

## Assumption Day; Independence Day; World Youth Day

As the Catholic Church commemorates the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mother Mary on 15th August, our nation celebrates its 70th Independence anniversary on that very day. I always say how lucky we are that our country, which we call, Bharat Mata (Mother India), got its political freedom with the blessings of Mariam Mata (Mother Mary) on that very day!

Independence Day is a time for every citizen to feel proud to be an Indian. We recall the words of Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru at 11pm on 14th August 1947 in the Constitution Hall in New Delhi where he delivered the Tryst with Destiny speech. This anniversary is a time to renew our pledge of dedication and service: "Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and



freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance. It is fitting that at this solemn moment, we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity."

On the International front we just concluded the World Youth Day at Krakow. One event there was the Youth Festival which aimed to unite youth from around the world through entertainment, cultural development and spiritual formation. It lasted four days consisting of various events spread throughout the city of Krakow. The Youth Festival is a program of 250 varying events, including art expositions, concerts, sporting events, competitions of different types, aiming

at uniting the world in love.

At a time when we hear and read of so many atrocities and violence, these events are a soothing balm to our troubled world. In the words of Ann Landers we must "be kind to people; the world needs kindness so much. You never know what sort of battles other people are fighting. Often just a soft word or a warm compliment can be immensely supportive. You can do a great deal of good by just being considerate, by extending a little friendship, going out of your way to do just one nice thing, or saying one good word."



Pastor's Corner

+Lumen, CSC

LINK wishes its readers Happy Pastors Day on the occasion of the Feast of St. Mary Vianney on August 4.



## The Connectivity Conundrum



Editorial

'Connectivity', seems to be now on everyone's minds even in these areas traditionally considered far-flung and challenging. Possibilities of access to the 'mainland' through neighboring Bangladesh, and to Chittagong port about 70 kilometers from Tripura's southernmost tip promise to transform not only Tripura, but the entire region into a prosperous patch. Although we cannot see into the future shape of things, it seems reasonable to conclude we are seeing around us measures that could have very far-reaching consequences for the region and its people.

The region seems to be taking giant strides in virtual connectivity too. Agartala became India's third international Internet gateway. Whatever that meant, media made merry and promised enhanced digital connectivity to the region. One hopes it becomes a reality soon.

In our backyard we get to see in very tangible ways what social scientists call 'the ambivalent' nature of progress and

development. For the greater part of July the whole of Tripura lacked connectivity of a more basic kind. It remained physically cut off from the rest of the country. That is because many kilometers of Assam-Agartala National Highway, considered the lifeline of Tripura, had turned into a water clogged, marshy mess unfit even for the nightmare journey along that route generally is. The dreaded patch successfully kept over 4500 trucks at bay on either side for more than a week.

And with impeccable sense of timing, the aviation industry rose to the occasion and proved that it certainly knows how to strike when the iron is hot. It hiked flight fares to the hilt, compelling helpless people to cancel all engagements that called for going outside the State. It had its silver lining though. With meetings and treatments outside the State all either cancelled or postponed, they found themselves free enough to join one of the many queues that Agartala town is famed



to engender even at short notice. This time there was ample choice too: LPG queue, CNG queue, Petrol queue (Rs. 250/litre). Between human beings too connectivity has increased. With everyone busy tapping on a screen in his or her hands crowded places today sport an eerie silence. The occasional contortion of the face alone signals they are lost in a world other than ours, experiencing what might be considered the acme of digital connectivity. A curious twist in our unfolding story of increased connectivity and progress!

As the Church and as a Diocese we place utmost importance on relationship. We call it, unity, closeness, harmony, peace and communion. We recognize that connectivity and connectivity-enhancing gadgets can help bring about a greater measure of these among us. We also know that technology and connectivity mean something only when they bring about a qualitative improvement in relationship between people.

J. Pulinthanath, SDB



### Pilgrims inspired by the Angel of Mercy

The Jubilee Year of Mercy continues to bring new dimensions of the theme to millions of people across the globe. New awareness is created and new initiatives are taken. For our Diocese the number of pilgrims who came to the Door of Mercy was drastically reduced this month, probably due to the dampening effect of the rainy season which makes movement difficult, and due to the paddy planting season in the villages.

However we had two small groups of pilgrims led by the Missionaries of Charity. On 14<sup>th</sup> July, the MC Sisters and the inmates from Agartala edified everyone with the Adoration, Confession, and Holy Eucharist celebrated by Fr. Cyprian SVD. Again, on 22<sup>nd</sup> July, the Sisters along with the inmates came from distant Kumarghat for a day of pilgrimage. It was wonderful to see them all praying beautifully and taking part in the holy Eucharist. We pray that through them our Diocese may be blessed abundantly.

I am confident that with the encouragement of Pastors, Sisters and the leaders of communities more and more Groups from villages and Parishes will make the Pilgrimage of Mercy during the remaining four months of the Jubilee Year to obtain abundant blessings. *Fr. Sunny, SDB*

### BISHRAMGANJ PARISH

#### Blessing of the Village Church in Pitra



The month of July brought great joy and delight to the people of Pitra as the village Church was

solemnly blessed by Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro CSC, on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016. A large crowd of faithful along with 12 priests and 12 sisters gathered to witness the occasion. Pitra falls under Bishramganj Parish and is located some 30kms away from it. The Bishop expressed his deep gratitude to Fr. Sunny SDB, the erstwhile PP and Fr. Blasius, SDB, the present PP for being instrumental in

erecting the village church. In the homily told the faithful that though the church was built by fathers because it belongs to them and is meant for them. Hence they should love the church, maintain it, and keep their faith alive. The cultural program presented beautifully by the students and the people after the Holy Mass, brought cheer and relaxation to everyone. The community meal marked the end of the day's program. *Fr. Thomas Marak, SDB*

### BODHJUNGNAGAR PARISH

#### Bible Camp from 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> June

The Bible Camp for the Catholic students of St. Andre Parish was conducted from 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> June at Bodhjunnagar. 115 students from class VIII to XII attended. There were action songs, praise and worship, Talks on the different Bible themes, Bible Quiz and parable enactment



Competition. The main purpose of the Camp was to instill in the students a thirst for the Word of God. The theme was 'Living the Word of God.' There were different Resource Persons who spoke on different themes in the Bible: Fr. Abraham C., CSC, the Fr. Lawrence Darlong, Fr. Binoy, CSC, Br. Vicky, CSC, and Sr. Lucy, CSC. The Adoration Sisters (SABS), Srs. Claire and Josena awakened the group with their action songs, hymns and games. Confession also was organized on 25<sup>th</sup> evening along with the Adoration. It was a great experience for the students. The program came to an end with Bible Quiz and distribution of Prizes followed by a sumptuous meal on 26<sup>th</sup> June.

*Fr. Binoy John, CSC*

### AMBASSA PARISH

#### Women's Seminar

Ambassa 09, July 2016: Holy Spirit Parish organized two days Seminar for Women leaders of the Parish. More than hundred leaders from



different villages were present in Naithungul Village from 9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> to discuss and evaluate their activities. The Resource Person was the Diocesan Women Coordinator Sr. Punita SJA from Agartala who was helped by Sr. Cecilia SSpS. The women had the reporting session of their activities and financial savings in the banks. On the following day, being Sunday, more participants

joined the group. During the Sunday homily, Fr. Ivan D' Silva invited them to find out their neighbors who are in need of help. After the Mass again they gathered to elect the new Women's Committee for the next three years. The new committee vouched to organize similar seminars in the villages more often. *News Desk, Ambassa Media Awareness*

Ambassa 10, July 2016: More than 100 Women leaders gathered for the half day session on Media Awareness at N.G. Para. Fr. Ivan D' Silva alerted the Mothers to be aware of the situation, particularly on how to bring up their children and how to face



the challenges posed by the media world. He asked them, "Whether they question their children when they freely use

their latest gadgets like, Screen touch Mobiles, tabs, laptop, etc". He explained "how the parents fall prey to their children's demand, how the children black mail their parents in asking money to buy these gadgets for the use of study purpose". The Resource Person Sr. Punita SJA, called on women leaders to know the facts about human trafficking. She said, "It is a growing menace in the North East and all the mothers should alert their daughters". She further explained, the growing trend of the use of mobile and how it can trap them. Stating the example of 'Wrong Numbers', she further said, "youth need to get trained in Mass Media, and parents too should be educated in this field". Fr. Ivan concluded saying that, "it is no use of blaming the media for its wrong doing; rather all of us should get trained in Media Education"! *News Desk, Ambassa*

### KUMARGHAT PARISH

#### Parish Feast celebrated with joy

In preparation for the Parish Feast, an intensive Novena was conducted from 17<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> June, which was held in different villages on each day. Then came the outpouring of divine grace where our Bishop Lumen Monteiro graced the occasion on our Feast day of St. Paul's Parish, Kumarghat on 26<sup>th</sup> June. A good number of Priests and Sisters from nearby parishes and many faithful of the different villages of the parish participated in this celebration. The celebration began with the hoisting of the parish flag by the Bishop and then followed the solemn Eucharistic celebration. This was followed by the Eucharistic procession, then short cultural program and ended with a fellowship meal. The outcome of this meaningful celebration



had brought us together as one family to be more united and strengthened us spiritually. We were blessed with good weather and it was a beautiful and joyful moment for us to have such an experience of God's love.

*Fr. Arul J, CSC*

## KATHALCHERRA PARISH

**Youth Seminar:** A day of Youth Seminar was conducted on 3<sup>rd</sup> July for the Youth of the Parish by KCYM. Mr. Paul Sangma was the Resource Person who explained the need and role of Youth in the church. In his message he said "Youth are the backbone of the society."



**Dance--an expression of love:** It was a great joy for Holy Cross H/S School Kathalcherra to organize an Interclass Dance Competition and to welcome and honour our former SDM Mr. Budhilian Hrangkhawl

who was a student of Holy Cross School Kathalcherra. Focusing on the youth the former SDM emphasized on importance of education as means of change. He encouraged the students to persevere in times of difficulties.

**Gift of life:** The Church reverberated on 20<sup>th</sup> June and on 8<sup>th</sup> July, as the choir sang and praised the Lord for the gift of life of Fr. CV Jose, CSC and Fr. Ishwar, CSC. A joyful cultural program was organized in the school and hostel to mark day.

**Foundation Day:** Happy Feast to the all the Bethany Sisters, our collaborators, as they celebrated the 95th Foundation Day of the Congregation on 16th July. Founded by Msgr. Raymond Mascarenhas on 16 July 1921, the Bethany Sisters have been able to spread the message of God in and through their spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

*Fr. Ishwar, CSC*

## MOHARPARA PARISH

**New Congregation of Sisters in our Parish**

People of Twithampui village in Moharpara Parish raised their minds and hearts to God in thanksgiving on July 16<sup>th</sup> along with their



Pastor, Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, during the Eucharistic celebration that began at 6.00pm. The occasion was the formal establishment of the first community of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod (SCC) at Twithampui under Moharpara Parish. Sr. Sherly Chacko, SCC (their N-Eastern Provincial) along with many other Sisters graced the occasion in the presence of a large gathering of the faithful of Twithampui. Sisters hope to run the English medium School hitherto run by the villagers from next January. *Fr. Hormis, CSC*

## Inter Religious Dialogue:

On the occasion of Ramdan/Iftar, an inter religious programme was jointly organized by International Association for Religious Freedom and Generation Welfare Society, minority Development Organisation and Edu Care, Agartala on June 25 in Vasundhara Community Hall, Gandhighat. Different religious organizations were invited for this programme; among others was the Catholic Church was represented by Frs. Lawrence, Harry CSC, and Cyprian SVD. On this auspicious occasion we



wished the Muslim community happiness, peace and prosperity as they are engaged in self purification during the month of Ramadan, a period of prayer, fasting, alms giving and self control. We also reminded them that it is the same God, the God of Abraham, Jacob

and Isaac who revealed himself through Mohammad but Jesus is the final revelation of God himself. The Meeting ended with all of us taking part in "Iftar," "food taken together with family and friends" symbolizing the end of the fast.

*Fr. Cyprian, SVD*

## JUST News Roundup

### Interface Meeting

JUST organized interface meeting with government department on 4<sup>th</sup> June at Teliamura Panchayat Samity Hall. The key persons of the program were Mr. Amaresh Chowdhury (PRI Chairperson), Mrs. Sushmita Chatterjee (PRI extension officer), CDPO Teliamura, SSA Block Coordinator, Mr. Francis (CBR resource person) and the Director of JUST Fr. Jeevan, SVD. There were 55 participants out of which 40 were PwDs. Among P w D s M r .



Indrajit Sil and Mr. Jagrata B h o w m i k spoke about their Rights. The SSA Block Coordinator spoke about e d u c a t i o n facility and how to avail it. CDPO spoke on social welfare facilities and how to avail them. PRI Chairperson spoke about rural development facilities and how to avail them. All PwDs and parents of CwDs were motivated to avail the schemes. PRI Chairperson ensured to help them in availing all the possible schemes and thanked JUST for taking up development activities for the PwDs and CwDs in his Panchayat.

### Distribution of IEC Materials

JUST assisted by KFB has distributed IEC materials relating to Health, Hygiene and Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) to the IDP youths in all 7 relief camps. The IEC contains how STI is transmitted by and the certain instructions which are to be



followed by everyone for prevention of such diseases and also about the impact of open defecation. Moreover, the IEC has instructions about HIV/AIDS that destroys the immune system over the time, robbing the body of its ability to fight other infections and illnesses. Once the immune system is weakened, other infections occur and AIDS develops. It also mentioned the signs and symptoms of HIV/AIDS which generally appears 2 to 4 weeks after exposure. Some people experience mild flu-like symptoms that last for few weeks and then disappear. The IDP youths have extended their gratefulness to JUST for distributing such knowledgeable and informative leaflet which is very helpful for prevention of STI, HIV/AIDS and other health hazards.

*Mr. Vincent Debbarma*

## Our Readers Voice

Thanks for the news in LINK. Moving onward with you. *Tony Krisak, USA*

You are always wonderful person. Thank you for your newsletter Link. *+Victor Lyngdoh*

Again you made it! Link comes in up-to-dateto us; so many happenings and blessing of new establishments... Just too bad we cannot carry churches and buildings being sold our here! *Conrad, CSC, Canada*

Thanks a lot for keeping me 'LINK'ed! It is

very informative and rejuvenating. Every time I read the LINK, I do get nostalgic feelings and memories of being and working in Tripura. This time, nuns and priest learning Kokborok, I felt the venture is worth it! *Fr. Chella, CSC, Telengana*

Thanks for the July Link. Your journey through memory lane of 20 years was more than worth reading. The Editorial is amazing. Your Diocese does a lot in this Year of Mercy, much more than ours here in Camden Diocese. *Alice, USA*



Thanks for sending the Link; I appreciate it very much. *Fr. Dolphy Pais OFM Cap, Bengaluru*

Thank you Bishop for July LINK...Great work, worth reading...! Congrats for the precision, punctuality with which LINK arrives on the 1st of every month. *Sr. Celine, FMA*

Thanks for another fine copy of the "Link." Good to hear about the progress and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and Moving onward. Rajiv Theodore's article inspired me to send along a picture with Muhammad Ali from several years ago at the Angels Locker-room in

Phoenix during spring training. *Fr. Willy CSC, USA*

Thanks a lot once again for this month's LINK. Always good to get all that news of your doings and that of the parishes around. *Sr. Vis, RGS*

Thank you for the latest edition of LINK. Reading the informative articles always brings me to be impressed by the vitality of the Diocese and also brings me to pray for all of you in the challenges you meet. *Tom O'Hara, CSC, USA*

Thank you Bishop for linking in time! Your capacity for being on time is wonderful. *Sr. Clara BS, Guwahati*

## World's oldest priest reveals secret to long life



A strict daily routine is the recipe for a long life, according to the world's oldest priest, Belgian Jacques Clemens, who celebrated his 107th birthday on July 11. Clemens, who has

also celebrated his 80th anniversary as a Catholic priest, gets up every morning at 5.30a.m. and goes to bed at 9.00p.m. When Clemens was about to retire at 75, his Bishop asked him to remain in service until they found a successor he only stopped holding regular church services at his Parish in the southern Belgian village of Nalinnes last year, Reuters reported. [mattersindia.com](http://mattersindia.com)

## 11 year-old boy has IQ of Einstein and Hawking

People around 11-year-old Akhilesh Chandorkar, including his parents, always knew he was smart. But last week they found out he may be among the smartest people



around. Akhilesh has been declared among the top two per cent most intelligent people in the world by Mensa the exclusive international society in the UK for people with exceptionally high IQ scores. With a whopping score of 160, Akhilesh has apparently the same level of IQ as legends Albert Einstein and Stephen Hawking. Akhilesh had taken the test in June this year while on a vacation in Scotland. This student of Jain International School in Nagpur said, "I want to be a space scientist and an astronaut. I like the attention that I am getting but it gets exhausting." [mattersindia.com](http://mattersindia.com)

## US Cardinal applauds harmony among religions in India

A prominent Catholic prelate from the United States has expressed concern over "persecution" of the Church across the world but applauded India for what he said was remarkable sense of harmony

### Our Distinguished Visitors

- ➔ Fr. T. K. Kurian, SVD from Odisha
- ➔ Fr. George Arackal, VC Provincial from Kerala
- ➔ Fr. Jose, VC Assistant Provincial from Kerala
- ➔ Fr. Augustine, VC, Director of Emmaus from Kolkata
- ➔ Frs. George & Vincent, VC, from Jalalkali, W. Bengal
- ➔ Frs. Thomas Baa, Thomas Lakra, Albinus Kullu & Anil Kullu from Rourkella
- ➔ Fr. Ravisagar, SJ from Geisha to
- ➔ Mr. Julian D'Mello from Shankarpura, Karnataka
- ➔ Fr. Dolphy Pais, OFM Cap Provincial from Bengaluru
- ➔ Sr. Sherly, SCC Provincial & Councillors from Guwahati

and friendship among religions. Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York, who was on a three-day visit to Kerala, said he has heard from Cardinal George Alencherry, that India's ancient Hindu culture is open to all religions. "What I hear...India is vast with a remarkable sense of harmony, friendship among religions. You have the ancient Hindu culture, which is really open to other religions. You have Islamic presence and of course you have Christian presence," the American cardinal told reporters here. Cardinal Dolan said he was told that there are incidents of "some harassment and some persecution" but the



climate in India is one of amity, friendship and respect. The American Cardinal came to India on July 13 on the invitation of Cardinal Baselios Mar Cleemis, head of the

Syro-Malankara Church, to be the chief guest for the 63rd death anniversary of the Oriental Catholic Rite's founder Servant of God Geevarghese Mar Ivanios. [mattersindia.com](http://mattersindia.com)

## Medical Train of India

It's the beginning of May in the central Indian city of Gondia, and despite the crushing heat, it seems like the entire town has come to the train station. Doctors, nurses, journalists and politicians all gather under a tent



to await a very unusual arrival: the Lifeline Express. There are less than 10 doctors to 10,000 inhabitants in India, and many have to travel hundreds of miles to reach the nearest hospital. While the country's pharmaceutical industry is now the largest supplier of generic medicines to the developed world, India lags seriously behind in matters of sanitation and public health. Equipped with two fully-functioning operating rooms, the Lifeline Express represents an unthinkable hope for many Indians. Each week of the train's four-week stop in Gondia is dedicated to one specialty. Renowned specialists take shifts to treat different pathologies. In the case of cataract surgery, doctors operate on 30 to 40 patients a day. Meanwhile, nurses from the train take trips to the villages around Gondia to inform people about epilepsy, a disease that is little-known in remote regions of India.

On July 16th, the Lifeline Express celebrated its 25th birthday. It is said the scheme has helped more than one million patients throughout India, and has been used as a model for similar projects in China and central Africa, as well as for hospital boats in Bangladesh and Cambodia.

## Bishop's Program for August 2016

- 02: Clergy Meet & Recollection, Agartala
- 04: Feast of St. John Mary Vianney
- 07: Pastoral Program, Mandwi Parish
- 11: Chapel Blessing at Sidoinandapara, Gondacherra Parish
- 12: Chapel Blessing at Bagirath, Gondacherra Parish
- 13-14: Pastoral Visit, Sindukpathar Parish
- 15: Feast of the Assumption & Independence Day
- 16: JUST GB & AGB Meet, Agartala
- 21: Parish Mass, SFX Cathedral, Agartala
- 22-31: Meet with Donor Agencies in Europe
- 01-04: Canonization of Bl. Mother Teresa in Rome