



Pastor's Corner

Smart Apps for Today

Picking up the Economic Times of Mumbai the other day, my eyes spotted this fine print: "Everything will be AppCentred." No longer are apps just to be used with accessories and toys! Your smartphone can now control your entire universe. For starters, you can lock or unlock your home doors with smart locks that work with smartphones from Okidokeys. NetatoMo Thermostat lets you set the home temperature from anywhere using your smartphone. BelkinsWeMo cooker lets you remotely cook your food. These and more will make their entry into our world in 2014.



I will add another year to my life in 2014 on 1st February. I am hoping that there would be an app for me it would have to be a multi-tasking one. I need something that will help me clear office files, deliver homilies, write circulars, conduct meetings, prepare projects and reports, chair meetings and do presentations, pray and counsel people, all at once!

As I read that amusing column my mind kept fleeting back to my growing up days in Goa in the early 50's when it was kerosene lamps for light and bicycles for commute. As I started in Bangalore in the 70's it was typewriters and duplicating machines for office equipment. While in Pune in the late 70's movies were in cinema houses and for news we read the daily papers or tuned in the radio; and for cricket we went to the stadium. Why, even when I went for my studies to USA in 1988 I was thrilled to be a proud owner of the electronic typewriter-the most modern invention!

How times have changed with the advent of the internet, tablets and the like. Technological advancement has brought a tsunami of change and the younger generation no longer believes me when I tell them stories of what happened 'in those days'.

As I add another year to my life, technology will add a plethora of 'smart inventions'. I ask God to make me smart enough to thank Him for human beings' inventive skill. God calls me to live in the light, to believe the surprising, amazing, staggeringly puzzling truth that I, wasn't made for darkness but for light. For his numerous blessings I say Thank You God.

+Lumen, CSC



Editorial

Family Matters

Today's Tripura Dream has a Rubber segment inbuilt into it. For a family in present day Tripura, few things seem more desirable than the prospect of owning a rubber garden. Interestingly, when rubber cultivation was first introduced in the state, most people looked askance at the leaf-fringed wonder, hardly realizing the revolution it was about to usher in not only in the economy of the state, but also in the psyche of its people. The impatience many displayed at having to wait out the first seven unproductive years vanished only when the rubber-rich began to flaunt it. And it didn't take the cynic long to lap up the rubber idea with a rare abandon.

The ambivalence about rubber has now vanished. More and more hectares of land are turning into rubber garden every passing year. One can sense a growing belief among the ordinary man that rubber is the panacea for all ills.

That's contestable, for sure. In fact, there are a number of myths surrounding the rubber phenomenon, each of which merit closer analysis and more-informed discourse. Take for instance, the falsity of the widespread belief that rubber has made the tribal society of Tripura rich. In fact, it has made only a microscopic segment of the tribal society rich, and stinking rich, that is.

Nevertheless, the rubber phenomenon has affected everyone in the community, both the rubber-haves and rubber-have-nots. For the latter it is the El Dorado devoutly wished, and for the former, it's a hugely gratifying indication of having moved up into the class that counts.

As a diocese, we focus on 'Families' in a special way this year. We cannot fail to consider the dynamics that rubber seems to be bringing into our homes and hearths. The suddenness of the rubber magic often gives rise to a 'big money syndrome' that not only redefines family's priorities and value system, but desecrates its natural sanctity and warmth.

With the god Mammon demanding from its devotees every bit of their strength, time and devotion one neither has time nor interest in responding to invitations of any other nature. It's an oft-heard alibi: "I have bought an estate and must attend to it. Excuse me." (Lk 14,18). It's never simply about hectares of land or liters of latex, really.

J. Pulinthanath, sdb

Diocese of Agartala
2014- Year of the Family



Link wishes its founder and our beloved Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, on his Birthday



Congratulations to Newly Appointed Provincials:

- Sr. Concepta Dkhar, MSMHC, Provincial Superior of Shillong Province
- Fr. George Panthanmackal, MSFS, Provincial of N.E. Province.

Bishramganj Parish Carols with a difference

At Bishramganj, Advent and Christmas makes a difference for the Catholic community. The Novena for Christmas is celebrated in most villages. It is during these days that 'carols' are organized in many areas with the intention of bringing God's message of salvation to many. In spite of the many around them who 'celebrate' Christmas during those days, our young people together with the Parish Council organized these 'preaching' programmes to bring the joy of Christ's birth to many more people.

Programmes were organized at Gulrai, Koiramura, Gamon and Mohanpur villages. Some thirty people mostly youth, accompanied by Priests and Sisters, would reach a village after having contacted the village leaders and through music, dance, films and the proclamation of the Word of God reached out to a large number of people who have never heard about Christ. It was a tremendous manifestation of faith.

An orchestra programme celebrated Christmas on 25th and another 'proclamation' of God's love at Shyamnagar on 31st night which concluded with the midnight Mass and celebration of the New Year attracted quite a number of people including those who did not belong to the Church.

Diocesan Youth Convention



Seventy five youth from our Parish took part in the Diocesan Youth Convention organized at Nandannagar by the Youth Commission. They participated enthusiastically and were happy to help the organizers for the smooth running of the programme. The Maria Zone

from the Pitra area generously offered to do the cooking.

First Communion preparation

The New Year saw Bishramganj Parish alive with activities. The children who came for the preparation for the reception of the Sacraments gave new life to the parish centre. Every year this is an event which is very joyful for children as they come to learn the faith. They live together for about a week. This year, the programme was from 7th January till 12th. Sr. Teresa Kerketta MSMHC together with other Sisters, catechists and youth made the programme truly memorable. The Parish Council and the other elders cooperated whole heartedly. Experience shows that these children become energizers for the village communities! **Fr. Sunny, SDB**

Gandacherra Parish

Preparing for Jesus' birth

In preparation to welcome Christ in our midst, we went carol singing to all our catholic houses in our *mondolis*. Even non-Catholics accepted the message of Christ and welcomed us to share their joy.

Then on 23rd December, we had an orchestra and float in the Gandacherra Town. On 24th night we had the Vigil Mass at the centre and in one of our *mondolis*. Christmas morning Mass was followed by a family meal. We shared the joy of our Saviour's birth with all including the non-Catholics around us -- Jesus was among us.

Parish Sabha

After 14 years of its establishment St. Arnold Parish had its first parish *sabha* from 3rd to 5th January in preparation for the Parish Feast. We began the preparation with the Parish Youth Convention from 1st to 3rd January. Youth from different *mondolis* came and discussed about their catholic life and planned for the year 2014. Parish *sabha* began with the Holy Eucharist by Fr. Bhuban. Then we had classes on different topics Women, Family, SCC and Sacraments. On the final day we had Feast day Mass where 33 people from a new village received baptism at the hands of Bishop Lumen. The *sabha* came to an end with a family meal. **Fr. Bosco Lathees**

Kathalcherra Parish

Maria Sangha Sabha

The twenty third Maria Sangha Sabha of Good Shepherd Parish Kathalcherra was organized on 18 and 19 January, 2014. The Annual Sabha, held at Puranbari *mondoli* was



attended by more than 300 Women. Fr. Bhuban Sarkar was the main Resource Person who dwelt on the theme 'Catholic Family a Holy Family'. He insisted on the importance of family prayer and called upon the Women to be agents of change and transmitters of Faith in the family. On the final day New Central Committee members were elected and old members were given a fitting farewell. Kudos to Srs. Simon Teresa and Suman, the Coordinators.

Holy Cross Family Ministry at Kathalcherra

Good Shepherd Parish Kathalcherra organized a candle lit procession in honor of Mother Mary on the occasion of the arrival of Fr. Jim Phalan CSC, Director of Family



Rosary Ministry and Fr. Arul Raj CSC National Coordinator and Fr. Robert Mathias CSC, on 21 January 2014. Fr. Jim demonstrated to the children the appearance of Mother Mary at Lourdes and explained to them the blessings one can receive through prayer. Prayer is the way to be good children of God. The candle lit procession was held after the Holy Mass. From the local *mondolis* four witnesses namely, Mr. Lukaram, Mr. Sanjoy, Mrs. Jamuna and Sr. Benny BS gave a powerful testimony of their experience of praying Rosary. **Mr. John Darlong**

Khumulwng Parish

Youth Convention and Christmas at St. Alphonsa Parish

Youth need constant encouragement and guidance. Little guidance and accompaniment gains much pastoral participation and help. Lack of encouragement and guidance not only



hampers youth initiative but also participation in the Church besides easy prey to various evils. Realizing the dangerous consequences, we organized a Parish Youth Convention on 20th and 21st of December. 70 parish youth enrolled from different villages.

The highlights of the Convention were- Seminar on awareness by Fr. Remol SDB (Youth Director) and Fr. Arun Minj SVD (Parish Priest), evaluation and planning, forming of parish and village youth committees, Christmas singing and dancing completion and youth picnic. The entire Convention was managed by the youth. We learnt that, little encouragement and support to the youth yields beyond one's expectation. Christmas Nite was one of the mega successes of the youth organization with various colourful items. The Convention and the Christmas programme has strengthened and united the youth of the Parish.

Parishioners walk on the Water...like Jesus

St. Alphonsa parishioners conceived the idea of sharing the word of God



to a new village called Champapara. The village is interior on hillocks inhabited by Rupini tribe. The village has 35 to 40 families. The villagers are poor and miserable economically. The parishioners purchased 40 blankets and other warm clothes to protect them from cold as a goodwill gesture. They also carried rice, daal, eggs and other food items. The route was unknown. Everyone was surprised to learn, the only route leading to the village was to follow a winding river upward called Champa. The villagers have no other approach road than the river. It was an exodus scene on the river carrying blankets, warm clothes and food items. The village could be traced amidst forests and hillocks after walking on the water-route about an hour. The villagers gathered on a courtyard and waited eagerly to hear the Word of God; then blankets, food and clothing were distributed. It was hard to walk on the water (requires strong faith and will power) but hard to forget the smiles on the face of the villagers.

Fr. Arun Minj SVD

Tuikarmaw Parish Year of Family

St. Mary's Parish, Tuikarmaw, organized a special Holy Eucharist on 12th January 2014 to inaugurate the year of family in the parish. There were about 250 people present for the Holy Eucharist from 11 *mondolis* of the parish. The Year of the Family was inaugurated with the symbolic lighting of the candle by the Secretary of the Parish Mr. Karuna Reang and Mrs Nanda Reang. Fr. Bhuban



Sarkar celebrated the Holy Eucharist and prayed for all the families in the Parish. In his homily Fr. Bhuban enumerated the importance of the Christian family life and invited everyone to imitate the model of the Holy Family of Nazareth. He too highlighted that the parents have greater responsibility to carry on God's creation and make this world meaningful. He advised the parents to impart the gospel values in the hearts of the children as they bring them up to be the future society. The children were made to understand the greatest sacrifices that their parents make day after day. The celebration came to an end with a tea party.

Fr. Abraham C, CSC

Depacherra Parish Christmas Carols

Like other years this time too Depacherra Parish conducted Christmas carols in the Parish as well as all the sub-stations. The Parish carol team visited all the *mondolis* and villages of the Parish before Christmas. The Parish Priest Fr. Prasad and Asst. PP Fr. Bennet enlivened the parishioners with the carol program. The Parish organized a Christmas Floating Crib on 23 December 2013 through different areas of the parish. During the procession Fr. Bhuban gave the Christmas Message at Natunbazar and Jatanbari in which he explained the meaning of Christmas. A large number of people gathered in all those places to hear the Christmas message. The Christmas carol and crib were well appreciated and also it was a right occasion to proclaim the name of Jesus to the people of other faiths.

Fr. Bhuban



Our Readers Write

Thank you for the Link. It is always interesting and great. **Chacko Kannikkatt, Winnipeg, Canada**

Thank you for your newsletter LINK. + **Abp. Stan Fernandes, Gandhinagar Gujarat**

Congratulations on the 205 issue. You have been so faithful over these years. May God continue to bless you and the diocese in this New Year and beyond. **Tony Krisak, Washington, USA**

Thank you so much for the "Link" on Dot. It brings back my past memories of NE every month. I pray for your good works. **Dominic, CSC, Bangalore**

Thanks for sending me "Link". It's good to be connected for so long. **Sr. Mallika, Chantaburi, Thailand**

I received the LINK. I am so grateful for your kind concern and service to us. HAPPY NEW YEAR! + **Andrew R. Marak, Tura Meghalaya**

Thank you for your last Link, on time as usual. I wish you a blessed New Year and good health to continue your ministry. **Jean Charles CSC, Montreal, Canada**

Thanks for the Link on the 1st itself. **Prabha SSps, Guwahati, Assam**

Thanks for forwarding the Link every month. **Biju Mathew, Calicut University**

News from the Diocese

Blessing and Dedication of Holy Cross College, Agartala

January 12, 2014 was a historic day which is to be written in golden letters in the annals of Holy Cross College, Agartala. The first phase construction of the College was blessed and inaugurated on that day. Present on the occasion were the Superior General, Very Rev. Richard Warner, CSC, Provincial Superior of Northeast India, Rev. Fr. K.J. Abraham, CSC, and the entire Province membership of Northeast Province of India, Vicariate Superior of Holy Cross Brothers in India, Bro. Sesuraj, CSC and many other dignitaries from Tripura University, Govt. of Tripura, Defense services, Heads of institutions, friends and well wishers. Fr. Emmanuel welcomed the guests.



Dedicating the first phase construction of Holy Cross College to the people of Northeast India, Rev. Fr. Richard Warner, CSC, the Superior General said "Holy Cross confreres are doing a lot of good work in northeast India; not only in the field of education but also in pastoral and social apostolate. Holy Cross College is the result of a

big dream which began many years ago. The students added colour and flavor to the function through their enchanting performances on the stage. The day ended with the Vote of Thanks by Rev. Fr. Jose Chempottical, CSC, and singing of the National Anthem.

Reporter, Holy Cross College, Agartala

Training on Seed Preservation

On 28th December 2013, Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura organized a training program on preservation of traditional seeds through FARM Northeast project funded by Caritas India. The Training was conducted at Bidyalachan Para under Hezamara R.D Block. The training started with its objective of imparting knowledge to the



farmers on various methods and systems of preserving seeds in a traditional way. There were 18 participants taking part in the training program. Mr. Ranjan Debbarma the animator of FARM Northeast Project was the Resource Person who spoke on the importance of preserving seeds. The farmers were given time for sharing and discussion on the various methods of preserving seeds in a traditional way which was a great help for all the farmers as they could exchange knowledge and ideas.

Filing of RTI

On 30th December 2013, Mr. Lilmohan Reang, the Coordinator of Ride-B project assisted by Caritas India under Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) filed Right to information (RTI) for old age pension at the SDM office, Kanchanpur, and for MGNREGA work at Dasda R.D Block. The Coordinator also filed RTI for Mid-Day Meal and up-gradation of schools of Naisingpara at the office of the Inspector of Schools, Kanchanpur.
Vincent Deburma

News from India and Beyond

Mother Teresa musical to tour India

Amruthavani Communication Center brought in Telugu movie celebrities to create a theatrical magnum opus **The Mother** in Telugu. Center's Director Fr. U. Balashowry, who has filmmaking experience in the USA, said unlike in the US, where the opera too is very popular, cinema tends to be the only form of entertainment available in India. Telugu film actor Sreeja Sadineni played the lead role. Most others were also drawn either from the film industry or TV fraternity. *UCAN-India*



Navalgund town of Dharwad district in Karnataka offer flowers and 'arti' and light oil lamps before a copy of the Bible. Nagalingaswamy, a yogi who lived in the 19th century, is the presiding deity in the temple. Temple head Veerendra Swami said that the copy of the Bible in Kannada was published by a Committee of the Missionaries of Germans, London, and Wesleyan Missionary Societies, and printed at Mangalore in 1865. Anyone can access the Bible with prior permission before the morning puja. Even a 'panja' and a 'sidgi' brought by the mystic have been preserved here.

Source: The Hindu

Is Sri Lanka Pope Francis's first Asian destination?

Pope Francis is expected to visit Sri Lanka

in the first half of this year to open South Asia's largest university for theological studies. The island nation will become the first destination in Asia for Pope Francis, who took over the mantle from Pope Benedict XVI on March 13, 2013. The Pope has accepted an invitation from Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith, archbishop of Colombo and head of the Catholic Church Sri Lanka, Church sources said.

The University for Theological Studies has been constructed in Bolawalana, Negombo, near Colombo, the national capital. The new University is considered the largest of its kind in South Asia. Pope Francis is also expected to visit neighboring India in December to attend the decennial exposition of St Francis Xavier's relics kept in Bom Jesu Church in Old Goa.

Courtesy: mattersindia.com

A temple where Bible is worshiped

A temple in Karnataka has a unique tradition of worshipping the Bible. Priests at the Nagalingaswami temple in



Visitors at Bishop's House

- Fr. Rick Gribble, CSC, from USA
- CSC Frs. Jomon and Francis from Canada
- Very Rev. Richard Warner, CSC, Superior General from Rome
- Bro. Jesuraj, CSC, Vicariate Superior from Bangalore
- Fr. Santhumayor, SVD from Sambalpur Diocese
- Fr. Jim Phalan, CSC USA
- Fr. Arul Raj Gali, CSC Bangalore
- BS Srs. Joy and Edelburg, Provincial and Assistant from Guwahati
- Fr. George Maliekal, SDB, Provincial Superior from Shillong

BISHOP'S PROGRAMME FOR FEBRUARY 2014

- 01-02: Kathalcherra Parish Sabah at Kukicherra
- 03-13: CBCI Meet, Palai, Kerala
- 14: School Inauguration and Blessing, Karbook
- 15-16: Bagbasa Parish Sabah, Dolubari
- 22-23: kamaranga Parish Sabah