



**Pastor's Corner**

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**The Pencil – A guide for the New Year**

A young boy was watching his grandmother writing in a book. 'I am writing a story' she said, 'but more important than the words is the pencil I'm using. I hope you will be like this pencil when you grow up.' Intrigued, the boy looked at the pencil. 'But it's just like any other pencil I've seen' he said. She said, 'that depends on how you look at things. A pencil has seven qualities which, if you manage to adopt them, will make you a happy person who is always at peace with the world.'

**First quality:** You must never forget that there is a hand guiding you. We call that hand God, and He always guides us according to His Will.

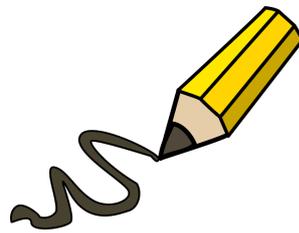
**Second quality:** Now and then, I have to stop writing and use a sharpener. That makes the pencil suffer a little, but afterwards, it is much sharper. So you, too, must learn to bear certain pains and sorrows, because they will make you a better person.

**Third quality:** The pencil always allows us to use an eraser to rub out any mistakes. This means that correcting something we did is not necessarily a bad thing; it helps to keep us on the right path.

**Fourth quality:** what really matters in a pencil is not its wooden exterior, but the graphite inside. So always pay attention to what is happening inside you.

**Fifth quality:** It always leaves a mark. In just the same way, you should know that everything you do in life will leave a mark; so try to be conscious of that in every action of yours.

**Sixth quality :** It gets shorter and shorter with use... so also life. Make the most while it lasts.



**Seventh quality:** It writes till the very end. Be useful and productive till your dying day.

The seven qualities of a Pencil have been explained as a guiding philosophy of one's life which I thought could serve as a resolution for the New Year.

Dear Reader, the 295th issue of LINK is in your hands, as we step into the 26th year of our Diocesan Newsletter in the Year 2022. Each year I like to recall the humble beginnings of LINK in July 1996 when this very Newsletter was 2-sheets of Xeroxed Reports of Parish Meetings and the Bishop's program. Today the LINK is a 4-page Newsletter covering news snippets from our Parishes and Institutions and news from other Regions of the country, keeping us in touch. I have purposefully limited the Newsletter to

four pages keeping in mind that brevity is the spice of life. However, this present issue has a photo gallery of two pages of the Jubilee finale; and with this the Throwback Memories come to an end. Finally, I take this opportunity to thank Fr. J. Pulinthanath SDB, who churns out a thought provoking Editorial each month and Fr. Prasad Rao who designs the Newsletter each month with appealing graphics. And you dear Reader deserve my greatest appreciation. THANK YOU. I wish you a joy-filled and peace-filled NEW YEAR 2022.

*+Lumen, CSC*



**EDITORIAL**

**New Year Blues**

As we wish each other Happy New Year, we cannot help noticing the speed with which days grow into months and months into years. New Year mornings can be a little disconcerting even, with all those thoughts of 'unfinished works' of the year gone by, which we can now do little about. This year is, perhaps, no exception, despite the much-needed sense of ending that the Silver Jubilee celebrations of December gave.



In a poem called 'Unfinished Business, the Italian poet, Primo Levi captures the New Year blues succinctly. *'I was supposed to tell someone something,/ But I no longer know what and to whom: I've forgotten. /I was also supposed to donate something – A wise word, a gift, a kiss;/ I put it off from one day to the next. I'm sorry. / I'll do it in the short time that remains.'*

I will do it in whatever time that remains is a resolution we step into the New Year with. The good left undone until now, the trees *I was supposed to plant and didn't; the house I*

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was supposed to build and didn't. And also the marvelous book that I had in mind, whose outline you'll find in my drawer, down below, with the unfinished business.

As a Diocese, the New Year we have stepped into is also the beginning of the post Silver Jubilee phase of the Diocese. Whether that milestone will turn out to be a watershed, we realize, depends on what

follows it rather than what has preceded it.

Which is why amidst uncertainties and anxieties galore, we tiptoe into the future trusting in God's providence and unfailing presence. We entrust our unfinished businesses too into His hands. May 2022 be for every reader of Link a wonderful year filled with God's blessings and all the best things we were created for. Happy New Year! *J. Pulinthanath, SDB*

## Parish News Briefs

### Silver Jubilee Celebrations at Agartala

The Diocese celebrated its jubilee along with the



first Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2021 at Holy Cross School grounds in Agartala. One hundred girls representing 19 tribal groups, attired in their culture lead the celebrant with an entrance dance synergizing different moves for a single music rhythmically. Eleven Bishops concelebrated along with the Jubilarian Bishop Lumen Monteiro with little more than one hundred Priests and Nuns. A short felicitation program after the Eucharist was well managed by the lay faithful effectively and the youth lead from the front.

The preparations for the Jubilee celebration started in 2019 with very many renewal programs for Children, Students, Youth, SCC Groups, Laity and Religious. But due to Covid19 indefinite lockdowns some of the programs were organized in a subdued manner. With all the restrictions of the number of participants and keeping in mind the Covid protocols, the jubilee celebration was organized with just around 1000 participants comprising of lay faithful of Tripura, Religious, Priests and the Bishops of Northeast region. Holy Cross father Shaji Mandapathikunnel Lucka, the Convener of the Jubilee Committee, who is the vice-Principal of Holy Cross College in Agartala said, "I am very happy with the collaboration and support from the Laity, Religious and Priests of the Diocese since day one" and added "I am grateful to all." The Silver Jubilarian Bishop Lumen Monteiro expressed his gratitude and joy in steering the Diocese from her inception. Expressing his sentiments he said, today my "Gratitude to God, Gratitude to my collaborator Priests and Religious, and Gratitude to the lovely people of the Diocese". *Fr. Jothi, SJ*

### CATHEDRAL PARISH Parish Feast & Confirmations



The feast of St. Francis Xavier, the Patron of Cathedral Parish, was celebrated on 5<sup>th</sup> December. Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro CSC was the main celebrant of the Holy Mass. The celebrant Priests were led to the altar with an entrance dance. In his homily the Bishop greeted the people of the Parish and encouraged them to lead a holy and devout family life. Several children received the Sacrament of Confirmation and first Holy Communion. After Mass a short felicitation program was conducted to felicitate the visiting Bishops and Priests who joined the program. The parish feast was concluded with a festive meal which was arranged and served by the parish council members. *Fr. Bhuvan Sarkar*

### KHUMULWNG PARISH Confirmations and Pastoral Visit



It was indeed a joyous and memorable event for the entire people of Divine Mercy Church, Khumulwng, to receive Most Rev. Dr. Lumen Monteiro, CSC, for a short visit and to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation on 28th November 2021. The Parish Priest, Brothers, Sisters and Parishioners along with the 24 Confirmation candidates received the Bishop and gave him a warm floral welcome. Being the first Sunday of Advent, the Advent wreath was blessed introducing the importance of Advent Season. In his homily the Bishop spoke advent as a time of waiting and preparation for our Savior's birth. He concluded by thanking God for the 25 years of Episcopal life and thanked the community for

felicitating him. During the holy Mass, the Sacrament of Confirmation was conferred to 24 candidates. After the solemn Eucharist there was a felicitation program for our beloved Bishop on his Silver Jubilee. The visit was concluded with a fellowship meal. It was a unique experience for the parish community to express their faith and belongingness to the Church.

*Dn. Valson Colaco, SVD*

### MOHARPARA PARISH

#### Golden Jubilee of Catholic community at Debthang



12<sup>th</sup> December 2021 was a memorable day for the faithful of St. John's Catholic Church Debthang Para. It was a celebration of their faith in Jesus Christ for 50 long years. It was an opportunity to thank God for His benevolent blessings in the lives of every faithful member of the local church. The Theme of the golden jubilee was "There is salvation in no one else other than Jesus Christ" Acts 4:12. The celebrations began with a blessing of the Memorial stone of the Jubilee by Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro CSC. This was followed by the thanksgiving Holy Eucharist presided by our Bishop and concelebrated by many priests. During the homily Bishop congratulated the faithful for their faithfulness and living their faith joyfully. He also encouraged them to recommit themselves to Christ and be a sign of unity to one another. There was short felicitation program during which the Jubilee Souvenir was released. The faithful expressed their gratitude to Priests and Sisters who served them during the past 50 years. Fr. Simon Fernandis CSC the Provincial Superior of Fathers of Holy Cross NE Province joined the celebrations with other Fathers: Hormis, Kanikkai, Agi Paul, Binoy, Tarun, Bosco, and Samy. Many Religious Sisters from the parish and neighboring parishes also joined in the celebration. The Jubilee celebration ended with a common meal together.

#### Installation of new PP and sweet Adieu to outgoing PP

On 19<sup>th</sup> December 2021 Immaculate Conception parish Moharpara witnessed the change of guard as



Fr. Arbok CSC was installed as the Parish Priest in place of Fr. Arul CSC. Fr. Hormis John CSC, the Judicial Vicar of the Diocese of Agartala, installed Fr. Arbok CSC as the Parish Priest in the presence of Fr. Simon Fernandis CSC the Provincial Superior of Fathers of Holy Cross North East India. A number of Sisters and Lay faithful witnessed this memorable event.

After the Holy Eucharist a short felicitation program was organized. The Parish community also gave a fitting farewell to Fr. Arul CSC for his wonderful service to Moharpara Parish and expressed their deep sense of gratitude. The faithful warmly welcomed the newly installed parish priest. The day's celebrations ended with common meal.

*Fr. Alfred D'Souza, CSC*

### KUMARGHAT PARISH

#### Sacrament of Confirmation administered



St. Paul Parish invited the Bishop to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation to 67 candidates of the Parish. It was great moment for all the candidates who received the Sacrament and for the parishioners to join as a Parish family. The candidates gathered together on the previous day to prepare themselves. They were prepared by MC Sisters Vero Anthony and Tarsiscius during the months of October to December. At the end of the Mass Bishop Lumen Monteiro was felicitated and thanked for his visit to the parish. I thank the M.C Sisters and their Superior Sr. Miriam MC for allowing the Sisters to stay in the villages of our parish and to prepare the candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation. I also thank Sr. Bastian FS and Fr. Francis CSC for looking after the immediate preparations for the day.

*Fr. Lancy D'Souza CSC*

### AMBASSA PARISH

#### Ecumenical Assembly in Ambassa



United Christian Forum for Human Rights (UCFHR) Dhalai District organized an advance Christmas and Office Bearers election on November 18<sup>th</sup>. There were 35 leaders (Pastors, Evangelists, Deacons & others) from 8 denominations. Prior to this gathering the UCFHR Secretary Fr. Ivan D'Silva, SVD sent an elaborate written information inviting all the Ecumenical Leaders to join in the advance Christmas

celebration. Pastor B.K. Thang Halam of Bible Church made an opening prayer and after that the Secretary Fr. Ivan welcomed all the participants. He requested all the Members to stand for a minute and pray for the repose soul of Pastor S.S Halam the President of the Forum who died a few months back. Each Pastor then gave a short Christmas Messages and sang

Christmas carols. The Secretary of UCFHR appealed to the congregation to elect the new Office Bearers for the next triennium. Five new office bearers were elected from different denominations and also three each member from each Ecumenical church. The assembly of the United Christian Forum concluded with the prayer and the lunch.  
*Ivan D'Silva, SVD*

## JUST News Briefs

### Interactive Program of JUST SHGs and IVDP



On 27<sup>th</sup> November 2021 JUST organized an Interaction program for the JUST SHGs and IVDP at JUST hall Agartala. Mr. Kulandai Francis founder of Integrated Village Development Project (IVDP) and Magsaysay Awardee 2012 was the speaker for the program. The Director of JUST, Fr. Lathees S, welcomed Mr. Francis and the Guests and all the other participants. Mr. Francis shared two crucial factors to attain self-reliance 'Equality and Self Respect'. The equality will ensure equal participation of all the members in the growth process of SHG whereas self-respect will allow the SHG to work harder to generate funds for sustainable growth rather than expecting someone else's help. The program ended with cultural show. An Exhibition of traditional attire and organic vegetables by the SHGs and Farmers clubs of JUST was held on the occasion.

### Capacity Building on Peace for the School Peace Club Members

JUST conducted a Capacity Building program on Peace for the Peace Club Members with the target Schools in the month of November 2021. The JUST Staff shared valuable knowledge about peace and its development on constructive personal and group relationships in the society. It aims to resolve injustice in non-violent ways and to transform the structural conditions that generate conflict. To strengthen and practice positive peace, the JUST Staff discussed on various peace building topics like non-violence, conflict resolution techniques, democracy, gender equality, human rights, environmental responsibility, communication skills, coexistence and tolerance of diversity.



*Mr. Cyril Darlong*

## News Snippets

### Northeast Missionary Nun wins 11th International Human Rights Award



A missionary Nun, Betsy Devasia, working in Guwahati, Assam, was conferred with 11th International Human Rights Award for her contribution to women development in the region by Delhi-based International

Human Rights Council on 10 December 2021 at the India Islamic Centre Auditorium, New Delhi. Sister Betsy Devasia, born on July 1, 1947 in Kerala's Kottayam district, has been working in Northeast India for the last 30 years. "I am not sure if I deserve

this honour", said the septuagenarian Holy Cross Nun. "Serving the people of Northeast India in various roles since 1988 and as Director of Women Development Centre (WDC), Guwahati, since 2008, has been the most rewarding experience of my life. That is an award in itself".

A Christian Missionary Nun receiving a prestigious international honour is an acknowledgement of the contribution made by the missionaries to the development of Northeast region and towards nation building, remarked Bishop George Palliparambil, SDB, of Miao Diocese. The glittering award function was attended by delegates from Australia, Malaysia, UK, USA, Nepal and India. *Felix Anthony for Mattersindia*

## Our Distinguished Guests

Archbishop John Moolachira from Guwahati; Archbishop Dominic Lumon from Imphal; Emeritus Archbishop Thomas Menampampil SDB from Guwahati; Bishop John Thomas from Itanagar; Bishop Thomas Pullopillil from Bongaigaon; Bishop Jose Chirackal from Tura; Bishop Paul Mattekatt from Diphu; Bishop Albert Hemrom from Dibrugarh; Bishop Steven Rotluanga CSC from Aizawl; Bishop Julius Marandi from Dumka; Bishop Vincent Aind from Bagdogra; Fr. Ansem Nonglang Administrator from Nongstoin; Sr. Violet CSC Area Coordinator from Bangladesh; Sr. Elizabeth FMA Provincial from Shillong; Fr. Roque D'Costa CSC Provincial from Bangalore; Bro. Santosh CSC Vicariate Superior from Bangalore; Fr. Roy, CSC from Shillong; Fr. George Jacob CSC from Jongsha; Fr. Roby CSC from Umkiang; Fr. Walter, SJ from Guwahati; Mr. Vepul Kaiser & Mrs. Ofelia from Kolkata; Mrs. Ritinha Pinto & Mrs. Rita Pinto from Mumbai; Mrs. Lunella Gonsalves & Mr. Sylvester Xavier from Goa; Fr. Anbu, SVD General Formation In charge from Indore, MP; Sr. Anjali, OLG Provincial from Indore, MP; Sr. Saumya, OLG Treasurer from Indore, MP.



