

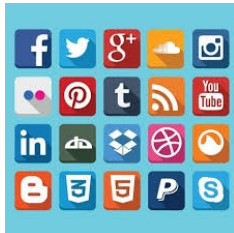


Pastor's Corner

Social Networking

This being the last issue for 2015, I thought I could share a 'last reflection' on being prepared and social media, which in many minds is the way of modern day communication. Fr. Pulinthanath's Editorial, though on a different note, augers well with the new research given below and is a call to introspect.

Depressed? Try quitting Facebook: Researchers ascribe anxiety associated with Facebook use to envy at other people's lives as they are seen enjoying. A study by Denmark-based think tank Happiness Research Institute says *quitting Facebook can actually make you happy*. It found that those who had abstained from the social networking website reported feeling more enthusiastic, less lonely, less worried and more decisive. The study enrolled 1095 volunteers and divided them into two groups. Half of them carried on using Facebook as usual whereas the rest spent their time away from the social networking website. After a week, 88 per cent of those who had given up Facebook said they felt "happy", compared with 81 per cent of those who had still been using it on a regular basis. The researchers ascribe the anxiety associated with Facebook use to *envy at other people's lives as they are seen enjoying, albeit in edited highlights*. "Instead of focusing on what we actually need, we have an unfortunate



tendency to focus on what other people have," wrote the authors of the study. According to Meik Wiking, CEO of the Happiness Research Institute, Facebook is a "constant bombardment of everyone else's great news".

Being Prepared

Our liturgical calendar for the Advent Season reminds us to stay 'alert' and 'be prepared'. Anel Aranha of Mumbai tells of a modern day parable. *In the new millennium, one of the changes people in England had to accept pertained to cars. For the first time ever, cars of a certain age were subject to inspection. When the time came to renew the tax on these cars, they needed to be subjected to a detailed examination first. People in possession of such cars were given ample notice. They were even advised to have the car serviced, as this would save them time and money. Needless to say, many people were caught unprepared, and all that could be heard from them was accusations about the unfairness of the system!*
+Lumen, CSC



Editorial

Dreamin' of Christmas

It's Christmas month. Whatsapp groups have already sent me Christmas cards and invitations to 'advance Christmas' celebrations.

Like everything else, the celebration of good ol Christmas too seems to have undergone a sea change. Spread across a month it now begins even

before the preparation for it (advent) begins. And it seems to say only the rich can have a happy Christmas - those that can, without a care in the world, afford to stroll about shopping malls lazily wheeling around an overstuffed trolley. Oh yes, like everything else today, Christmas too has become a lot about money.

It's a time when we renew and refresh contacts. But the way we get in touch has changed. There are many we do not visit now because it is possible to send them a card, there are many we do not send a card because it is possible to give them a call. There are many we do not call because it is possible to swype them a text. And there are many we do not even text because it is possible to forward them a text we received from someone else. Oh yes, the way we get in touch has changed!

It's become a lot more convenient now. In fact, unlike ever



before, we (especially our kids) are 'wired' now 24x7. Nothing prevents us from keeping in touch, sharing greetings or listening to carols of our choice anytime, anywhere. And online offers ensure cakes baked thousands of miles away arrive at our doorsteps in a matter of days. No we do not lack conveniences!

And yet..., somehow I long for those good old times when Christmas was less about Whatsapp pyrotechnics and more about a host of images that still warm my heart in a special way: of being home with those you love and care, taking time off to give last touches to a crib made with bamboo and grass in the company of eager, excited children and grown-ups, whispering a prayer to 'the Child of Christmas' while 'O Come all ye Faithful' is softly playing at the background, the morsel of cake passed around, the smiles, the hugs, and other hundred memories of people and events that Christmas time always brought to mind.

Perhaps, Christmas is so special because He came himself! It's an amusing, even inspiring thought that He sidestepped all those mesmerizing methods of getting in touch (in which we are caught up today), and came himself. He perhaps wanted to say Christmas is more than two lines of good news. It's when His Son took on flesh and blood and came to this 'here' and 'now' world of ours. With due respect to all concerned, Whatsapp and many other such communication wonders of our present world seem to be on a different track.

J. Pulinthanath, SDB

**Holy Spirit Parish, Ambassa
Marriage Classes**



Ambassa Parish conducted classes from 22nd to 24th October for those contemplating marriage and those who got rectified their marriage. 56 persons participated. When most of the people were enjoying their holidays and celebrating Puja the Resource Persons were busy giving classes on Marriage. Frs. Cyprian, Ivan, Bosco, Joachim and from the laity Mr. S.K Darlong, Dr. Ashok and Jaichandra were the Resource Persons. At the end of the class Certificates were issued by the Family Commission of Agartala Diocese. Participants felt it was a great opportunity to prepare themselves before venturing into an important phase their life. For Ambassa Parish it is a good beginning and we hope that it will continue.

Seminar for Women

Forty-six women from different villages of Ambassa Parish came together on 26th



October at Lalchari and discussed matters pertaining to their family life.

Questions like: What are the social evils and how they fight it out? What is a role of woman in the family and in the Church? were some themes. Sr. Punitha of the Women Commission of the Diocese spoke about the 'How to cope up with tensions in their lives and how to look after the mental health. Women leaders are happy that their organization is becoming strong in the parish and in their own villages. They take active steps in their own respective villages to fight against the social evils. The one day program concluded with a lunch.

Media Education and Public Relations

Fifty Six young boys and girls from Ambassa Parish participated in the Media Education



Class from October 22nd to 23rd. Many

felt that it was necessary to come together and be trained in a media connected world. The Resource Persons, namely, Mr. SK Darlong, Dr. Ashok and Fr. Ivan, SVD, conducted classes, group discussion, and role plays. Young people felt this training is the need of

the hour as they go out to different places for interviews and appear in the public places to face the reality. They have realized that youngsters fall prey to the latest gadgets without understanding its pros and cons. *News Desk, Ambassa*

**St. Paul Parish, Kumarghat
Silver Jubilee of Masli Marakpara
Chapel (1990-2015)**

Sacred Heart Masli Marak Para under St. Paul's Parish, Kumarghat celebrated the Silver Jubilee on November 1, 2015. The *mondoli* which began with 32 members, who received Baptism in 1990, has presently grown to 278 members, and this was an added reason to be joyful. We gratefully acknowledge Frs. Ivan and Lancy for guiding the faithful spiritually during the *Triduum*. As a result of all the spiritual and external preparations, the whole faithful community was in good spirits and the Jubilee day was a moving experience. The year-long preparations came to the culmination as we were blessed with the presence of our dear Bishop Lumen, who presided over the Holy Eucharist and unveiled the memorial stone, despite his ill-health. Rev. Bishop Lumen in his homily encouraged the faithful to continue to be the light of faith to the people around. A short felicitation program and community meal added flavour to the occasion.

Fr. Arul Jaganathan, CSC

**St. Alphonsa Parish, Khumulwng
Bishop blesses Chapel at
Tuimairang, replacing the old mud
wall Chapel**



Twimairang village, one of the oldest Catholic villages of St. Alphonsa Parish

Khumulwng, received a new Chapel on 3rd November after 40 years of its existence. The blessing ceremony began with a welcome dance procession, lighting of the inaugural lamp, cutting of the ribbon and unveiling of the chapel name plate, followed by celebration of the meaningful Holy Eucharist. The dream of a new chapel came true when Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, blessed, dedicated and offered the Chapel to the *mondoli*. Incessant rain and landslides kept on challenging and disrupting our work. But the true spirit of unity and harmony of the villagers, united against all odds, helped to complete the chapel. The people are extremely happy to have

their new Chapel. Several priests and sisters and parishioners from other villages gathered in large numbers to encourage Twimairang *mondoli*. Our benefactors from Church in Need, Germany, also participated in the ceremony. Truly, the construction of a Chapel has built the unity and harmony and strengthened the faith of our village community. *Fr. Arun MinjSVD*

**St. Arnold Parish, Gondacherra
Youth Fest**

St. Arnold parish Youth Fest was celebrated from 23rd to 25th



October 2015 at Resyabari. Seventy youth gathered for the Meet. This theme was 'Aim to become a

Eucharistic Youth". The day commenced with the formal introduction by the youth president Sanjith Tripura followed by Talks given by Fr. Bennet, Daniel Reang and others. On the second day all the participants received the Sacrament of Reconciliation, after which we had Mass celebrated by Fr. Bosco. This was followed by Talks by Mr. Oshim and Fr. Bennet. The new executive members were elected. There were varieties of games, singing and dance completions and winners were rewarded with prizes. All the participants expressed their happiness and satisfaction and are looking forward to the next program.

Parents Day 2015

St. Arnold High School Gandacherra celebrated its Parents Day on the 6th November in the school premises. It was presided over by the Honourable Sri. Lalit Mohan Tripura, MLA Raima Valley Constituency. Other dignitaries present were Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC, Sri. Baskar Das Gupta, SDM Gandacherra, Sri. Khagendra Reang, MDC Block Chairman, Sri. Pradeep Debbarma, BDO of Dumbur, and Sri. Gumenjoy Reang, SDPO. All VIP's before their speech, distributed Certificates and the Medals for the students who participated in different completions throughout the year. Fr. Bosco, the Principal of the School presented the School Annual Report. The evening was made more colourful with multiple cultural items. The program ended with a vote of thanks by the students. *Fr. Bennet*

Good Shepherd Parish, Kathalcherra

Expression of Faith in celebration

On 31st October we had the Marian procession. Many devoted faithful joined the procession which culminated with the Holy Eucharist. It was faith strengthening



experience.

On 1st November was the Parish Council meeting. Main agenda were to plan and prepare for the ordination of Deacon



Gabriel and Parish Sabah and Maria Sanga's 25th year Jubilee celebration on 2016. Every village of the parish took their own responsibility to contribute and to participate in the upcoming event.

We were also pleased to welcome two benefactors from 'Church In Need' Germany, Mrs. Veronique and Barbara along with our local ordinary Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC. They were the sole witness of the new church blessing at Garo-II. They also joined us for SCC in the parish church and cherished the word of God. Their presence along with our local ordinary was very encouraging and faith enriching.

Inauguration and Blessing of Village Chapel

The inauguration and blessing of the new church at Garo-II was the faith strengthening experience. The new St. ANDRE Church at Garo-II was named blessed by Rev Bp. Lumen Monteiro csc and inaugurated by our

benefactors Mrs. Veronica and Mrs. Barbara along with the village representatives. The church



h brought the people together to worship and praise God. The new church is the expression of deeper love and faith of the people for God. People of Garo-II are filled with joy and enthusiasm, moved by the word of God through their participation in SCC. Each and every member of the mondoli contributed physically, spiritually and mentally to build the church. Our guests from Germany were enthralled by the beautiful felicitation and cultural program the villagers.

On 13th November we celebrated the Children's Day in all our 3 Schools with beautiful cultural events organized by the Teachers. *Fr. Iswar Happa, CSC*

St. Mary's Parish, Tuikarmaw Rosary Rally

The Rosary rally was initiated by the local Tuikarmaw *mondoli* leaders, which began by going to different villages by vehicles and praying the rosary with people in their

village chapels. It was a first time experience for our people. The priests and sisters also joined the groups. The grand finale was a candlelit procession organized at the Parish centre on 31st October along with Mother Mary's statue in Procession. After the procession the holy Eucharist was celebrated in both places. *Fr. Alfred, CSC*

Immaculate Conception Parish, Moharpara Parish News Bulletin

To make the youth better understand the Sacrament of marriage, we conducted a Marriage preparation Course for 3 days. 20 young people from different villages attended this program. The program was held on 28th to 30th October. With the help of three catechists, Fr. Hormis John and Fr. Agi Paul conducted this program.

The Parish Council meeting was held on 10th November. 35 people attended this meeting. Many important information and matters related to the lives of the people were discussed and resolutions passed.

On 14th November we celebrated Children's Day with a variety of programs enthusiastically performed by the Teachers. The program concluded with prize distribution for activities conducted during the year.

Moharpara News Desk

Diocese News Roundup

Diocese Level SCC Seminar

On 4th and 5th of November a Seminar on SCC was organized on the diocesan level.



Priests and religious, about 60 of them, participated in it. Most Rev. Bishop Lumen introduced the topic along with a note of welcome to all Resource Persons and participants. He said SCC plays a very important role in bringing people together and close to God. Fr. Thomas Vijay, SAC, Coordinator of NST and Secretary to NST for SCC, Sr. Martina (Regional Secretary), and Fr. Lancy, CSC, Diocesan Secretary, were our Resource Persons. These were the topics of the Seminar--basic knowledge of SCC, Spirituality of SCC, (Gospel sharing), Animation Skills, and Leadership. The Seminar was very beneficial said most the participants. *Fr. Prasanna, OFM Cap*

Diocese Level Eucharistic Procession marks record gathering

More than nine thousand faithful from all parts of the State converged at Agartala on 8th November to be part of the the 7th Annual

Eucharistic Procession, making it a record of sorts in the 19 year old diocese.



The day's program began with a solemn Eucharist officiated by Most Rev Lumen Monteiro, CSC, DD, the Bishop of Agartala along with 35 priests in the presence of many Religious and thousands of lay faithful from different Parishes, at Don Bosco School Grounds, Agartala.

Fr. V.M. Thomas, SDB, Chancellor of Assam Don Bosco University, Provincial of Guwahati Province and National CRI President was the special guest. Fr. Rodney Borneo and Fr. Jilson, CSC, animated the congregation and led the Praise and Worship segment. The crowd comprising the young and the elderly who had come in large numbers from all parishes of the Diocese made it truly a 'diocesan' event. For the past seven years the Eucharistic Procession has been happening uninterruptedly making it now an eagerly awaited annual rallying point for all Catholics of the Diocese. The AICU wing of the Diocese takes leadership in the

preparation and organization of the event. For the clergy, priests and religious of the Diocese too, the annual procession is an important event in their calendar. Agartala, one of the 15 dioceses of Northeast India, comprises the entire state of Tripura, home to over 3.6 million people. Erected in 1996 the Diocese of Agartala now has 20 parishes.

Fr. Pulinthanath, SDB, Spokesperson of the Diocese

Fatima Convent School, Damdamia

Fatima Convent School at Damdamia, celebrated its first Annual Day on 14 November. Fr Jeevan, SVD, the Director of JUST, was the Chief Guest. Sr. Ventura Fernandes, FS, the Regional Superior of Fatima Sisters, presided over the function. Students from class Nursery to class IV put up an enthralling performance. There was an array of dances and a ramp walk exhibiting the colorful costumes of various states of our country. A skit 'Save the Earth; our Home' by the students of Class IV portrayed the present scenario of violence, terrorism, war, crimes against nature, like deforestation and degradation of moral values. It powerfully conveyed the message to save the Earth and the need to





restore Peace, unity and harmony. Besides the Best Teacher, Best Girl and Boy

student of the year 2015 Awards, the students were awarded prizes for sports and other competitive events held during the year. Upholding the spirit of patriotism the program ended on the note of the National Anthem. **Sr. Joanita Fernandes, FS**

Ferrando School for Speech and Hearing

On 30th September 2015 Ferrando School for Speech and Hearing celebrated International Day of the Deaf showcasing the talents and achievements of the hearing impaired students of the school. The students were extremely happy and enthusiastic with the presence of their parents, teachers, friends and dignitaries like Minister of Social

Welfare and Social Education Director of SW & SE, MLA & Leader of the Opposition, our Beloved Bishop Lumen



Monteiro, and principals from Don Bosco and Auxilium Girls School, directors, brothers, sisters and students from neighboring hostels were there to join the celebration and appreciate and approve the children's abilities. In his message our dear Bishop said to dance to the rhythm of the music and song when one is not able to hear and speak indeed needs an extra ability. Bishop then congratulated Students and Sisters and their Team of dedicated staff. Sr. Sini expressed her gratitude to everyone for feeling, being and appreciating their efforts. **Sr. Sini, MSMHC**

JUST News Roundup

Skilling Young Girls

JUST provided tailoring training for 10 unemployed girls from Ganganagar



from 1st September to 31st October 2015. The two-month training was conducted at Ganganagar. At the end of the training all the 10 trainees were given a tailoring certificate. The trainees were also given one each sewing machine by JUST in order to help them in continuing their skills in the future and which can help them as source of generating income for their families.

Peace Awards celebrated

JUST organized Peace Award function at 14 schools in the target areas under Peace Project. Altogether 420 students took part in the program. The theme of the program was

"Student: Being Peace Agent and Peace Activist"

The topic was given to the Peace Club members to make an extempore speech with



their experience and knowledge gained from the trainings conducted over the period of time. The performances in the peace club as well as the Competitions were the main criteria for selecting the Peace awardees. Three students were selected from all the schools and given the peace award. This initiative has motivated many students to be more effective and integrated while encouraging them to be the 'student peace agent.' The student peace agents would also be the peer mediators and peace builders in the schools and in the villages.

Vincent Debbarma

Bishop's Program for December 2015

- 01: Consultors Meet, Agartala
- 01: Clergy Meet, Agartala
- 02-03: Caritas PSC Meet, Delhi
- 05: Karbook Inauguration, Depacherra Parish
- 06: Parish Feast, Moharpara
- 12: Priestly Ordination, Kathalcherra
- 13: Champabari Chapel Blessing, Khumulwng Parish
- 17: JUST GB & AGBM, Agartala
- 18: Christo Mela, Khumulwng
- 19: Silver Jubilee Bro. Alex, SDB
- 20: Christo Mela, Kamaranga
- 21: Christo Mela, Tuikarmaw
- 22: Molsom Sabah, Nittyo Bazar
- 23-24: Sabah & Christmas Eve, Bagbasa Parish
- 25: Parish Mass
- 27: Joggyathakur Chapel Blessing, Bishramganj Parish
- 31: New Year's Eve, Agartala

Our Distinguished Visitors

- Fr. Maliekal, SDB Provincial from Shillong
- Fr. James Poonthuruthil, SDB, ITLR Director, Shillong
- Fr. Alphonse, NESCOM Director from Guwahati
- Sr. Ventura, FS Provincial from Rangia, Assam
- Fr. George Arackal, VC from West Bengal

Our Readers Write

Thanks for the Link. God bless all the activities in the diocese. It is indeed too great to run programs like the irrigation awareness program. This is sure to uplift the poor farmers who much need external support in improving the farming practices. **Biju Mathew, Calicut**
Thank you so much Bishop for the October Link. The reflection on Life's Fragility is so good and meaningful. **Sr. Rihun Sten FMA, Agartala**

Thank you for the November Link. I missed a note on the parents' day of St. Antony's school. I thought it was well done. **Sr. Mirabelle AC, Kolkata**

I liked your very inspiring message. Thank you For the Link- **Ishwar, CSC, Kathalcherra**
Thank you Bishop for the Link. The Diocesan news letter comes on time. **Ivan, SVD, Ambassa**

Your LINK contained the usual interesting articles. **Evrard, Canada**

Thanks once again for your Newsletter. Loved the article and sentiments expressed in Life's fragility. So true! **Steven, Australia**

Thank you so much dearest Bishop for sending the Link regularly. It keeps me very close to your diocese and its mission; and it reminds me of my past mission. Congratulations for the wonderful mission. Your messages are so enriching. **J. Charles Descary, CSC, Canada**

(Please Note: We received an overwhelming response to our news item on the Eucharistic procession held at Agartala. I thank you all and am sorry they are too many to be printed here. +Lumen, CSC)

News from the Catholic Church in India

NEC, Mumbai: Cardinals, Bishops and participants in the National Eucharistic Congress (NEC), being held in Mumbai (India), observed a minute of silence and prayed for the victims of the terrorist attack last night in Paris, where about 130 people are believed to have died. Addressing those present, Cardinal Oswald Gracias, Archbishop of Mumbai, said: "The participants in the NEC observe a moment of silent prayer - ours is a cry to God that rises from deep in the silence - to commemorate the victims of the tragic events that have taken place at this time in Paris." Speaking of the tragedy, Cardinal Gracias said that "innocent victims have been brutally torn from us by a senseless violence." Our hearts, adds the cardinal, "cry out to the Lord Jesus" to "give comfort" to victims' families, friends and the entire nation for an act that is "a heinous crime against humanity." The curtain came down on the 4-day National Eucharistic Congress of India on Sunday, 15th November, in Mumbai, with delegates from all of the country's Dioceses pledging themselves to nourish others having been nourished by the Eucharist. The theme of the November 12-15 Eucharistic Congress, held in the Pius X Seminary, Goregaon was, "Nourished by Christ, to Nourish Others". The Eucharistic Congress commemorated 50 years of Blessed Pope Paul VI's visit to India, Dec 2-5, 1964, to celebrate the 38th International Eucharistic Congress in Bombay, today called 'Mumbai'. (UCANews)