



Pastor's Corner

His hand to lead us through 2015

A New Year has begun...how quickly time flies! These days people feel they don't have enough time and have resorted to 'multi-tasking'. But multi-tasking often leads to reduced concentration and mistakes which then takes up more time. Some become so dispirited by their 'to-do' list that they put things off, hoping it will

be easier another day - or unnecessary if left long enough - and so the list gets longer... When time feels like this, everything seems an effort.

But then there are people who do a lot but don't appear to be busy; they seem to be carefree. How do they manage that? The secret lies in how much we understand and value ourselves and time. **Dadi Janki**, Administrative Head of the Brahma Kumaris says she is sometimes asked where she gets her energy from. Her answer is, *"If I use my time, energy and money in ways that are benevolent and useful I experience a lot of happiness and strength internally and in my relationships... So what I have to do is focus my attention on the present and the quality of my thoughts, words and actions now. With a better understanding of myself and time, I am able to tap into my inner power and the power and energy of the One above and use that in a worthwhile way to help bring about positive change in my own life and in the world."*

And then there are those who are impatient who want to reach the end without delay. This is because "we are impatient of being on



the way to something unknown, something new" says **Teilhard de Chardin**. *And yet it is the law of all progress that it is made by passing through some stages of instability and that it may take a very long time. And so I think it is with you; your ideas mature gradually let them grow, let them shape themselves, without undue haste. Don't try to force them on, as though you could be today what time will make of you tomorrow. Only God could say what this new spirit gradually forming within you will be. Give our Lord the benefit of believing that His hand is leading you, and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete."* As we begin a New Year with our 'to do' list and future plans let us allow His hand to lead us through the year ahead.

213 since 1996

Today I present the 213th issue of LINK since its birth in May 1996 a reminder that we are 19 years old and haven't missed an issue every month! I am happy that despite the boom in electronic communications and apps the humble printed newsletter 'links' us with each other. I am grateful to Frs. PJ, Prasad and Roby who assist me month after month to churn out an issue on time not an easy task given our many constraints! I thank our dear readers for the steady stream of one-liners encouraging us in our humble effort. I wish each of you a Joy-filled and Peace-filled Happy New Year. +**Lumen, CSC**

**Happy New Year to all our Readers.
Explode Goodwill Not Bombs during
2015**



Editorial

Stepping into 2015

We have just begun another year amidst thoughts and talks of new beginnings. How nice to think the old year is ended and gone, offering us the chance to begin afresh, not just a new chapter, but a new book altogether.

How wonderful if we could forget all the bills and debts, sicknesses and unfinished tasks of the year gone by and start on a clean slate! But we know, in real life, that is a luxury not many can afford. These irritants do find their way into the New Year and often make a mockery of our resolutions and good intentions. They even seem to question the basis of all New Year commotion we find around.

Despite such knowledge, we are right, perhaps, to not let go of the birth of the New Year without acknowledging it as best we can. We know it is a time to look ahead and make changes for the better. It is a time to engage in new things, better things, bigger things. But even more than that, it is a time, perhaps, to infuse new life and vigor into old things. It is the time of the year when we shake off our tiredness, and apathy and recommit ourselves to the same causes and peoples and responsibilities with greater enthusiasm and hope.



The New Year comes at a moment when we, as a Diocese and as the Church in India, are weighed down by many worries and doubts about the shape of things to come, and the direction the country will take. A government that came to power promising 'development' seems to have already pushed that agenda to the backburner and taken up volatile issues like 'conversion' as its priority. Right-minded citizens of the country cannot but fear for the secular credentials of India.

This New Year we have other melancholic memories at the back of our minds: the Peshawar massacre of students, the ongoing communal killings in Bodoland. These are somber thoughts that must not only put a tab on the extravagant way New Year is often celebrated, but urge us on to action and to a resolve, to ensure that this New Year we do our bit to rid the world of such mindless evils.

The New Year certainly does not offer us a new clean slate to start afresh, but it does give us an opportunity to consider the same realities with new eyes and renewed hearts.

The prayer on our lips as we step into the uncertainty of the New Year is that we walk our days and our paths in the safe and secure shadow of God Almighty. Happy New Year!

J. Pulinthanath, sdb

Kumarghat Parish

St. Thomas Chapel Twinaisa blessed

A new *mondoli* is added to St. Paul's Parish Kumarghat on 14th December



2014. It was a joyful time for all the parishioners to have the gracious presence of

Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, to inaugurate the new Chapel and give the Sacraments of Initiation to 66 catechumens. Their new village chapel is dedicated to St. Thomas and it is in Twinaisa. 43 candidates received the Sacrament of Confirmation from Bishop Lumen.

It was really inspiring to witness the enthusiasm of the villagers. The villagers put up a Church by their own effort and money, and organized the day very well.

Fr. Jaibu SVD, Holy Spirit Sisters' from Ambassa Parish, M.C Sisters, Fatima Sisters, Evangelization Team, Parish Council Members all initiated and encouraged the people of this village to receive the good news. Thanks to all of them.

One month long Family strengthening Program

The Parish Council felt the importance of strengthening Christian families and organized two days Seminar on Family in every village in St. Paul's Parish Kumarghat. The program began from 5th November to 5th December 2014. Fr. Sathish, CSsR from Krishnagar was the Resource Person. The Family Resource Team of the Parish also joined Fr. Sathish in organizing the Seminar. Fr. Sathish visited every village of the Parish and stayed in the village two days giving classes on Family. The main topics covered were 'The Sacrament of Marriage, Fidelity in Marriage Life, Parenting in different stages of growth of children, Natural Family Planning, The teaching of Church on Marriage and the evils of Abortion. Training the Family Cell was created in each village to strengthen the family life of the villagers.

Fr. Arul J. CSC, Parish Priest

Ambassa Parish

Small Christian Community Meeting, Ambassa, December 13:

Agartala Diocese Zonal level Small Christian Community meeting (SCC)

was held at Ambassa Parish. Parishioners from four parishes were present for the occasion. Zonal Coordinator Fr. Arul CSC the Parish Priest of Kumarghat briefed about the



Meeting. Before that the host and the Parish Priest of Ambassa

Fr. Ivan D'Silva SVD welcomed the participants for the Meeting. After the Bible sharing reports were read from different parishes. It was a unanimous voice that SCC units of different parishes should be strengthened and increased. Few Parishes are excelling in this area whereas other Parishes still lagging behind. One of the concerns is how to create interest and meaning in the Small Christian Community.

Hadukolok Village Chapel

Ambassa, November 30: Hadukolok Village Chapel got a new shape and was inaugurated on this day. This village has more than 50 families



among which only four families are Catholic.

The village is inhabited by Reang community, one of the primitive tribes of India. The village is only 1km away for the National Highway yet the Civil Administration is not much bothered about supplying basic amenities to this village. The village is deprived of electricity, water and proper road. Villagers live by selling forest products such as, bamboos, bamboo shoots, firewood and other vegetables. Many children are studying in Ambassa Parish School. The Prayer house of this village was in dilapidated condition. The Catholic families reported about this to the Ambassa Parish pastor. He, along with the parish youth and neighbouring Catholic community once again erected the broken building and gave it the shape of a Church. Thanks to the initiative of the

Parish youth and the spirit of local faithful.

News Desk, Ambassa

Kathalcherra Parish

Bible Camp for Children

In the cold winter days of December there was a lovely opportunity for the children of Good Shepherd Parish, Kathalcherra, to be a part of the Bible camp organized exclusively for them on 13th to 14th of Dec. The Parish priest Fr. Lancy prepared the animators prior to this. Six villages were chosen and on the first day children gathered in their respective villages. Two lay leaders and a religious Sister each in these places enthused the children and gave them the taste of Bible scenes taken from both Old and New Testament and required knowledge on catechism in a creative way. The day was made vibrant with action songs and bible songs.

On 14th the children charged with the love of Jesus gathered at the Parish Centre. Day commenced with the Holy Eucharist followed by competitions like Bible Quiz, Bible Skit, and Bible Song. Before leaving to their respective homes children enjoyed a movie on the life of Jesus. It was a memorable day for the children.

Dr. Sr. Prema, B.S.

Gandacherra Parish

Annual Youth Meet

St. Arnold Parish Annual Youth Meet was held in the Parish Hall between 12 and 14 December, 2014. Thirty six youth from different *mondolis* represented the Meet. The program was inaugurated on 12th with an Ice breaker, welcome, prayer and singing competition. On 13th morning Sr. Juliana gave a motivational conference, helping the youth to apprehend their capability and potentialities to what they can contribute to the development of their own villages. During the second session, Fr. Bennet spoke about the Liturgy of the Eucharist. It was a learning which they would teach in their respective village churches when they go back. During the third Session Fr. Bosco taught them about Christian marriage and family. There was also a brief awareness program regarding legal matters by Advocate Ms. Halam. This was followed by a colorful dance and singing competition; prizes were



given to the wining groups. In the evening, we had an hour of prayer with the Eucharistic Lord in which Fr. Bennet invoked the Holy Spirit upon the Youth.

Gandacherra News Service

Moharpara Parish Parish Retreat and Feast Celebrations

Preceding the Parish Feast this year, Moharpara Parish had one day preaching each in nine centres conducted by Fr.



Pradeep, CSSR, from Krishnagar WB, starting from 28th November to 11th December.

Most of the people made use of this opportunity to make their confessions. This year the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of our Blessed Mother had fallen on a Monday and therefore this Feast was celebrated on 7th December 2014. In preparation for the same there was a one day Recollection for those around Moharpara village conducted by Fr. Pradeep, CSSR. His Lordship Bishop Lumen arrived on the previous day itself and we had the solemn holy Mass at 10.00am on 7th. Fr. Pradeep preached the homily. A few representatives from other 'mandolis' of the Parish also attended.

After the Holy Mass Bishop Lumen addressed the 'mondoli' representatives and listened to their queries. After a fellowship meal they all departed.

Deacon Ishwar Happa, csc

Our Readers Write

Lumen, Thanks so much. You never miss a deadline. Keeping you and all in the diocese in prayer. *Tony Krisak, USA*

Thank you for your email and for Link. I really enjoy reading every word of your new letter. The two stories are very telling and good to reflect upon. *Marie Fay, AC*

Thanks for the Newsletter and your usual wonderful stories. *Timm, CSC, Dhaka*

Thanks for the December Link; good thoughts for refection--to encounter Christ in the silence of our hearts. *Tony, SFX, Italy*

Thanks for the Link... It reinforces the contact with your people and our friendship. *Lieve Hoogewys, Belgium*

Christmas Mela unites Christian Churches at Khumulwng



The first Christmas Mela was organized by St. Alphonsa Parish, Khumulwng, on 20th December 2014. The Mela was organized in a market place of Chengkharukami under Khumulwng Parish. It began with carols singing, dancing and praise and worship led by the choir. The entire thanksgiving Prayer Service was well prepared which led the congregation in prayer and devotion. Later it was declared open by Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC, who placed a statue of child Jesus in the crib, blessed the crib and congregation and switched on the lights. This was followed by lighting the lamp and paying homage to the child Jesus by all dignitaries and guests. Among those who delivered Christmas Messages were Bishop Lumen Monteiro, Executive Member-TTAAADC, MDC, Fr. Jeevan SVD and Fr. Arun Minj SVD. Besides Catholics other Christian denominations such as Baptists, Believers Church, Presbyterians and Hindus were invited who participated with group songs and dances. One of the most meaningful and apt item for the season was "History of Salvation" a musical drama enacted by the Seminarians and St. Mary Hostel girls. The 1st Christmas Mela was a grand success in bringing different denominations and religions together to share the joy and happiness of the Christmas. The Mela ended at 10pm invoking God's blessings.

Fr. Arun Minj SVD

Ecumenical 'advance Christmas' celebrations at Ambassa



Ambassa, December 11: All denomination leaders, pastors, priests and lay people gathered together at Lalchori, Ambassa to

celebrate the Christmas. "JESUS CHRIST THE HOPE OF AGES" (1 Tim 1, 1) was the theme of the celebration. Catholic youth welcomed the participants with a welcome song and bouquet. Prior to that Fr. Joachim Kullu, SVD the Secretary of the United Christian Forum welcomed everyone and thanked the organizers. Pastor Parimol Kaipeng of Tripura Baptist Christian Union (T.B.C.U.) conducted the whole show. Before the speaker spoke on the theme, readings from the Bible were read in different languages. Rev. C.K. Debbarma (T.B.C.U) speaker of the day spoke, 'how Jesus is the hope for all the Christians and non-Christians'. He stressed 'We Christians are called to give hope to the hopeless'. Fr. Ivan D' Silva, SVD the host of the day, appreciated the assembly for gathering together to celebrate Christmas. He said, "Miracles happen when we are united and working for a cause". The focus of the day was the carol singing by the different groups in different languages. There were more than 100 participants who gathered in the Church and thereafter had sumptuous meal. *Ivan D' Silva, SVD*

14th Christo Mela at Kamaranga

The Christo Mela organized by St. Raphael's Parish Kamaranga is now an annual feature, each year growing in numerical strength. This year the celebrations



began with the parishioners gathering to celebrate 'advance Christmas' with Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, and their priests. After the solemn Holy Eucharist in which the incarnation mystery was celebrated the faithful gathered to discuss and share on their understanding of Christmas. This was led by Fr. Cyprian, SVD. Fr. Nabin, SVD who had come from Guwahati put in joy and cheer with the inclusion of action songs in his speech. The faithful then joined for the sumptuous meal with the fatted pig providing the tasty meat. The Christo Mela program began at 6.30pm with a beautiful prayer service in front of the crib. The Mela which brings hordes of people

from the Longthorai Valley is a great opportunity to share the Good News to peoples of all faiths. The enactment of the birth of Jesus followed by carol singing and dancing in various tribal costumes continued for the whole night and people were hovering around till 2.30am despite the chilly weather and dense fog. Business was thriving on the road side where special shops were erected for the occasion. Bishop Lumen blessed the congregation and explained how “Jesus has come to illumine our world darkened by violence, disfigured by the scars of wars, of murders, of exploitation and injustice.” *Link News Desk*

Pope calls Nobel Peace Laureates to continue 'Urgent Work' to promote Peace

Pope Francis has reminded Nobel Peace Laureates that our human nature is one which embraces our brothers and sisters in fellowship, and that Nelson Mandela's commitment to reconciliation embodied this mentality. This reflection was expressed in a message that Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin sent on behalf of the Holy Father to the participants in



the 14th World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates, which began in Rome on December 12.

The first annual World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates was held in Rome in 1999. It is an initiative of the Gorbachev Foundation, which is an international NGO founded by the former leader of the USSR. Since then, the summits have served as venues for exchanging opinions and as events promoting international peace campaigns and initiatives, often aimed at tackling violence. Attendees of the summit include Nobel Peace laureates and prominent global figures, often active in social, scientific, political and cultural areas. Among the participants in this year's Rome summit were Desmond Tutu, the Dalai Lama, and Mikhail Gorbachev. Some of the topics discussed include extreme poverty experienced around the world, problems with managing water resources, the role of ethics in politics and economic undertakings, and cross-cultural integration of people. *Zenit.org*

Fr. M. C. George becomes first National Secretary of Don Bosco Schools India

Fr M.C. George a legendary man of multifarious talent was elected to the post by a popular vote at the recent national meet of Don Bosco School principals held in Mumbai. Fr George, popularly known as Fr. Raj assumes office in January 2015 with hands-on-experience, gleaned from 25 years of experience as principal of prestigious schools in Assam and Tripura writes Fr. CM Paul, SDB.



The Salesian India apex body SPCSA (Salesian Provincials Conference of South Asia) endorsed the election of Fr George to the task of Coordination and animation of Don Bosco schools in India. Speaking to mattersindia.com Fr George says, “we will introduce programs to empower the girl child through quality education that will in turn and in years to come transform Indian families.”

Former principal of Don Bosco School, Guwahati and Don Bosco School, Agartala Fr George is acclaimed an eminent educationist and an able school administrator. President Dr Abdul J. Kalam conferred on Fr George the award for “Outstanding School Principal of India,” in 2007.

JUST News

JUST links SHG with Spices Board



Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) links SHG's with Spices Board to promote spices as a commercial product. Linking of SHG's with Spices Board had provided an opportunity for the SHG's to know regarding available schemes. Spices Board also conducted a training program for SHG's on turmeric cultivation. As on December 2014 more than 50 applications had been submitted by the SHG members for availing subsidy from the Board.

Training on Livestock Rearing

Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) organized training on livestock rearing

for 25 SHG members from 24th to 26th November 2014. The objective of the training was to “Initiate the SHG



members in a professional way of rearing live stock with disease control”. The introductory session was conducted at JUST training hall, Durjoynagar. The participants were then taken to ICAR, Lembucherra for practical session. Mr. Jogendra Debbarma Technical Officer, Dr. Vinoy Sing and Dr. Gulab Singh Yadav of ICAR were the resource persons for the practical sessions at ICAR. The SHG members appreciated JUST for the opportunity provided to them.

Mr. Deepan Gurung

Bishop's Program for January 2015

- 01: Confirmations at Nabinpara, Depacherra
- 02-12: SFX Exposition & Home Visit
- 16: JUST Livestock Distribution, Tuidu
- 17-18: Karbook *mondoli* inaugural, Depacherra Parish
- 19-23: Personal Retreat
- 24-25: Parish Sabah, Kumarghat
- 27: Consultors Meet
Clergy Meet & Recollection
- 28-30: DDC Caritas India, Nagpur
- 31-01: Parish Sabah, Kathalcherra

Our Distinguished Visitors

- Sr. Millie Fernandes, UFS, UFS Provincial and Sr. Mary D'Souza, UFS, from Dimapur
- Sr. Mirabelle, AC Provincial and Sr. Agnelita AC Provincial Economer from Kolkata
- SCSC Srs. Arul Mary & Liseena from Manipur
- Fr. George Maliekal, SDB, Provincial from Shillong
- Sr. Tapasi Gomes, CSC, Area Procurator from Dhaka
- Fr. K. P. Joseph, MSFS, Provincial Bursar from Guwahati
- SG Bros. James, Mathew, Thomas and Paulose from Mizoram
- Srs. Shephy & Lucy FCC, from Alwaye Provincialate