



Pastor's Corner

Valuable Indeed!

A well known speaker started off his seminar by holding up a 500-rupee note in a room of 200 people, and asking, "Who would like this 500-rupee note?" Hands started going up. He said "I am going to give this 500-rupee note to one of you, but first let me do this...." He proceeded to crumble the 500-rupee note up. He then asked "Who still wants it?" Still the hands were up in the air. "Well" he replied "What if I do this?" He dropped it on the ground and started to grind it into the floor with his shoe. He picked it up, now crumpled and dirty. "Now, who still wants it?" he asked. Hands still shot up!



"My friends you have all learned a very valuable lesson. No matter what I can do to the money, you still wanted it because it did not decrease in value. It was still worth 500-rupees. Many times in our lives, we are dropped, crumpled and ground into the dirt by the decisions we make and the circumstances that come our way. We feel as though we are worthless. But no matter what has happened or what will happen, you never lose your value! Dirty... clean...crumpled...or finally creased, you are still priceless to those who love you. You are special-don't ever forget it!"

The story is found in a fine collection of Once upon a time, compiled by a good Fr. Hedwig Lewis, SJ (Dawn/Vaigarai, 2010)

There are times in our lives when we feel crumpled, dirty, embarrassed, inferior....We may look at ourselves and feel we have lost our youth, looks and strength. Our faces may have wrinkles, our hair may have turned silver, our bones weaker, and we may feel we are not as fresh and crisp as we were. We may have retired and feel we are not useful anymore. The danger at such moments is that we may feel we have lost our value that we are not worth anything anymore. Because of the changes in our appearance caused by time or illness, we may feel as if nature has thrown us down and ground us into the dirt. The temptation is to think, we have lost our values. The way some treat us may make this temptation powerful. Therefore we need to remember the words of the wise speaker of the story: "No matter what has happened or what will happen, you never lose your value!"

God bless. +**Lumen, CSC**



Editorial

An October Gift

With each passing year, the Christian community in Tripura seems to be gradually discovering its own way of dealing with the

October *pujas*.

With schools and offices closed and streets and townships all lit up, it is hard to ignore the 'atmosphere' that surely seems to have something magical about it. Yet aware that *pujas* are primarily a Hindu religious event, Christians who constitute approximately 5% of the total population of the state make a conscious effort to disengage themselves from it.



It's a time when, taking advantage of the long stretch of holidays the season provides one can catch up on pending assignments and programs. It has indeed become a time of Conventions, Retreats, Parish *Sabhas* and other such activities.

Again, why October this particular year promises to be very different for us has nothing to do with the *pujas* really. In fact, it has everything to do with something happening thousands of miles away the Synodal Assembly of Bishops to be held in the Vatican from 5 to 19 October 2014, on the theme "The pastoral challenges of the family in the context of evangelization".

'The Family' is always a vintage theme, for many reasons. Even for us in this tiny State, caught up right now in festive frenzy. In a letter the Pontiff sent to families, he insists the meeting 'involves' all people of God and all must participate in it through 'the crucial support of prayer'. Like elsewhere we see around us too 'families' that are in dire straits economically, emotionally and spiritually. This most basic and important unit of society has perhaps never been as crisis-ridden as it is today. The ill-effects of the crises in families are surfacing in other arenas of life that apparently have nothing to do with family per se class rooms, offices, social structures, public spaces. It only reinforces the all-embracing nature of what happens in 'the family'. It is a sobering thought that at times, as a Parish, as an Institution, as a community of believers, we are unable to come to the aid of families in their darkest moments in a meaningful manner.

The Synod, we are told, will "adopt the necessary pastoral means to help families face their present challenges with the light and strength that comes from the Gospel". What better October gift can one hope for and pray for! **J. Pulinthanath, sdb**

Immaculate Conception Parish Moharpara Charismatic Retreat

From 18th to 20th September, a Charismatic Retreat was held at Sirduk in Moharpara Parish, conducted by Fr. George Varghese VC and Miss Mary Roy of Divine Retreat Centre, Jalalikhali W. Bengal. More than 125 people from Sirduk, Rangamura and the other neighbouring villages took part in it in spite of their emergency work in their own paddy fields. People managed to stay and listen to the Word of God and pray from morning 09.00 to evening about 04.00. with a few minutes interval for a light tea break. Few healings, both physical and internal have been reported. We thank and praise God for the manifold blessings the Lord has showered upon us through this retreat. We thank Fr. Lancy D'Souza and Fr. Hormis John for having helped us to participate in this spiritual renewal.

Mr. Peter Hrangkhawl, Parish Secretary

National News Tidbits

Catholic nun receives Delhi's best teacher award

The Teacher's Day celebration this year became special for New Delhi's Carmel Convent School as its principal Sr. Nirmalini was given the Best Teacher Award of Delhi Government.

She was the only one from a Catholic school to receive the award this year. "Better late than never" describes the feelings of the Carmel school staff. "Sr. Nirmalini deserved this award all along and it was really long over due. We are happy that the Government of Delhi has finally recognized her immense contribution to building future responsible women citizens of our country," said Ms. Sudha, a Senior Teacher of the School. The nun of the Apostolic Carmel order has been the principal of Carmel Convent for last 11 years where she had also served as a Vice-Principal. Sr. Nirmalini, though carries the title of the Principal, she is many things to many people in the School. (UCAN-India)

St. Arnold Parish Gandacherra Peace Rally



On 19th September, 2014, a Peace Rally was organized by St. Arnold School in collaboration with JUST and ASHA Agartala. The inauguration ceremony was held at 9a.m. in the School premises and Chief Guest was Mr. Ralfaktlinga, DCM of Gandacherra. He spoke about the need for peace and harmony in Gandacherra and the nation as whole. He also appreciated the initiatives of the school authorities. The procession which lasted for 3 long hours got the appreciation of all.

SCC Training Program



On 27th July, 2014, a SCC training program was held in St. Arnold Parish. The Resource Person Fr. Lancy, helped people understand their role as Christian in the Church and exhorted them to be an active participant in all activities, especially in the liturgy. One of the way by which their participation can be made effective is to have SCC Units in the parish. People are already aware of this but this training program would definitely help to go deeper. SCC Unit in the Parish Centre is active and now moving into the other village *mondolis*.

Vianey Day Celebration



On August 3, Vianey Day was observed in the Parish. During the Sunday liturgy, the main celebrant Fr. Lawrence Darlong, focused on the life of St. Vianny and besought the faithful to have faith in their pastors and pray for good and holy pastors like St. Vianey in our Diocese. Earlier Fr. Lawrence was given a traditional welcome.

Father's Day

On 4th August, in honour of St. Vianey, the day was remembered as "Father's Day" in St. Arnold High School. After a meaningful liturgy in the morning there was a long cultural program in the school premises, organized by school students and the teachers. It was highly entertaining and colorful to watch. This day also coincided with Fr. Bosco's anticipated Birthday celebration. The celebration was made jubilant and significant by distributing cake for the students and a festive meal for the Teachers. *Fr. Bennet Joseph*

St. Paul Parish Kumarghat Parish level SCC Leaders' Meet



Parish level Small Christian Community Leaders meeting was held for the first time on 31st of August 2014 at the Parish centre. 60 SCCs' leaders of different villages of the Parish attended the meeting. 28 SCCs' gave their reports. The impact of the SCCs' is as follows: Many of the faithful participated in the different activities of the Church like preparing liturgy, cleaning, decorating of the Church, making footpaths, cleaning the surroundings, etc.

The functioning of the SCCs' helped them to become fervent Catholics, those who were shy become courageous and confident. Those who did not go to Church started to come to Church to pray. They learnt to pray. There is communication and closeness among the SCC members. The SCC members visited the sick and the poor in the neighbourhood.

The Executive Committee of SCCs' of the Parish was formed. The Leaders decided to meet once in 3 months in the Parish level to strengthen SCCs' in Parish. It was also decided to contribute for the expenses involved in nurturing of SCCs'. The meeting lasted for four hours. *Mr. Roitua Darlong, Secretary*

Good Shepherd Parish Kathalcherra Charismatic Renewal

Two days faith renewal program was organized at the Parish Centre on 16th and 17th of August 2014. The Retreat was preached by Fr. George Arackal, VC, assisted by Miss Mary. Being the Year of the Family the preachers dwelt on the theme of Family Renewal and Faith Formation in the family. It was a moment of grace, healing, reconciliation and experience of Devine Love for the many parishioners. People from the remote villages flocked to the parish to be touched by the Lord and indeed returned to the village renewed and revived. Last day was witnessed by around 700 people.

Sacraments of Initiation

It was a glorious occasion for the faithful on September 7, 2014 to witness the reception of 45 catechumens into the Catholic family. Our Shepherd Bishop Lumen Monteiro, initiated families of Dangacherra, Becharaipara, and Maichayapara into the Catholic

Te Deum Laudamus Mariamnagar moves on, beyond Platinum Milestone



Curtains came down on the yearlong Platinum Jubilee celebrations of Mariamnagar Parish in Tripura with a memorable program on 31st August, considered the most solemn, ever held here in its checkered history of 75 years. Over a thousand people from the 19 parishes of the Diocese took part in the day's events which marked the culmination of a yearlong celebration and the conclusion of the Jubilee.

The bevy of dignitaries at the historic event included Archbishop Dominic Jala of Shillong, Bishop Moses Costa of Chittagong, Bishop Lumen Monteiro of Agartala, Fr. KJ Abraham, Provincial Superior of Holy Cross Northeast, Fr. George Maliekal, Salesian Provincial of Silchar, Fr. VM Thomas, Salesian Provincial of Guwahati, Sr. Joy, Provincial of Bethany Sisters, and Shri Pabitra Kar, Deputy Speaker of the Tripura Legislative Assembly. There was also present a large number of priests and religious sisters from all parts of the Diocese. The soulful rendition of Te Deum Laudamus at the end of the Mass, literally made a thousand tongues and hearts to praise and thank God in union for the Mariamnagar saga and for an entire Diocese that emerged out of this lowly mission in course of time. During the brief felicitation held after the Mass, Bishop Monteiro released the Jubilee Souvenir and presented the first copy to Archbishop Jala. The Souvenir publication, through a set of articles, documents for posterity the little known history of Mariamnagar from its earliest days to the present. The dignitaries especially thanked and congratulated Fr. Ronald Vendt, the Parish Priest, who was the main architect behind the yearlong programs of the Platinum Jubilee. The day's programs came to an end with a sumptuous jubilee meal for all prepared by the parishioners. *Joseph Pulinthanath, SDB*

fold. Catechists Mr. Lalrina, Mr. Chandro Reang and Mr. Thuatuama prepared them for the reception of the same under the guidance of Fr. Lancy, the Parish Priest and Fr. Jerome. Sr. Therese Simon B.S. was remembered on this day; she who first sowed the seed of faith in these villages. We are joyful to welcome them to our Parish and pray that their faith may strengthen day by day in the Lord.

Medical Camp



With the outbreak of Malaria in the last few months the social and medical team of our Parish comprising of Sr. Suman, Dr. Sr. Prema, Ashique Debbarma, Mr. Chandro Joy Reang, Mr. Thautuama Darlong could reach to the remote villages of Dhalai District. They organized Malaria Camps at Chowmanu area under the direction of SDM and few villages around Manu area were administered medicines by the team. Quite many cases were tested and treated for malaria and other illness. It was a unique opportunity to visit these remote areas, forsaken by all and show them the kindness of Lord Jesus. *Dr. Prema BS*

Glimpses from the Diocese

Silver Jubilee Bells at Tuikarmaw



St. Mary's Parish Tuikarmaw celebrated its Silver Jubilee on 14th of September 2014. The theme for the celebration was Miracle of Faith. It was the celebration to thank God for the miraculous transformation that has taken place in the religious-socio-economic-cultural life of the people by believing in the person of Jesus. On 13th September, there was a cultural extravaganza with cultural dances and orchestra which went on from 6.30pm to 3.00am. More than 3,000 people gathered for the celebration. Sri Naresh Jamatia the Honorable Minister for RD & Forest, Govt. of Tripura was the Chief Guest. We were blessed by the presence of our dear Bishop Lumen, Fr. KJ Abraham CSC, Sri Hiralal Debbarma Deputy DM of South Tripura, former Parish Priests and many other religious, political and lay leaders. On the 14th September, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross Most Rev. Bishop Lumen Monteiro presided over the Eucharist with 37 priests concelebrating and a church packed with faithful. The celebrations concluded with the agape meal. *Fr. Sijo Joseph CSC*



Girl Child Day Celebrations in the Diocese Fatima Bhavan Damdamia



Girl Child Day was celebrated on 8th September 2014 by the students of Fatima Grihini Centre, through Chart Display and Speech. The students were made aware of the disparity meted out by the girl child in our society and the need to restore gender equality, human dignity, love and respect. The girls also staged a short play in Bengali highlighting the necessity to educate girl child. The motivational documentary 'Perna' inspired the children to overcome all disabilities and make every obstacle a ladder to succeed and be a role model to others. The day ended with honoring Mother Mary on her birthday. The hostel children, Grihini students, and neighbors from Fishery College joined the Fatima Sisters in praying the Rosary. The laughter of the little ones filled the air as they enjoyed the games conducted by the Sisters.

Ms. Nandrani Debbarma, Teacher

Auxilium Girls School, Nandanagar

Auxilium Girls' School Agartala celebrated Girl Child Day on September 8, 2014. Being a school only for the girls, the school takes extra care to educate them, to empower them, training them to become assertive, strong and courageous. To mark the occasion a very inspiring assembly was co-ordinate by XI students, stressing on the present condition of girls in India. They enacted this episode of Damini in such a vivid way that it brought tears to all present there. *The hand that rocks the cradle, the procreator, the mother of tomorrow; a woman shapes the destiny of civilization. Such is the tragic irony of fate, that a beautiful creation such as the girl child is today one of the gravest concerns facing humanity.* The Principal Sr. Celine D'Cunha stressed on the safety and integrity of girls, their role in progressing the society. To celebrate the day, school also organized slogan composing competition as well as poster drawing competition on Girl Child. After the assembly, students along with the Teachers and Sisters went on a rally to Don Bosco School and SDO Chawmuhani, shouting slogans and holding colourful posters on the Girl Child.



Girls are the pillars of society. Respect the girl child, respect mother, sister or wife. Investing in girl children brightens our future. Daughter is the knot that ties the family together. She makes the world bright, but still struggles to see light. Nurture and Educate Girl Children, they are the future of our world. *Ms. Riya Baidya, Student*

JUST distributes fingerlings to Farmers



On 23rd August 2014, the staff of FARM Northeast project of JUST received fingerlings from Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). Mr. Chandan Debnath (Fishery Scientist) of ICAR gave 70,000 fingerlings to the staff of JUST for distributing it to the members of

the farmers clubs of JUST under Hezamara R.D Block. Mr. Vincent Debbarma, the coordinator of FARM Northeast project of JUST distributed the fingerlings to 100 farmers of Hezamara R.D Block at Barakathal village.

JUST conducts Malaria Health Camps & Awareness Program

JUST organized a 5-day Health Camp and Awareness Program on Malaria from 25th to 29th August 2014 at Ganganagar R.D Block under Dhalai District. The camps were conducted at Karnamoni Para, Siddha Para, Radharambari Para, and Karma Para which is located at a distance of 22kms from



Ambassa and 120 Kms from Agartala. Dr. Ashok Debbarma of THS, Dr. Anut Debbarma of JUST, Fr. Ivan D, Silva, SVD Ambassa parish priest and other health workers remained present there in the health camps cum donation program. More than 300 mosquito nets were distributed among the poor families. More than 500 people attended the medical camps. Health awareness in local language for Malaria prevention was conducted along with loud speaker. 142 fever cases were screened with the RDT kits out of which 34 are diagnosed with Malaria parasite PF and were treated with ACT-AL and referred to hospitals also. On behalf of JUST Fr. Jeevan Kennady, SVD Director, has conveyed sincere thanks to the Donor Manos Unidas who donated mosquito nets, medicines, RDTs and ACT-AL and also to the volunteers who made the camps a great success.

Mr. Deepan Gurung

BISHOP'S PROGRAMME FOR OCTOBER 2014

- 01-03: NE Diocesan Fraternity Convention, Itanagar
- 04-05: Bagmara Golden Jubilee, Ambassa Parish
- 07: Consultors Meet
Clergy Meet & Recollection, Agartala
- 11-12: Parish Feast, Gachirampara
- 17: 2nd Bro. Joy Memorial Volley Ball, Champaknagar
- 19: Pastoral Visit, Nandanagar Parish
- 23: CBCI-CARD Meet, Delhi
- 25-26: CSC Jubilee Celebrations, Agartala
- 28-29: Caritas GB Meet, Delhi

Gachirampara Parish



7th of September Girl Child Day was celebrated in view of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Maria Sangha members joined hands together in making the day colourful by decorating the prayer hall and singing. After the Holy Mass they also distributed gifts to the girl children to encourage them to study well. The celebration ended with a hymn.

Fr. Prasanna Kumar, OFM. Cap.

Gandacherra Parish

We celebrated the girl child day for 2 days, on 7th September along with our parishioners and on 8th September with our children. The girls of the Holy Spirit Hostel led the meaningful liturgy on both the days with a beautiful introduction saying that Women are the greatest strength of the family, society, nation and world at large. Without them there is no



procreation. They are equal to men in the society and they are also created in the mother image of God. Mother Mary's birth was highlighted because she is the patron of all women of the world as model and intercessor so that looking at Mary's greatness all women can find their strength in themselves and could be empowered by her example.

During the Holy Eucharist on both the days, the priests advised the boys to respect the girls and give importance to them. The girls were told to be happy always as the children of God and to shine out in the family, society, nation and world at large.

In the Girl's hostel, the day was celebrated by having the morning devotion with them. There was a Speech Competition with the Topic "**Girl child and her strengths**" and Drawing Competition highlighting Girl and her "**Educational capacities**". Many girls, small and big, participated in both the Competitions. The winners were given prizes. We made this day a remarkable one to each one. *Sr. Juliana, SSpS*

Our Distinguished Visitors

- Archbishop Dominic Jala SDB, from Shillong
- Bishop Moses Costa, CSC, from Chittagong
- Fr. V. M. Thomas, SDB, Provincial from Guwahati
- Sr. Sinclair, FCC, Superior General from Alwaye
- Fr. Thomas Varanath, SVD, Asst. Provincial from Jharsuguda
- Fr. Jacob Vazhavelil, SVD, Novice Master from Indore
- Fr. Jose Sarpathil, CSC, from Kottayam
- Fr. Antonysamay, SVD, from Warangal
- Fr. Dolhpy, OFM, Cap., Provincial from Bangalore
- Fr. Thomas John, CSC, from Aizawl
- Fr. Petrus Kullu, SVD, from Kolkata
- Fr. Maria Nayagam, SVD, from Rourkella
- Bro. John Kallarackal, SG, Superior General from Rome
- Bro. Devasy, SG, Provincial Superior from Guwahati