



Pastor's Corner

The Purpose of Suffering

The church celebrates September 14 as the feast of the Triumph of the Cross. The very phrase 'triumph of the cross' seems ridiculous! Steven Hemler in 'What is the purpose of suffering?' says, "no one wants or enjoys suffering and



hardship even though they are an inevitable part of our temporal life on earth." He goes on to add "I know this may sound funny, but difficulties and hardships can be blessings in disguise. They can be a catalyst for achieving new heights in our personal and spiritual lives... In times of difficulty and hardship, we naturally turn to God and seek His help. If everything were always wonderful, do you think we would need God or seek Him? C. S. Lewis once noted, "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks to us in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: It is His megaphone to ruse a deaf world."

God wants us to embrace the truth that our problems, difficulties, and disappointments are storms on the sea of life that are **not** meant to sink us, but to sanctify us. Each 'storm' is an opportunity to grow closer to God. If everything were always perfect, we would become lazy, hedonistic, and selfish. It is through life's suffering and

hardships that we are given the opportunity to develop our trust in God and experience His love for us."

The Cross has been a source of attraction and strength and a challenge for the first disciples of Jesus and for all Christians down the centuries. In our own lives today, the Cross primarily means accepting God's love, which entails dying to our selfishness and pride. Suffering by itself does not necessarily mean the cross. We may suffer deeply, cursing God, people and our lot. Only when we accept suffering in a spirit of deep faith, hope and love, can we say that we are participating in the mystery of the Cross. The mystery of the Cross is really an invitation to love! It is an invitation to true discipleship, "For, the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God." (1Cor. 1:18-25)

To our Teachers

The month of September has another important date, that is, the fifth, which is celebrated as Teacher's Day in our country. The day is dedicated to all teachers who play a prominent role in the life of their students. Teachers act as guides for life, show the path towards success and enrich the personality of their students by imparting ethical and academic knowledge. To our Teachers who serve with love and devotion I extend sincere wishes and say, HAPPY TEACHERS DAY.

+Lumen, CSC



Editorial

'Big City Blues'

On January 21, 2014 the Agartala Municipal Council turned into a Corporation. On the same day, the 42nd Statehood day of Tripura, 10 Nagar Panchayats including Dharmanagar, Kailasahar, Ambassa, Khawai, Teliamura, Mohanpur,



Bishalgarh, Melaghar, Udaipur and Belonia in the sub-divisional towns were also promoted as Municipal Councils. These urban local bodies have been upgraded and extended, official sources say, in order to give better services to the people of the State. Some even claim that Agartala, with its nearly half million population, is the biggest city in Northeast, after Guwahati!

That may be debatable but it's true Tripura has been through huge changes in the past decades. Distances have shrunk and more townships have developed. One now finds the narrow roads, sluggish traffic and ramshackle structures of old replaced by broader roads, faster cars, and taller buildings. In every nook and corner of the towns and townships signs of growth and

improved infrastructure are visible.

Unfortunately, these, however, have also widened the gap between the haves and the have-nots. Economic disparity, especially among the indigenous people of the state, is on the rise. A greater number of people have entered the elite club alright and many have moved up a notch or two on the social and economic matrix. This gives one the impression that the development process they're part of is without any lacuna whatsoever.

This disturbing trend is most pronouncedly seen among the youth. Among them the glaring disparity is not confined merely to the economic sphere but in all areas of life. The problem with such 'lop-sided' development is that the rich and the powerful get richer and more powerful while the poor get left out of the rat race.

The Gospels are filled with examples of Jesus' preferential treatment of the weak, the helpless, and the vulnerable. As individuals and communities that have the mandate to continue the mission of Jesus, we would do well to examine our attitude to such categories of people. Do we have some strategies in place to 'include' the normally excluded? Or do we, carried away by its many bells and whistles, bide our time naively singing the development song?

J. Pulinthanath, SDB

St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Gachirampara

Children get new Hostel

The newly constructed Assisi Boys Hostel at Gachirampara was blessed on 27th July, 2015 by Rev. Fr. Felix Pinto OFM Cap. We had simple celebration of the blessing along with our children and parishioners. Children are happy in the new



hostel. Sorry for the delay in responding your email. This is because of the poor network. Wish and pray happy days in the USA. Blessing of the new boys hostel at Gachirampara

in the presence of hostel children and the parishioners. It was a felt need of the place to accommodate the growing number of children. The new building can accommodate 150 children comfortably. We sincerely thank our Bishop Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro and the Capuchin Fathers for their support.

Fr. Joel, OFM Cap.

St. Paul Parish Kumarghat

Maria Shongo Picnic

The central committee of *Maria Shongo* decided to have a day out with Fr. Agi Paul, CSC, who guided them for last three years. It was an exposure cum a day of relaxation as the



Women visited the mission station for the first time and interacted with the *Maria Shongo* of Gachirampara Parish. On 1st August in spite of the heavy rains the women were determined to go ahead, facing all the difficulties, and we proceeded to Gachirampara. The Parish Priest Fr. Prasanna warmly welcomed all of us. After refreshing ourselves with hot tea and snacks, we went around the campus. We visited the newly built church and prayed together. The Women appreciated the Fathers for the good work they are doing of taking care of the children from remote villages and refugee camps, and proclaiming the Word of God among the poor and needy. Then we had relaxation time as the Women were singing and dancing. A delicious meal was prepared by Fr. Prasanna and the parish members, we all enjoyed the day and returned home praising the Lord for all his blessing.

Bishop Visit



Bishop Lumen made a short visit to St. Paul Parish Kumarghat on 15th of August 2015. Bishop graced the Independence Day programme at Holy Cross School Kumarghat as the Chief Guest. He hosted the flag and gave message to the students. In his message he gave emphasis the need of knitting better India

for better future. After the programme he proceeded to Kanchanchera village for the Holy Mass. The villagers welcome Bishop and the solemnity of Assumption of Mary was celebrated with solemn Mass at Kanchancherra village. The villagers expressed their happiness at the presence of Bishop in their village. Common meal was served to everyone on the Feast Day.

Sr. Mary David, FS

St. Andre Parish Bodhjunnagar

Change of Guard

There has been a change of guard at St. Andre Parish, Bodhjunnagar since 19th July 2015. Fr. Jilson Tom C.S.C. who was in this mission for five years was given a befitting send-off by the parishioners during the farewell programs. The faithful who came for the farewell in large numbers were a sign of the volume of good deeds done by Fr. Jilson in the parish. On the same day, Fr. Binoy John C.S.C was welcomed and installed as the new Parish Priest by Fr. Hormis John C.S.C, the V.G. of the Diocese, during the Eucharistic celebration. Fr. K.J Abraham, the Provincial Superior was present along with many priests, sisters, faithful of the parish and other dignitaries. More than 800 faithful were present for the program from all sub-centers of the Parish. The sentiment of affection and love expressed by the Youth was something touching and remarkable. Mr. B. Debbarma

Marian Procession & Women's Day

A Marian procession was organized at the Parish Centre on 15th August, the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. 'Maria Sango' organized a one day Seminar for the women in the parish at Barokathal church on 16th August 2015. There were 130 women who participated in the Seminar. Sr. Punita, SJA, Secretary of the diocesan Women Commission, was the chief Resource Person. She spoke on the meaning and asked for an Action Plan from every sub-center. She also demonstrated the ways of mushroom cultivation in order to enable them to generate additional income. Fr. Binoy John, C.S.C, the Parish Priest took a session on 'family and the role women in the family.' The program came to an end with a sumptuous meal at 3pm.

Sr. Punitha, SJA

St. Alphonsa Parish, Khumulwng Parish Feast celebrated

The feast of St. Alphonsa began with Novena prayer in the parish. The Holy Eucharist was presided over by the Parish Priest and concelebrated by Frs. Thomas Thengumpally CSC, Cyprian SVD,



Jeevan SVD, Shaiju CSC, Ishwar CSC and Lawrence Darlong. The entrance procession, prayer of the faithful and offertory was unique in that all village sub-stations of the parish were involved. The homily was preached by Fr. Jeevan SVD. The Cultural program began with cake cutting followed by variety of tribal group dances representing different communities of the parish. Life sketch of St. Alphonsa was acted out in a skit by Belbari women. Parishioners from all *mothas* came in good number. Results of the monthly Bible Test was declared and the winners were awarded by the chief guest. Lunch was served for all the parishioners after the program. The parish feast was meaningful and successful uniting all communities of the parish.

Fr. Lawrence Darlong

St. Mary's Parish, Tuikarmaw

Sweet Adieu

Holy Cross School Tuikarmaw and St. Marys' Parish Tuikarmaw bid farewell to Fr. Sijo



Joseph, CSC on 17th and 19th of July 2015. In the journey of life we meet people with varied experiences and expectations. Sometimes such people make a greater

impact in the lives of many and disappear from that situation by leaving behind their legacy and footprints. Fr. Sijo was one such person. It was such a painful experience for the people of Tuikarmaw to bid farewell to their beloved Principal and Assistant Parish Priest. Yet, on the 17th July the School Community gathered and thanked Fr. Sijo for his untiring work in bringing up the standard of the school. The students exhibited their love through their dances and songs.

On 19th July it was the turn of the Parish to say goodbye. Sunday morning was a rainy day; yet an ocean of people gathered at the parish to bid farewell to Fr. Sijo. The Thanksgiving Mass, the farewell program, the speeches and dances, all expressed their love and appreciation. Fr. Sijo thanked everyone and appreciated their love and care in his life.

Village Feast at Hatipocha mondoli

The Catholic *mondoli* at Hatipocha celebrated its village feast on 9th August. Prior to the feast day three days of prayers were conducted followed by Holy Mass and various other competitions, and SCC training. On the 9th August the feast day began with Holy Mass presided by Fr. Jeevan SVD. During the Holy Mass 11 children were given the First Holy Communion. After Mass prizes were



distributed for the winners of the competitions. The feast day celebration ended with community meal.

Fr. Alfred, CSC

Christ the King Parish, Depacherra

Pastoral program at Kedernal Mondolie



On 9th August 2015, we were privileged to welcome Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC on his Pastoral visitation to Kedernal Mondolie. People from three mondolies i.e. Jorjoria, Nandurai and kedernal along with local Parish community gathered in the village chapel for the meaningful Eucharistic celebration. During the celebration Bishop administered the sacrament of Confirmation and first Holy Communion. In his homily, Bishop spoke about moving forward with faith and great need to continue the mission of Jesus he also invited the people to take an active participation in the life of the parish. This was followed by a felicitation program and community meal.

Mrs. Lakshmi Uchoi

Jubilee football tournament

Christ the King, Depacherra Parish which is in the silver years has organized Jubilee Football Tournament on 15th August 2015 at Holy Cross School grounds. The aim of the Tournament was to bring awareness among the youth the transformation brought about by Depacherra mission in this area. The



Tournament began with the opening ceremony and was inaugurated by our Parish Priest Fr. Prasad Rao. This knockout tournament has

seen the participation of 23 teams from far and near. The highlight of the tournament was, it has attracted over a thousand spectators who thronged to the field to witness this exiting sporting spectacle. The energy, goodwill and enthusiasm highlighted the value of this tournament. After tough battle it was Local Stars club from Nuthanbazar claimed the Jubilee Cup and Mongolsingh Para came as Runners. The winners and runners were awarded the cash prize. Tournament was concluded with songs and prayers.

Mr. Naresh Uchoi

JUST Team visit to IVDP, Krishnagiri

The 7 member Team of J U S T including the Director of JUST Fr. Jeevan Kennady, the Chief Coordinator of JUST Sr. Amali, 2 Project Coordinators and 3 JUST SHG Animators visited Integrated Village Development Project (IVDP), Krishnagiri from 13th to 18th July 2015. The Team reached IVDP on 13th July in the morning and was received and welcomed by the Founder/President of IVDP Magsaysay Kulandai Francis. During the visit the Team was guided on the various processes of SHG managements, maintenance of books and records, related to SHG managements and finance. The visit was a great help and learning for the



animators and coordinators of JUST.

JUST distributes Livestock

On 10th July 2015, Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura through the assistance of Caritas India distributed livestock to the Farmers' Clubs under Hezamara R.D. Block. The distribution began at 11:00am at Barakathal and the leaders of 6 farmers' clubs came for the distribution program. 4 farmers' clubs namely, Owabusa, Yarung, Uraua and Bagbari received 3 each piglets and 3 farmers clubs namely, Radhanagar, Ramchandra and Yaphang received 4 each goats as a means of livelihood support. The aim is to promote small scale farms in these villages by providing options for sustainable livelihood.



Vincent DebBurma

Diocese News Roundup

Holy Cross College Celebrates the Fourth Graduation Day



Holy Cross College celebrated the 4th Graduation Day, on 25th July 2015, at Rabindra Satabarshiki Bhavan, Agartala. The official function began with a prayer song followed by the welcome address by the Principal, Fr. Emmanuel Kallarackal, CSC. The welcome speech was followed by the lighting of the ceremonial lamp. The Chief Guest of the occasion was Shri Tathagatha Roy, Hon'ble Governor of Tripura. In his speech he invited the new graduates to serve the society with dedication and commitment and make a difference. He himself was proud to be a student of a Catholic institution in his younger days. Professor Anjan Kumar Ghosh, the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of Tripura University, in his speech congratulated the outgoing graduates and invited them to achieve excellence through their hard work. They should strive to be good citizens of the country and make Holy Cross College, their alma mater proud. Fr. K. J Abraham, CSC, Chairman of the Holy Cross Educational

Foundation presided over the function and gave the benediction. The vote of thanks was proposed by Dr. Pankaj Chakraborty, the academic coordinator. A total of seventy students of Holy Cross College, the class of 2015, which is the fourth batch, graduated from the college with their BA, B.Sc, and BBA degrees. (Courtesy Press Release)

Tripura Salesian Family rallies around 'Youth' at Bicentenary Finale

Curtains came down on the yearlong celebrations of Don Bosco's birth bicentenary with a two-day Youth Meet at Agartala from 15-16 August 2015. The program commenced with the screening of a 10-minute movie on the life and works of Don Bosco. Shri Daniel Jamatia Member of the Legislative Assembly, and a past pupil himself, who was the Chief Guest at the inaugural function called Don Bosco an unparalleled Educator of Youth and congratulated the Salesian Family on the occasion. He also inaugurated the Don Bosco Exhibition.

In typical Salesian fashion, the Youth occupied the centre stage throughout the event. The animation sessions taken by Sr. Celine D'Cunha, Mr. TarunKanti Debbarma and Fr. Paul Panachickal had the young people reflecting on the power they wielded and the challenges they faced in the present day world. In the Eucharistic celebration, Fr. Hormis John, the Vicar



General of the Diocese and the main celebrant, spoke of Holy Mother Mary assumed into heaven, as a model par excellence for youth.

The celebrations on 16th August began in front of the statue of Don Bosco at the tri-junction outside the campus paying homage to the saint. The high point of the day was the solemn Bicentenary Holy Eucharist presided over by Most Rev Lumen Monteiro CSC, and joined by other priest concelebrants. The congregation numbering over 1,500 consisted mostly of young people. For the Agartala unit of Salesian Cooperators, the day had an added significance. Eight new members made the promise during the solemn Eucharistic celebration.

After the Holy Eucharist, Bishop Monteiro released a 120-page Bicentenary Souvenir painstakingly prepared by a team headed by Sr. Celine D'Cunha FMA. The program also offered the young an opportunity to showcase their talents. In the cultural program held on both the days, groups of youth from various institutions danced with gay abandon. The near perfect feel that most dances had was proof that much effort and earnestness had gone into their preparation. Unprecedented camaraderie and collaboration among all component groups of the Salesian Family characterized the run up to the bicentenary celebrations.

Fr. Sunny, the Convener thanked everyone and said he hoped the conclusion of the celebrations was 'just the beginning of greater commitment and dedication to the cause of youth'. **J. Pulinathanath, sdb**

India News - Tidbits

One Decade, 14 Disasters, One Million lives: Report released on World Humanitarian Day

"As a humanitarian agency, Caritas has touched one million lives in the last one decade through a range of emergency responses," said the Executive Director Fr. Frederick D'Souza on the occasion of World Humanitarian Day August 19. "This wouldn't have been possible without a



dedicated team of brave and selfless aid workers' whose spirit we proudly salute today." he added. A report was presented to the gathering. "Within this period, Caritas has invested 5 billion Indian Rupees for relief and rehabilitation primarily in nine major sectors of health, livelihood, shelter, food, water, sanitation, agriculture, vocational training, education and cash for work" mentioned the report. It aimed to cover the ambit of floods, earthquake, cyclones, landslides, cloudburst and ethnic conflicts. **Amrit Sangma, Public Relations and Communications Officer, Delhi**

Thank you for making a very realistic analysis of the outcome of the recently published socio-economic-caste census conducted in India in your column in the LINK. This census reveals the real face of our motherland and the concerted efforts required from all quarters to combat poverty, marginalization and social exclusion consistently suffered by millions of men and women of our country. India has a long way to go in ensuring rights and justice to all her citizens and the Church which contributes to the Nation building through her various missionary enterprises needs to accelerate her efforts in creating platforms and conducive atmosphere for people to claim their legitimate rights. **Fr Jolly of Caritas India**

As usual on the dot. Thank you. **Terrie, Mumbai**

Thank you for LINK that I read last night from first to last word with great interest... Yes India realities... Pope Francis surely has an eye on the million poor people of India! **Conrad, Canada**
Thank you for the August Link. Very well written. **Sr. Mirabelle AC, Kolkata**

Thank you for your beautiful newsletter. May God bless you and your Diocese. **+Victor Lyngdoh, Nongstoin**
I just read THE LINK and as always I enjoyed it. **Peggy, USA**

You are 'on the dot' despite your far away sojourn, with your welcome Link. My kudos to your excellence! **Fr. Harry, CSC, Agartala**

Thank you, Lumen. Your note on India in the latest issue is very effective and very effectively arouses sorrow and concern. **Marco, Milano, Italia**

Dear Link, I wish to be anonymous, and kindly respect my anonymity. You reach me every month regularly, and your consistency and timekeeping is highly admired. I wish to acknowledge that the Pastor's Corner is inspiring ... always; and the Editorial is thought provoking ... every time. It is amazing to see the high-level result of two committed personalities, the Pastor & the Editor, putting their heads and hands together. **August 2015 Issue:** Though the **Independent India's Realities** are really the Realities, the Pastor could have been more on the positive side to inspire the Catholic-citizens to have a positive look at our developing-nation to enhance the good-side of it. The **Sound of our Music** also was not sound. Our tribal people need both appreciation and correction. In fact, more +ve and less ve. We need to be prophetic in our approach ... meaning, highlighting the defects & proposing remedies. Keep up your Good work. **Link-Reader**

Our Distinguished Visitors

Fr. Roy Joseph, SVD, from Arunachal Pradesh

Bro. Sesuraj, CSC, Vicariate Superior from Bengaluru

Fr. Jimmy, CSC, Vice-Provincial South India

Fr. S. Martin, CSC, Councilor South India

Fr. Arul Raj Gali CSC, Holy Cross Family Ministries from Bengaluru

Fr. Alexander, CSC, Councilor Vicariate of Tamilnadu

CSC Frs. Joby, Royal, Vino, Sydney, from Bengaluru

Bros. Chacko and Stephen from Karnataka

Bishop's Program for September 2015

- 01: Clergy Meet, Agartala
Clergy Recollection, Agartala
- 02-04: Meetings with Engineer
- 05-06: New Jairampara Chapel Blessing, Gandacherra Parish
- 07-10: NERPC at Social Forum, Guwahati
- 11-12: NE Bishops Council, Shillong
- 12-13: NERCC at Social Forum, Guwahati
- 20: Mandwi Parish, Pastoral Visit
- 22-26: Standing Committee Meeting, Bengaluru
Inauguration of Spiritual Renewal Centre, Goa
- 28-29: DDC Valedictory, SKS Kolkata