

## Pastor's Message



### Living for others is the rule of nature ... And therein lies the secret of living!

In 1892 at Stanford University, an 18-year-old student was struggling to pay his fees. He was an orphan, and not knowing where to turn for money, he came up with a bright idea. He and a friend decided to host a musical concert on campus to raise money for their education. They reached out to the great pianist Ignacy J. Paderewski. His manager demanded a guaranteed fee of \$2000 for the piano recital. A deal was struck and the boys began to work to make the concert a success.

The big day arrived. But unfortunately, they had not managed to sell enough tickets. The total collection was only \$1600. Disappointed, they went to Paderewski and explained their plight. They gave him the entire \$1600, plus a cheque for the balance \$400. They promised to honour the cheque at the soonest possible. "No," said Paderewski. "This is not acceptable." He tore up the cheque, returned the \$1600 and told the two boys: "Here's the \$1600. Please deduct whatever expenses you have incurred. Keep the money you need for your fees. And just give me whatever is left". The boys were surprised, and thanked him profusely. It was a small act of kindness. But it clearly marked out Paderewski as a great human being.

Why should he help two people he did not even know? We all come across situations like these in our lives. And most of us only think "If I help them, what would happen to me?" The truly great people think, "If I don't help them, what will happen to them?" They don't do it expecting something in return. They do it because they feel it's the right thing to do.

Paderewski later went on to become the Prime Minister of Poland. He was a great leader, but unfortunately when the World War began, Poland was ravaged. There were more than 1.5 million people starving in his country, and no money to feed them. Paderewski did not know where to turn for help. He reached out to the US Food and Relief Administration for help. He heard there was a man called Herbert Hoover — who later went on to become the US President. Hoover agreed to help and quickly shipped tons of food grains to feed the starving Polish people. A calamity was averted.

Paderewski was relieved. He decided to go across to meet Hoover and personally thank him. When Paderewski began to thank Hoover for his noble gesture, Hoover quickly interjected and said, "You shouldn't be thanking me Mr. Prime Minister. You may not remember this, but several years ago, you helped two young students go through college. I was one of them."

The world is a wonderful place. What goes around comes around. Please help others to the best of your ability. In the long run you may be helping yourself. God never forgets anyone who sows a good seed in other people, never.

Nothing in nature lives for itself. Rivers don't drink their own water. Trees don't eat their own fruit. The sun doesn't give heat for itself. Flowers don't spread fragrance for themselves. Living for others is the rule of nature. And therein lies the secret of living.

+ Lumen, CSC

## EDITORIAL

### Language Matters



For many decades now, the question of language has remained one of the most talked about and 'fought for' issues in this tiny state of Tripura. Language-connected issues are too complex and too numerous to even gloss over in the little space of an editorial. Nevertheless, one must try because time and again, one comes across highly ill-informed and irresponsible comments from people one would think know better.

One such comment made by a prominent Tpirasa person was that although Christian missionaries have done a lot 'for our people in the field of education, it has not done anything for the promotion of our language'. Evidently, the person has got it so wrong that one is tempted to doubt if there are other motives behind such pronouncements.

The language in question is Kokborok. Its chequered history is marked by decades of neglect and indifference, not only, as one might suspect, by speakers of other tongues, but also by its own speakers and proponents. Even the citadels of the royal palace proved vulnerable to it when it made Bengali, the official language of the Palace. The community passed through a phase where speakers of Kokborok felt ashamed to be identified as such. 'Ami Kokborok janena' (I don't know Kokborok) uttered by village born and bred Debbarmas marked the depths to which self-esteem and pride in one's culture had fallen. All that is changed now, of course. Did the missionaries and the Church have no role at all in this amazing turn around? The Holy Bible in Kokborok translated painstakingly by committed Christians of the Baptist Church remains the biggest single published volume in the language to this day. The Catholic Church included Kokborok also as one of its languages for liturgy. It brought out liturgical texts and other faith building publications in Kokborok. It brought out Kokborok text books for schools years before others began to speak about the need for such a thing. Schools and hostels run by Christian missionaries instilled in their wards values such as self-esteem, dignity, love of one's culture and language among other things. They brought out publications in Kokborok even when it had no readership. Although efforts are made to paint a different picture, the truth is that the young people who passed out of Christian missionary institutions became heralds and ardent promoters of their culture and language. Christian NGOs engaged in creating awareness among the people about the need to feel proud about one's culture and language. Right now, even as this is being written there are 30 missionaries, both men and women, gathered in Agartala with the sole objective of learning the Kokborok language. If they have left aside all responsibilities and signed up for a 15 day course, it is perhaps an indication of the importance they attach to learning the local language. It doesn't seem right at all to say that the Church and missionaries have 'not done anything for the promotion of our language.'

J. Pulinthanath, SDB

## Karbook Parish

## Installation of new Parish Priest



The installation of a new Parish Priest is to remind both priest and faithful of their responsibilities in building the kingdom of God by discharging the duties to promote the mission of Christ in this world. On May 5, a new Parish Priest has been formally installed at Our Lady of Good Health Parish, Karbook, by His Lordship Most Rev. Dr. Lumen Monteiro CSC, D.D. The ceremony took place during the Holy Eucharist and was attended by many faithful who were present to welcome Rev. Fr. Antony Balan as he took over the reins of the Parish. Fr. Allwin who served as the first PP for 3 years was also given a fond farewell. There were speeches welcoming the new PP and also thanking speeches for the former Parish Priest. Rev. Fr. Antony Balan said that he was happy to be the Parish Priest and promised to do his best. The people expressed their gratitude to the outgoing Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Alwin and warmly welcomed the new Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Antony Balan.

*Bro. Jojappa*

## Moharpara Parish

## Blessing of Divine Mercy Chapel at Twicholong



Divine Mercy motha at Twicholong was blessed with a new chapel on the 12th of May 2024. It was a long awaited dream of the people to have their own decent chapel and through their hard work and dedication their dream has become a reality. The event commenced with a grand floral welcome to our Lordship Most Rev. Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC DD with a procession to the church

premises. Fr. Arbok Lyngdoh CSC gave the introduction and welcomed everyone for the event. After the formalities were done the new Chapel was inaugurated by Fr. Hormis John CSC along with the local Church elders, followed by solemn blessing by our dear Bishop Lumen. Soon after the blessing the people gathered for the Holy Eucharist which was presided by the Bishop along with three concelebrants, Frs. Hormis, Roby and Arbok. In his homily Bishop Lumen appreciated the faithful for their faith, encouraged them to be regular to church, and exhorted them to be united and faithful to God. After the Holy Mass a short felicitation program was held which concluded with a fellowship meal for everyone who came from far and wide.

*Fr. Arbok, CSC*

## Gachirampara Parish

## Retreat at St. Francis of Assisi Parish



The Couples Retreat was held on 27th and 28th of April at the Parish Centre with the initiative of Holy Cross Family Ministry. Fr. Leenus VC, Parish Priest of Mariamnagar, was the main preacher. The Retreat began on 27th with praise and worship. Fr. Thomas John CSC, the Director of ASHA, gave the introductory talk. The Talks were based on the family life.

The preachers insisted to have Rosary prayer and family prayer. There was an active participation during the program. The melodious singing of Sr. Sona, CMC, inspired many. Evening there was Eucharistic procession in the campus. The participants stayed in the hostel premise overnight. The next day there was healing session; many including protestant brethren joined the service.

The Retreat ended with the Holy Mass and individual blessings. At the end of the Retreat, Fr. Felix Pinto OFM Cap felicitated the Retreat Preacher. Fr. Arun Fernandes OFM Cap delivered the vote of thanks.

He also thanked Fr. Thomas John CSC who will be going to Papua New Guinea for the new mission of the Holy Cross, Fr. Walter D'Souza who is going for studies for his dedicated pastoral ministry in the parish and Sr. Emily OLG who is transferred to Indore for her valuable services. All the three were felicitated.

*Fr. Arun, OFM Cap*

## Kumarghat Parish

## Women's Day celebrations



On 5th May, Women's & Mother's Day was celebrated in our parish. The theme was "WORD OF GOD & MOTHER". There were 125 Women who participated. The celebration began with the Holy Rosary followed by the Holy Eucharist. The holy Mass was presided by Fr. Lancy (Parish Priest) and Fr. J Sahaya Lourdu Raj (Assistant). The entrance dance was by Fatima girl's Hostel. Liturgy was conducted by the women of different villages. After the Holy Mass refreshments were served. Special sessions were conducted for the women. Mrs. Sefali was the MC of the program. The following were the Resources Persons--Mrs. Julia D'Silva, Sr. Vero MC, and Fr. Lancy CSC. The topics covered were: Role of the mother in the family; Family prayer; Rosary in the family; Bible reading every day in the family; teaching the children good values, etc. Mrs. Julia Darlong spoke on the challenges faced by families in the villages and how to face them. She shared her own family struggles. Sr. Vero Anthony spoke about health and cleanliness. Fr. Lancy said that mothers should sow spiritual seeds in the mind of the child and encourage children to pray for vocations to priesthood and religious life. The President of the Parish women commission Mrs. Biaki Darlong, thanked the Resource Persons and all the participants for their active participation. The celebration ended with the fellowship meal.

*Sr. Bertila FS*

## Depacherra Parish

## Vacation Bible School



Vacation Bible School (VBS) was conducted at Christ the King Parish, Depacherra. The theme "Celebrate Jesus," saw the participation of 157 Catholic children over three days. Led by

Fr. Amal Raj, Fr. Lawrence, and Fr. Derrick, the program included adoration, group activities, and a devotional movie on the first day. Day two featured morning prayers, the Holy Eucharistic celebration, educational sessions, group activities, and a Holy Rosary procession. Day three concluded with a rosary, Pentecost Mass, prize distribution, and a community meal. The VBS fostered spiritual growth, community bonding, and joyful participation among the children.

*Br. Bala Showry*

#### Baijalbari Parish



In 2010 when Fr. Paul Panachikkal started the Baijalbari centre, one of the villages were Badomaidan. Times were controversial and allegiances were divided. When Fr. Paul landed there, he witnessed such undercurrents and disturbing ground realities. The Lord had his plans for Badomaidan and that design gradually unfolded. The School which had closed by itself due to lack of students and staff was started by Fr. Paul under the name of Don Bosco School. He constructed a building to accommodate the newly established school which was managed from Baijalbari and the hostel for boys and girls were under the supervision of the Badomaidan Mothers' Association. He ran it till the arrival of the SKD Sisters and then the management was handed over to them. After their arrival many developmental projects have been started.

Seeing that the church which was built many decades ago was crumbling, Fr. Paul began major repair works and asked the people of Badomaidan to storm heaven and the Lord would come to their rescue. And indeed, after 13 years the Lord inspired Fr. Paul to commence the rebuilding work. The Lord blessed the people with many generous benefactors--Badomaidan faithful, Mothers' Association of Chalakudy Kerala, Baijalbari Parish, and some relatives of Fr. Paul were the outstanding contributors for the project. The work which commenced with absolute trust in the Lord was commendably completed on the 18th May 2024.

On the 19th of May, in the presence of a large crowd, Fr. Paul welcomed the gathering and thanked the Almighty for the new

church constructed on the edifice of the old church. He invited Fr. Isaac to cut the ribbon. Bishop Lumen Monteiro blessed the newly constructed church, the new Altar and the Tabernacle symbolizing the eternal presence of Jesus with His people. In his speech he thanked all persons involved in the construction work. During the Holy Eucharist, Confirmation was administered to 35 persons and first Holy Communion to 5 children. After Holy Mass, Fr. Paul expressed his gratitude to the God, Mother Mary, Bishop Lumen, the Priests, sisters, and brothers and in a very special manner the benefactors from Kerala, Badomaidan people who worked and contributed, the relatives of Fr. Paul and all persons involved in the project. The masons, painters, artists, electricians and decorators were not forgotten. The whole program ended with a delicious meal for all.

*Scribe from the Baijalbari Parish*

#### Bodhjungnagar Parish

#### Bible Seminar



In the Year of the Word of God in our Diocese, a Bible Seminar was organized exclusively for the Youth of our Parish on 25<sup>th</sup> May at the Centre.

The purpose of the Seminar was to deepen their knowledge of the Bible and to make them know the power of the Word of God.

As desired, the Seminar was held under the theme: Be rooted in the Living Word (cf.: Col. 2:6-7).

Rev. Fr. Amalraj, of the Diocese of Agartala, was the Resource Person. Quoting references from the New and the Old Testaments, Fr. Amalraj biblically catechized the 65 plus youth, who participated in the One-Day Seminar.

The presence of the Parish Fathers and the Sisters, added the needed seriousness to the Day's program. Now, the Seminar is over, but our prayer for them continues: That the Word of God may become a lamp for their feet, a light to their path and strength to their life.

*Fr. Mariaraj, CSC  
Parish Priest*

*Plant Trees.... Save the World...*

**GREEN SUNDAY**

**16<sup>th</sup> June, 2024**



## 28<sup>th</sup> Episcopal Ordination Anniversary of Our Beloved Bishop & Birth of Our Diocese



On 23rd May, we had a grace filled and joyful celebration of the 28th Anniversary of the Episcopal Ordination of our beloved Bishop Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC, DD, and the anniversary of the establishment of the Diocese at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral Church in Agartala. The actual date is 26th of May. The celebration began with the holy Eucharist, presided over by Bishop Lumen Monteiro, along with 29 priests and Religious serving in the Diocese. Sisters, Brothers, Parishioners of local and the neighboring Parishes also participated. In the introduction Fr. Lawrence Darlong, Chancellor of the Diocese, welcomed the gathering and reminded the people of the importance of the day. Bishop Lumen broke the Word of God and shared his experience of all these past years. After the holy Eucharist, Fr KJ Abraham CSC, the newly elected Provincial of the Holy Cross Fathers NE Province, felicitated our Bishop. In his speech he appreciated the selfless dedication in bringing up the Diocese to this day. Fathers, Sisters and lay faithful of the diocese also felicitated our Bishop. At the end of the event the Bishop and a few others planted fruit saplings in the cathedral campus. Bishop expressed his gratitude to all for their physical and prayerful support for the growth of the Diocese. With a grand agape for all the program came to an end.

*Fr. Bosco Lathees*

## Inter-religious meet at Ramakrishna mission, Agartala



On the occasion of Buddha Purnima an inter-religious Meet was organized at Ramkrishna mission, Gangail, Gandhi Ghat, Agartala, on the 26th of May, by (IARF) Inter-national Association for Religious Freedom. Different religious representatives from Agartala took part in this meeting. The Catholic Church was represented by Fr. Cyprian Pinto SVD from Oisho Bani and two M.C Sisters from Nirmal Hriday, Agartala. About 50 invited guests from different religious

communities too took part in the meeting. Lord Bhudda's contributions for right living through middle path in order to attain "Moksha or Nirvana" was highlighted by the speakers. I from our part said that, the only path to salvation is through "love", loving one another as Jesus has loved us, giving oneself totally in the service of the other.

*Fr. Cyprian Pinto, SVD*

## Fr. Robin Sekhar Das SFX, Mariamnagar's 1<sup>st</sup> Catholic Priest



The priestly Ordination Anniversary of Fr. Robin Sekhar Das SFX was held on 6th May at Shantir Rani Catholic Church, Mariamnagar.

Fr. Sekhar was ordained during the time of COVID-19 by Bishop Lumen Monteiro.

At the time only his parents could attend the ceremony because of Covid-19 restrictions.

Fr. Robin Sekhar Das SFX belongs to Kolkata Province of SFX, commonly known as Pilar Fathers. He is the first priest from the Bengali community of Tripura.

Presently he is working in Miao Diocese, Arunachal Pradesh. The anniversary Mass was presided by our Bishop Lumen along with a number of Priests from this Diocese and Fr. Eric Mascharenhas SFX.

Many religious brothers, sisters, and parishioners of Mariamnagar, Dupcherra, Dolacherra, Preethilotha, along with relatives and family members attended.

The theme chosen by Fr. Sekhar for his ordination and anniversary Mass were the same, "The Almighty has done great works for me" (Lk 1:49).

Before the Mass, Fr. Eric SFX, gave a brief overview of Fr. Sekhar and a small video presentation entitled "Faithful years in the Lord Vineyard".

After the Holy Eucharist there was a short felicitation ceremony.

Sr. Isabella BS, who knew the grandparents and parents of Fr. Sekhar spoke a few words on the occasion. The program ended with the vote of thanks by Fr. Sekhar and a thanksgiving hymn, followed by a fellowship meal.

*Bro. Balaswamy T.*

## INTER-YOUTH GATHERING FOR PEACE



On 8<sup>th</sup> of May, an 'Inter-youth gathering for peace at district level' was organized by JUST in collaboration with Depacherra Parish at Depacherra. The Resource Persons were Mr. Lalenzawna Rante (Research Consultant, JUST) and Mr. Sujoy Uchoi (Former Youth President, Depacherra Parish). The gathering aimed to promote peace and understanding among young leaders. Guided by experienced mentors, the YCS youth engaged in dynamic discussions, exploring the importance of peace, conflict resolution and the pathway of attaining inner peace. The interactive session fostered confidence building and mutual respect, emphasizing the importance of working together to overcome challenges and build a harmonious society. As the event concluded, participants departed with a shared commitment to continue their efforts in creating a brighter future for their communities.

*Mr. Robert Lushai*

## NETWORK MEETING FOR NGOS, FBOS, CSOS AND LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE



A networking meeting was organized on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at JUST Hall, Damdamia. The meeting began by reviewing the previous session which was held in the month of November 2023 by Mr. Gabriel Darlong, State Consultant of Peace Project. Then the meeting was facilitated by Fr. Lathees S (Director, JUST). The discussion-oriented meeting saw active participation from ASHA Holy Cross Director, Human Rights activists, Tripura Student Forum (TSF) members, Oisho Bani, and JUST staff. Participants engaged in a rigorous discussion, sharing ideas and the importance of networking with various NGOs in Tripura. The facilitator gave time for open discussion on the key topics included human rights education, sports to combat youth drug use, women empowerment, skill-building, startup culture, and awareness of government schemes. Environmental concerns were highlighted, particularly the celebration of the World Environment Day with tree plantation and maintaining proper documentation. The meeting concluded with the participant's unanimous decision to focus on tree plantation on World Environment Day and Drug Awareness initiatives.

*Mr. Robert Lushai*



LINK Congratulate  
Sr. Angela Narzary SCC, the newly appointed Provincial Superior of the Holy Cross Sisters, Province of Guwahati.

## Our Distinguished Guests

- Fr. E.P. Mathew SJ, Provincial from Kerala
- Fr. Joe Pereira from Bombay Diocese
- Fr. Vilas Pegado, OFM Cap. from Pune
- Sr. Shaila Pegado DC, from Aurangabad
- Sr. Rita Rebello CCV, from Mumbai
- Mrs. Mary Kensa & Abai Suraj from Tamil Nadu
- Fr. Melwyn D'Cunha SJ, Pro VC of St. Aloysius deemed University, Mangalore

## Bishop's Program for June 2024

- 01-12 : Meetings with Donor Partners, Rome & Germany
- 15 -16 : Parish Sabha, Moharpara Parish
- 16 : Green Sunday @ Moharpara
- 17 : ADPC Meet @ St. Joseph Hall, Cathedral Campus
- 22 - 23 : Confirmation Program @ Ganganagar
- 27 - 29 : NECHA Meet, Guwahati
- 30 : Parish Feast, Kumarghat