaster

response force modeled on the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) established with selected TSR personnel last fifteen years ago. This is the first time Tripura witness such a huge devastating flood across the state. And (SDRF) jawans have been working non-stop for the last 96 hours along with the NDRF to rescue the flood victims. During this rescued period these young SDRF jawans did not rest for a single time except to take food. State Police DG Amitabh Ranjan praised the SDRF and NDRF jawans for their tireless work.

In order to tackle a possible outbreak of post-flood water-borne diseases in the 558 relief camps opened across the state the state health department has cancelled leave of all health staff including doctors for the next three days. A large section of health staff has been deployed to examine the health condition of 1.28 lakh people including women and children sheltered in camps all over the state. There is a fear that in the post-flood situation a outbreak of water-borne diseases is possible among the affected people.

Meanwhile, the power department seems to have been the worst affected by the recent rain and flood. Altogether 1603 electric poles have collapsed all over the state over and above the irreparable damages caused to altogether 501 transformers and two substations of 33 and 66 KV, he said. "According to primary estimate the power department in the state has suffered a loss of Rs 9.2 crores but this may go up further when final estimates are made," said Abhishek Singh. Apart from this, the revenue secretary Brijesh Pande said that the monetary value of losses suffered by the state in the recent flood and rain may reach Rs 5 thousand crores, according to estimates made so far but this may be more as making final estimates may take a longer period of time. (*tripurainfo.com*)

Bishop's Program for September 2024

- 01: Nandurai Chapel Blessing under Depacherra Parish
- 03: Clergy Meet, Agartala
- 05: Mother Teresa Feast Day, MC Kumarghat
- 07: Presbytery Blessing @ Kamaranga
- 08: SVD Sesquicentennial Year of Foundation @ Ambassa
- 10-14: St. John's Board Meeting & CBCI SCM @ Bangalore
- 15-30: Out of the Diocese for Health check up

Our Distinguished Guests

- Fr. Amol Augustine Rozario, CSC, from Bangladesh
- Fr. Justine, MC, from Shillong