



Diocese of Agartala

December 2013 Vol.17 No.12



Pastor's Corner

Save a life by donating Blood

Nine centers in Agartala Diocese and more than 185 voluntary blood donors in Tripura donated blood to the Blood Bank offering 'life' to whoever would need blood transfusion in an emergency. The camps were organized as a concrete step to reach out and make a united impact in Tripura during the Year of Faith. Commending the Catholic Church's noble action Tripura's State Minister for Tribal Welfare and Forestry Shri Augur Debarma encouraged the donors to give life to others by donating blood. He was speaking at the closing ceremony of the State-level program at St. Joseph's Church Agartala on 17th November. The program was inaugurated at Depacherra on 6th October, moving on to Gandacherra, Bishramganj, Rangamra, Belbari, Mariamnagar, Kamaranga, Gachirampara and Durjoynagar in subsequent weeks. The



Blood Transfusion Council was highly appreciative of the Catholic Church, especially with the timing of the camps, as it was in the season of festivals when hordes of people travel and accidents are on the rise; it is then that blood banks are needed most.

I myself was present on the closing day in Agartala and offered to be a willing volunteer. But I could see the enormous hesitation and fear in the donors, especially due to ignorance; and I told them this story: *In those early days when blood banks were not known, a girl was in urgent need of blood transfusion. The surgeon asked her twelve-year old brother if he would give his blood which might save his sister's life. The boy hesitated for a moment, his eyes filled with tears. Then he made his decision, "Yes, doctor, I am ready!" When the transfusion was complete, the boy asked the doctor, "Tell me when I die?" It was only then that the doctor understood why the little boy had momentarily hesitated.* I did succeed in bringing a few 'faint hearted' persons to the donation table. But many others came, watched, and walked away shaking their heads in negation.

The Year of Faith had a grand finale at Christ the King Parish Depacherra. After the Solemn Mass and the Eucharistic Procession, a brief yet very meaningful ceremony began in the presence of a large congregation of priests, religious and laity from across the Diocese. The short felicitation program ended as yours sincerely took a sapling in his hands and said: "The Year of Faith concludes but the Life of Faith continues to grow". The revised edition of the Logesong was also released on the occasion.

December will see us celebrate the Feast of the Nativity and the end of the calendar year. I extend you joy-filled wishes for Christmas and the New Year.



Editorial

Beyond the 'Year of Faith'

Christmas wistfully reminds us that yet another year is about to pass. Even a cursory look back at 2013 brings to our minds memories of numerous events and programs that our Diocese was blessed to organize, or be part of, this year. The Pastoral Councils of the Diocese, the Meeting of the Bishops that brought all the prelates of Northeast India to our city, the Diocese level Eucharistic procession held at Bodhjungnagar Parish, the recent SCC Convention in Goa, the release of the fifth edition of Logesong - our book of prayers and hymns, and hopefully later in the month, the Youth Convention, are all events closely connected with our life as a Diocese this closing year.



For the universal Church too, the year 2013 which saw a historic change of guard at its highest level, has been a year of blessings. 'The Year of Faith' which Pope Benedict XVI began and his successor Pope Francis ardently followed up did make its ramifications felt even in the smallest village *mondoli* of our Diocese. The special prayer for the Year of Faith became a daily reminder for us of the special year we were in. Faith not only became a much-talked notion but something we wanted our lives to be rooted on.

Now that the Year of Faith is behind us, how do we ensure that we carry forward its fruits into the future? The recently-released 'Logesong' has revised versions of two practices, both of which, if carried out, might prove to be concrete faith-sustaining practices. They are 'Daily Family Prayer' and 'Group Prayer in homes on Sundays'. Both these practices - one daily, the other weekly, have adequate scope to be made situation-specific and therefore 'interesting'. The actual challenge, perhaps, lies in making these integral practices of our daily Christian living. It could prove to be a tough agenda, but it is a direction we all, leadership and faithful alike, must strive towards.

If it does happen, it would mean that the observance of the Year of Faith has helped us to go beyond a faith whose expressions are at best spasmodic and event-centered into one that is constant and perhaps quieter. It's something that would make our observance of church-related events more meaningful, for sure. More importantly, it promises to anchor our lives more firmly on the object of our Faith. Merry Christmas! **J. Pulinthanath, sdb**

+Lumen, CSC

Kathalcherra Parish Candlelight Procession

The last day of October, the month dedicated to the Rosary was special to the people of Kathalcherra. The closing day of the month of Rosary began with the Eucharist in the evening followed by Adoration and candlelit procession to the School Ground. The neighboring *mondolis* gathered at the Parish Center to honor mother Mary and pray the Rosary. The liturgy was organized by the *Maria Sangha* members who led the community in prayer and worship. May our Blessed Mother continue to shower down graces after graces upon her children.

Senior Citizens Day

"Better late than Never" goes the saying. The dawn of 3rd November saw a broad smile on the senior citizens of the Parish as they prepared themselves to march to the parish center to celebrate 'Elders Day'. *Maria Sangha* of the Parish took the lead to organize the day. After the Holy



Eucharist there was a short felicitation program, wherein we honored the elders with special song, flowers and gifts. Mr. Moia Darlong appreciated the efforts to bring together the elders of the Parish and recognition of their service to the *mondolis*. He also invited the young generation to accompany the old and build values of prayer and faith, unity and sacrifice in the family. About 200 elders were present. As a culmination of this program a sumptuous meal was served at the parish residence. *Sr. Suman, B.S.*

Khumulwng Parish Mother Mary Lifted Up!

God lifted up mother Mary to heavens due to her obedience and commitment; we His creatures must raise her up through our honor and devotion to her. Mother Mary is the medium to obtain God's grace. To benefit maximum

from this popular devotion, St. Alphonsa parishioners began Rosary prayer every evening at every family. The villages were grouped in smaller units to facilitate easy access to prayers in the evening. The groups have been united and increased their faith. Rosary prayer in October was culminated by organizing huge procession at the end of the month. The statues of Mother Mary were decorated attractively and carried by devotees. Besides parishioners, there were at least seven hostel students who flooded the procession. The procession began at three different village chapels and gathered at market Chengkharukami. Different village leaders delivered messages on devotion to mother Mary. People in the busy market also heeded the important message on devotion to Mother Mary. The Rosary procession ended with a prayer and blessing by the Parish Priest.

Parish Foundation Day Celebrated

St. Alphonsa Parish Khumulwng completed five years of its existence. The parish celebrated its foundation day on 3rd November. *Maria Sangha*



Seminar and Mothers' Day celebration on 2nd November was held for the women. *Sr. Punita SJA*, (Secretary of Women Commission) and Miss Jaya Rupini (Youth Zonal Coordinator) animated the Seminar. Fr. Cyprian Pinto SVD and Fr. Arun Minj SVD were

Resource Persons, who spoke of the importance of a mother in the family and the church in strengthening the faith. It is the woman who transforms the family and the society. She plays a vital role initiating faith life in the family and the village church. She is the pillar of faith in the family and the village church. The Seminar ended by planning session in the evening.

The parish foundation day celebrations began with the holy Eucharist at 10am the next day. Parishioners from different villages gathered for the celebration. Fr. Jeevan SVD in his homily emphasized that memory of parish foundation must help us to retrospect and strengthen our faith. Many priests concelebrated. Later there was a colorful felicitation program, followed by festive-picnic lunch. The parish foundation day celebration has united the women and the parishioners without doubt. *Fr. Arun Minj, SVD*

Depacherra Parish

Day of Sick and Old

About 70 old and sick parishioners of

Depacherra came to the parish church for the celebration of the Day of the Sick and old on 27th October 2013. Special Eucharistic celebration presided over by Fr. Bhuban Sarkar was organized. All the participants were given warm cloths during the short felicitation

program. Also at parish level we organized free health checkups and medicines were given. This parish celebration was a response to the call of the Bishop Lumen Monteiro,CSC, who invited all the Parishes to observe the day of sick and old in the Diocese.

Sr. Benny,BS

All souls day

Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC, celebrated Mass on the Feast of All Souls Day at Christ the King Parish, Depacherra.



The liturgy was conducted at the Parish Cemetery and prayed for all the deceased members of the Diocese. Following Mass, the priests and faithful in attendance followed Bishop in procession as he blessed the gravesites of our deceased members of our Parishioners and prayed. *Sr. Kanthi,BS*

Parish Feast and the Conclusion of the Year of Faith

Christ the King Parish Depacherra, celebrated its Parish Feast on 24th November 2013. On this

occasion the Concluding of the Year of Faith also was celebrated. Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro,CSC, along with several priests, Religious and around thousand laity both from the parish and from other parishes made the celebration solemn and meaningful. During well organized liturgy, 26 children received First Holy Communion and 28 students were given the sacrament of Confirmation. Bishop Lumen in his homily; called on the faithful to make faith a reality and witnessing in our day today life. A solemn Eucharistic procession was held after the Eucharistic celebration which was a great moment of grace and faith experience to the participants. "Loge song" 5th revised edition was released during the short felicitation program that was organized after the Eucharistic procession. Towards the end Bishop Lumen symbolically concluded the Year of Faith by veiling the logo of the Year of Faith and planted a sapling by saying " Though the Year of Faith concludes but the life of Faith continues". *Sr. Benny,BS*



Montfort Higher Secondary School, Champaknagar Blood Donation Camp

On 24th October 2013 we had blood donation camp in our school campus, which was organized by the Diocese of Agartala.

28 students and teachers came forward to donate blood and thus save the life of someone whom they do not know. For the inaugural ceremony, we had Mr. Sukumar Debbarma MDC (TTAACD) as Chief Guest and Mr. Argab Saha, BDO of Belbari, as the Guest of Honor. Mr. Sukumar Debbarma in his speech appreciated the Diocese of Agartala for undertaking this event in Montfort School.

Bro. Joy Alex Memorial Volleyball Tournament

It is said that an attitude of gratitude is the greatest beatitude. At Montfort,

we are greatly indebted to late Bro. Joy Alex for his invaluable contribution for the development of this school into a premier educational institution. In gratitude to him the School organized 'Bro. Joy Alex Memorial Volleyball Tournament' on 1st November 2013 on our school grounds. Thirteen teams responded to our invitations and participated in the day-long tournament. It was inaugurated by Mr. Ratan Biswas, the SDM of Jirania Sub Division. He appreciated the school authorities for organizing such a Tournament. He wished that it would help promote team spirit and unity among the student community. At the end of the day, a hard fought final between St. Andre Bodhjungnagar and Montfort, was finally won by Montfort. In the Closing Ceremony that followed, Mr. Sajal Debnath, DCM (SDWO) Jirania, presented the Champions Trophy & Prize Money to Montfort and Fr. Jilson, P. P. of Bodhjungnagar, presented the Runners Up Trophy & prize money to St. Andre. The Fathers, Brothers, Principals, Teachers, Parents, participating teams and students present expressed their satisfaction at the



orderly conduct of the Tournament. Being a Rolling Trophy, we look forward to conducting the same next year. *Bro. Joseph Reddy, SG*

Holy Cross College Agartala National Seminar

Holy Cross College organized a National Seminar on the topic 'Issues and Trends of Governance in Multicultural Societies'.

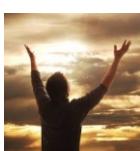


The Seminar was inaugurated on the 16th Nov the Hon'ble Justice V. Gopala Gowda, Judge, Supreme Court of India. In his message he said, "Academicians, journalists, political thinkers and students should come together to deliberate on very important topics like this to understand it in a better way." The College has organized five academic Seminars till date and published 3 books during its journey of four and a half years. The fifth Seminar was organized by the Political Science Department of the College. *Courtesy, CSCNET-L*

News from JUST (Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura)

Success Story

Mrs. Justina Sangma, aged 42 from the village Lalchori,



A m b a s s a , Dhalai Tripura h a d b e e n suffering from malaria since March 2013.

She had been suffering and struggling with high fever, body pain and headache and unable to carry out her daily activities. She attended an Awareness Program on preventive measures of Malaria, Diarrhea, Dysentery and T.B organized by Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura under IDEA project. Mrs. Sangma shared her problems to Sr. Rose (the

then IDEA animator) of JUST. The animator advised her to take one teaspoon of boiled pepper powder in a glass of water with one spoon sugar in empty stomach for 2 days with an interval of 3 days and to continue it for 3 months. She followed the instructions. Sr. Pushparani the new animator visited Mrs. Sangma's house after 3 months and found that she was completely cured and till now she did not have malaria attack. She is grateful to JUST and Sr. Rose for her good health.

Training on Preparing Traditional Manure

On 21st October 2013, The Coordinator and animators of FARM Northeast conducted a training program on preparing traditional manure at Bargachia Para, under Hezamara Block,

organized by JUST. 25 farmers were present in the training. The training began at 10:00am with a welcoming word by the animator Mr. Subhas Debbarma after which the session was taken over by the Coordinator Mr. Vincent Debbarma. The Coordinator explained on how to prepare low cost traditional manure at home in 21 days. He used the help of chart papers, boxes and drawings to explain and make the farmers understand.

The farmers then expressed their gratitude to JUST and FARM Northeast Staff for providing them such a training and requested for a helping hand to prepare manure. *Vincent Deburma*

1st SCC National Convention

'Go to Goa' was a slogan, but was



m a d e memorable by all the 7,000 SCC m e m b e r s present at the feet of St.

Francis Xavier. 'Small Christian Communities: Communion of Faith in Love' was the theme. The

Convention was something to cherish for a number of reasons. 15 lay faithful along with Bishop Lumen and 3 priests from our Diocese took part in the event held from 19-21st November in Goa. It was something wonderful to see 75 bishops from the country and abroad with some foreign delegates along with a large number of clergy and religious. The inaugural Eucharist was presided over by the Nuncio. The opening ceremony was attended by the State dignitaries the Governor, Chief Minister and other State Ministers. Many Bishops and dignitaries

News from across India

spoke of the importance of the SCC in our country. On the second day we had programs in different Parishes of the Archdiocese. The concluding Mass was presided over by Cardinal Oswald Gracias during which he concluded the Convention and the Year of Faith. He asked all the participants to become 'leaven in the world'. Before leaving Goa, the delegates from Agartala had an evaluation. The team appreciated the presence of our beloved Bishop Lumen for the Convention and took a

resolution to begin SCC everywhere in the Diocese to live the Word of God in our life. The delegates were put up in different houses in different parishes of the diocese. Hats-off to the Goans for their hospitality and co-operation!

Fr. Bosco Lathes

Forming the Formators at Guwahati

Human formation is a life long process. Sound formation of a



formator is essential with continuous updating and training. To facilitate the candidate's formation and growth

the formator requires necessary skills in addition to deep rootedness in his/her faith. The integrity and the quality of life of a good formator speak louder than words. Candidates observe and learn from the life style of the formator more than from inputs. Unity and understanding of Staff members in a formation house plays a vital role in shaping the candidates. Caring and loving approach helps the candidate to understand and strengthen his/her vocation. In order to equip formators with these skills, NE Regional Formators' Seminar was held from 18th to 20th October 2013 at NEDSF Guwahati, Assam. 65 participants attended and I was happy to be one of them! Fr. Joe Mannath SDB with his vast experience and wisdom guided the Seminar. Various topics concerning formation were dealt with. The effective proclamation of the Gospel in today's would require new evangelizers who are well-integrated, have truly experienced Christ and are men and women of unfailing faith. They have to be persons of knowledge, capable of deep theological reflection to effectively communicate the doctrines of the church. The challenge that calls for new evangelization offers to the church as a whole, and in particular, to all those who are involved in the

formation of future priests and religious.

Fr. Arun Minj, SVD

Catholic Council of India

The Catholic Council of India (CCI) ended its triennial assembly urging the Church in India to continue its social service and dialogue to reach out to people of their country. "Unassuming service mentality and dialogue with other religions are the need of the hour," said a statement the council, the most representative body in the Indian Catholic Church, issued at the conclusion of its meeting on November 17 at Varanasi, the holiest city for Hindus.

The council that has representatives from bishops, priests, nuns, brothers and lay people met in the backdrop of the golden jubilee of the Second Vatican Council that ushered revolutionary changes in the Catholic Church.

Theologians and Church experts urged the some 500 people, who met at Nav Sadhana (new silence), a regional pastoral center, to foster the Vatican II's renewal spirit. Mattersindia.com

Pune girl wins Google contest

Gayatri Ketharaman is "floating in the air" that's how she describes her feelings now. And why shouldn't she? The tenth grader of Bishop's Co-Ed School, Kalyani Nagar, Pune, has been

declared the national winner of Google India's Doodle4Google Competition. Chosen from 12 finalists, Ketharaman, 15, was felicitated by Rajan Anandan, managing director, Google India, in New Delhi.

The fifth edition of the doodle design competition received 150,000 entries from more than 1,500 schools across 100 cities. The theme for this year's competition was "Celebrating Indian Women," reported tech2.in.com. Ketharaman's doodle titled "Sky's the Limit for Indian Women" went live on the Google (India) homepage on November 14, Children's Day. It was judged on the basis of artistic merit, creativity and expression of the theme by a jury that comprised actor Kirron Kher among others. Mattersindia.com

Our Readers Write

Another enjoyable trip through your diocese by means of LINK. Thanks so much! **David Schlaver, CSC, Maine, USA**

Thank you for the LINK, I am viewing it for the first time and I am impressed, Congratulations! Good to know the life giving activities of your diocese. I am happy to tell you that the FMM letter from the Superior General and her Council is also named 'LINK'. **Taurina, FMM, Delhi**

Thank you for your thoughtfulness for marking me a copy of LINK without fail. **Simon, CSC, Toronto, Canada**



LINK wishes all its Readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2014

Visitors at Bishop's House

- Relatives of Sr. Juliana SSpS from Surat
- Mr. Luigino and Mauro from Cittadella, Italy
- Fr. Joseph Xavier, SJ; Fr. Joseph Puthenpura, CMI; Sr. Teresa Cherian, SAP from Xavier Board
- FMM India Provincials: Srs. Pushpa, Taurina, Leena D, Valsa and Leena Quadras
- Fr. Sekar, SSS Provincial from Mumbai
- Parents of Fr. Thomas John, CSC, from Kerala
- Fr. Gravirour Augustine from Nagaland
- Parents of Fr. Joe Paul, CSC, from Kerala
- Architect Jim and Engineer Sebastiao from Goa

BISHOP'S PROGRAMME FOR DECEMBER 2013

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| 01: | Ganganagar Chapel Blessing, Ambassa Parish |
| 02: | Consultors Meet, Agartala |
| 03: | CDC Meet, Agartala Clergy Meet, Agartala |
| 07-08: | Parish Feast, Moharpura |
| 09-14: | Caritas India Field Visit, Kerala |
| 15: | Kathalbari Chapel Blessing, Kumarghat Parish |
| 16: | Chagoriya Chapel Blessing, Kumarghat Parish |
| 18: | JUST General Body Meet, Agartala JUST GB Meet, Agartala JUST Pre-Christmas celebrations |
| 19: | Christo Mela, Kamaranga |
| 21: | Ichamara Confirmations, Tuikarmaw Parish |
| 22: | Molsom Sabah, Gamagu, Moharpura Parish |
| 22: | Lukicherra Confirmations, Tuikarmaw Parish |
| 24: | Christmas Midnight Mass, SJC Agartala |
| 25: | Christmas Day Mass, Mariamnagar |
| 28-29: | Diocese Youth Convention, Nandanagar Parish |