

## Editorial



### Global Matters, Local Matters

The Conclave that gave us Pope Leo XIV last month generated an unprecedented level of interest not just in the Catholic Church but the world over. The amazing things that communication technology can now do alone, however, cannot account for such interest. More likely, it is because the world now better understands that the impact a Pope has on the entire world far exceeds his role as the spiritual leader of over 1.4 billion Catholics in the world.

Each time the white smoke billows out from that famous chimney, the world, even its remotest corner, waits with bated breath to hear the name that follows the tidings 'Habemus Papam'. One might ask, how does it matter so much to us, here in Tripura, who becomes the Pope? On deeper thought we realize, it does matter. While the papacy is headquartered in Vatican City, its influence stretches into every corner of the world, from the rainforests of South America to the mountains of Southeast Asia.

From the perspective of the Universal Church, the diocese of Agartala is a small but vibrant Catholic community in one of the distant and ethnically diverse States in north-eastern India. Though geographically distant from the Vatican, as a diocese we are deeply connected to the global Church, and the Pope's vision can shape our path in important ways.

Like Francis before him, Pope Leo XIV too has already spoken about the need to focus on 'peripheries'. It augurs well for minority communities and dioceses like Agartala where Catholics are a tiny minority in a predominantly multi-ethnic-religious region. It further shows that the Church is a mother to all; it recognizes the faith and cultural contributions of every tribe, culture and people.

It is fascinating how the theological vision and pastoral priorities of the Pope shape the tone and direction of the Church. The values he emphasizes will filter down through bishops and local clergy, energizing parishes in far-flung areas that might at times feel forgotten. His homilies, encyclicals, and world travels can bring the voices of the marginalized to the forefront, providing recognition and dignity to small communities who share in the global Catholic faith.

In the secular field too, the papacy continues to exert significant influence on global affairs, shaping discussions on peace, climate action, interfaith relations, human dignity, etc. One cannot but wonder how a two-thousand-year-old institution called Papacy continues to bring about significant changes simultaneously on a global level and at the village level!

Agartala Diocese has stepped into its 30th year of existence. As part of the Universal Church every parish in the Diocese, under the leadership of our dear Bishop, feels close to Leo XIV, the newly elected Vicar of Christ on earth.

J. Pulinthanath, SDB

## Pastor's Corner

### OUR NEW POPE LEO XIV

Here are excerpts from Dr. Fr. Francis Kodiyan MCBS from his insightful Editorial entitled *Pope Leo XIV and the Church in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*. He says,



Leo P.P. XIV

by adopting the name Leo XIV, the new Pope appears poised to revisit that bridge, not as a relic but as a structure still vital for navigating today's global inequities. Our modern world is not post-industrial so much as hyper-industrial - driven by automation, fractured by economic disparity, and endangered by ecological collapse. The digital revolution, like its steam-powered predecessor, has created staggering wealth -and equally staggering alienation. The plight of the gig worker, the migrant laborer, and the displaced family echoes the workers' struggles Leo XIII tried to address.

Pope Leo XIV's name thus places him squarely in continuity with a Church that takes the material conditions of humanity seriously. Equally compelling is the legacy he inherits from his immediate predecessor, Pope Francis. If Leo XIII brought the Church to the factory floor, Francis brought it to the peripheries - spiritual, ecological, and geographic. Leo XIII addressed the dignity of workers in the factory, Leo XIV must defend the dignity of persons in the digital sphere. Where Pope Francis urged the world to listen to "the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor," Leo XIV must now consider the cry of the human soul in a time when algorithms risk replacing empathy, and data replaces dialogue.

With his choice of the name Leo, he signals a Church ready to engage with the moral challenges of digital life - courageously, intelligently, and pastorally. We can expect from this papacy a deepening of Catholic teaching on the ethical use of artificial intelligence. A Church that speaks clearly about "algorithmic conscience" -the imperative that technology just never eclipses the moral agency of the human person; a Church that reminds the world that data is not destiny, and that dignity is not digitized. If Leo XIII gave us the Church that defended the worker in the age of industry, and if Francis gave us a Church that embraced the poor and the planet, then Leo XIV may give us a Church that speaks to the digital conscience of our age - forming not only coders and policymakers, but disciples capable of ethical discernment in an automated world. (Courtesy: SMART COMPANION INDIA, May 2025)

+ Lumen, CSC



## Gandatwisa Parish

### Vacation Bible School (VBS)



The Vacation Bible School (VBS) was held at St. Arnold Parish, Gandatwisa from 6th to 8th May 2025, drawing a total of 65 enthusiastic children from the parish. The three-day program began with the celebration of the Holy Mass and the solemn veneration of the Bible, setting a sacred and joyful tone for the days ahead. On the first day, Fr. Amalraj led an inspiring session on King David, highlighting key life lessons such as trust in God, repentance, and courage. This was followed by a session by Fr. Sebin, who spoke engagingly about the importance of the Bible in the lives of children. On the following days, the catechists continued the formation with sessions tailored to the children's level of understanding and spiritual growth.

The program also included a variety of fun and faith-filled activities such as Bible skits, Gospel singing competitions, and Bible quizzes, which helped the children internalize the Word of God in a joyful way. The Brothers added energy and excitement by teaching action songs that helped the children express their faith through music and movement. Overall, the VBS was a fruitful and spiritually enriching experience that helped deepen the faith of the young participants while building a stronger parish community.

News Bureau- St. Arnold Parish –  
Gandatwisa

## Bodhjungnagar Parish

### Village Chapel Blessing



R. K. Para, a Sub-Center of the Parish, has now been blessed with a New Chapel, which will be utilized by the Faithful for their Sunday Services and other spiritual activities.

The Chapel work was initiated by the then Parish Priest, Rev Fr. Packia Jayaseelan csc in January 2024. Through the generosity of the Faithful, both of the local Mondoli and of the Parish, the Chapel had its completion in April 2025. Of course, the Mondoli did have a temporary chapel for their weekly gathering for the last five or so. On 6th May 2025 {Tuesday}, Our Bishop, Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro solemnly blessed the Chapel and officiated the First Ever Eucharistic Celebration, in the newly built and blessed Chapel. It was his maiden trip to the village as well. Over 125 faithful, comprising Fathers, Sisters, Parishioners and the Mondoli people, witnessed and participated in the spiritual-celebration. We offer our gratitude to the Almighty God, to our Bishop, to the Fathers and Sisters, to the faithful of the Parish, and particularly to the local mondoli for their generosity and goodness towards God's work. St. John the Baptist is the Patron of the mondoli, as the Chapel has been dedicated to him. The felicitation program and the common meal {held after the Mass} enhanced our sense of belonging to each other and the strengthened the spirit of collaboration. What next? The Chapel is there to accommodate the faithful as and when they gather; but it is the faithful who, in such an atmosphere, will have to make every effort to keep growing in their faith. Alleluia.

### Biannual Youth gathering



The Youth Group of St. Andre Parish, organized their biannual gathering in Tamakari on 11th May 2025. As planned, the Day began with the Holy Eucharist followed by the Meeting. Evaluation of the earlier activities, planning for the upcoming months, the Annual gathering, and Membership related issues were dealt with. Around 50 Youths participated in the Meeting. What next? The Youth will move forward in faith and practice.

### Mothers' Day

On the Second Sunday of May, our Parish celebrated Mother's Day honoring the mothers in different mothas. Special prayers were offered for the mothers during the Sunday service. At the Parish Center, after

after the Sunday Mass, the mothers were felicitated in an exclusive manner, with words of praise, and gestures of gratitude. It was in deed a Day to feel that we are blessed with the gift and presence of our mothers at home. What next? Let all the children be reminded of the 4th Commandment of the Lord, and keep honoring the mothers at home.

The Parish Chronicler

## Ambassa Parish

### Golden Jubilee in Kachuchara Village



St. Arnold Catholic Chapel in Kachuchara joyfully celebrated 50 years of its existence on May 5, 2025. The chapel, one of the substations of Holy Spirit Parish, Ambassa, has been a beacon of faith for the local community since its founding in 1974. Preparations for the Golden Jubilee began a year in advance. Although Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, had limited availability due to other commitments, he confirmed his presence for May 5, bringing great joy to all. Leading up to the day, all eyes were on the sky, anxious about the weather—but the day turned out to be perfect, and everything went according to plan. Over 450 people gathered to commemorate the occasion. The chapel was freshly painted, a new toilet block and a stage for the felicitation program were constructed. Fr. Hormis John, CSC, one of the first Holy Cross missionaries to the Kachuchara community, unveiled a commemorative plaque inscribed with the following: "This plaque is to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of St. Arnold Kachuchara Village Chapel, 1974 to 2024, blessed by Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, and unveiled by Fr. Hormis John, CSC, and Fr. Ivan D'Silva, SVD, on May 5, 2025." The plaque was blessed by the Bishop who also released a dove as a symbol of celebration and peace. The Holy Mass was presided over by Bishop Lumen and concelebrated by seven priests, accompanied by a melodious choir. A well-organized felicitation program followed, during which former chapel leaders were honored for their unwavering service to the Church. Fr. Hormis John, reflecting on the past, shared: "I thank God for the wonders He has done. I remember the early days when I had to walk through this area—sometimes even face wild elephants. I once had to climb a tree to save myself. Times have changed, and the Gospel has truly taken root in this part of Tripura." The celebration concluded with colorful cultural dances and a sumptuous meal for all attendees, bringing to a close a day filled with gratitude, unity, and spiritual joy.

Fr. Ivan D'Silva, SVD



**Gachirampara Parish****Confirmation & 1<sup>st</sup> Holy Communion**

On 18th May 2025, St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Gachirampara, witnessed a spiritually enriching celebration as 50 candidates received the Sacrament of Confirmation and 10 children received their First Holy Communion. The solemn Eucharistic celebration was presided over by His Lordship, Rev. Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, Bishop of Agartala who administered the sacraments with deep pastoral care and joy.

The ceremony began with a vibrant entrance procession, accompanied by devotional hymns, setting a reverent tone for the occasion. In his homily, Bishop Lumen Monteiro emphasized the importance of faith, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the responsibility of living as true witnesses of Christ in today's world. He encouraged the newly confirmed to be active members of the Church and to serve the community with love and humility.

The children receiving their First Holy Communion approached the altar with innocence and devotion, marking an important milestone in their spiritual journey. The entire parish community participated prayerfully in the liturgy, offering their support and blessings.

The celebration concluded with words of gratitude from the parish priest Rev. Fr. Arun Fernandes, OFM Cap and a vote of thanks to Bishop Monteiro. Capuchin Fathers Fr. Felix Pinto, Fr. George Godwin M., Fr. Anil Sunil D'souza, Fr. Regis Lalbiaklhua concelebrated the Eucharist. It was a memorable day of grace, unity, and spiritual renewal for the faithful of Gachirampara.

Fr. Arun Fernandes, OFM Cap





## 15th Diocesan Pastoral Meet (ADPC)



The 15th ADPC meeting was successfully held on 12th May at St. Joseph's Hall, Cathedral campus, chaired by Most Rev. Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, DD. A total of 81 members (32 Clergy/Religious and 49 Laity) participated. The meeting began with an opening prayer by Mr. Vinod Debbarma and Mr. Henry Debbarma, followed by a welcome to special invitee, Provincial Fr. K.J. Abraham, CSC, and all members.

Mr. Rajulal Debbarma presented the minutes of the previous meeting. Fr. Ivan D'Silva, SVD, delivered an input session on "Key themes from CCBI to the Church in India," followed by group workshops and reports.

Two books were released: A Mosaic of Memories (edited by Fr. P.T. Mathew, SJ) by Fr. K.J. Abraham, and Poito Rwnghmung (Aitorma Publications) by Fr. Lancy D'Souza, CSC. The meeting concluded at 2:00 PM with a vote of thanks from Mrs. Rita Uchoi and a community lunch.

– Mr. Rajulal Debbarma  
Secretary, ADPC

## Women Commission Training of Trainers Leadership Program



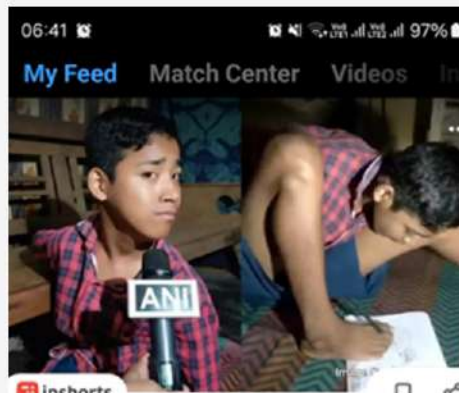
The Women Commission of North East India held a two-day Training of Trainers (TOT) on leadership and empowerment, followed by a one-day conference from May 9–11, 2025, with participation from all 15 dioceses.

Sr. Shrija SND led sessions on women's leadership, feminine and masculine energy, prayer, and the role of Mary in salvation history, encouraging reflection and group

discussion. The event was inaugurated by Bishop Denis, Chairperson of the NE Women's Commission, under the theme "Pilgrims of Hope." Other speakers included Fr. Francis, Ms. Pallavi, and regional women leaders. Cultural performances showcased the region's diversity. Sr. Sunanda, Regional Coordinator, honored diocesan women coordinators for their work. Agartala Diocese received the second prize for timely reporting and training effectiveness. The Reang cultural and fashion exhibition from Agartala raised awareness on key social issues including violence against women, environmental care, and gender equality.

Frs. Amal Raj, Raj Kapoor, Anil, and several Sisters and Priests graced the event.

– Sr. Veronica FS



### Tripura student who uses foot to write clears Class 10 board exam

Differently-abled student Romeo Hrangkhaw has successfully cleared secondary (matriculation) examination conducted by Tripura Board of Secondary Education (TBSE). Romeo, who was born with 80% locomotor disability and can't walk or use his hands, wrote all his exams using his foot. "He often stumbles while walking, yet he never misses...class and holds...highest attendance," Romeo's father said.

few hours ago | Saurav Joshi | ANI News

## YCS/YSM: Walking Together & Leading Together



Agartala, May 2, 2025: The Youth Christian Students/Young Students Movement (YCS-YSM) of Agartala Diocese hosted its Diocesan Animation and Election program on May 1, 2025, at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, Agartala. Organized by the Agartala Diocesan Youth Commission, the event brought together 71 student leaders and animators from across the diocese for a day of formation and democratic engagement under the theme "Walking

together, Leading together".

The day commenced with a session on "Media Literacy", led by Fr. Ivan D'Silva, S.V.D. His presentation equipped the young attendees with essential skills to navigate the digital landscape effectively and responsibly. Following the session, the highlight of the event—the election of the new Diocesan Team—took place. This democratic process gave all the youth in attendance the opportunity to actively shape the future of their organization. The DEXCO members of the Youth Commission played a pivotal role in the day's program, offering invaluable guidance, support, and expertise that ensured a smooth and successful animation and election process. The event concluded with a fellowship lunch. The Diocesan Animation and the election of the Diocesan Team marked a significant milestone in the journey of YCS-YSM in the Diocese.

Fr. Derrick Augustin,  
Diocesan Chaplain, YCS-YSM, Agartala  
Diocese

## Residents escape as flames take hold of a Boys' Boarding House in Ambassa



On May 8, 2025, around 2:00 AM, loud screams alerted me to a fire in the St. Arnold Hostel near the presbytery. The fire had already engulfed the top part of the building. Thankfully, all 30 boarding children (KG–Class II), along with two hostel wardens, two female teachers, and two cooks, had evacuated safely.

I immediately alerted the police and fire services, and contacted parishioners for help. Firefighters arrived within 15 minutes and extinguished the fire by 4:00 AM. The electrical department later indicated that a short circuit likely caused the fire.

The hostel, a former priest's residence with 15 small rooms and a tin roof, is completely destroyed. The children's books, beds, and personal belongings were reduced to ashes. Fortunately, no injuries were reported.

Parents, mostly poor farmers from distant villages, rushed to check on their children. We assured them that the school will provide books and uniforms free of charge. A formal letter has been sent to the local administration requesting an investigation.

Fr. Ivan DSilva, SVD



### Need-based Capacity Building for Students and Teachers to promote Peace



This program was organized under the Peace project at JUST Hall Damdamia. 113 students and 33 teachers from 18 schools of Tripura attended the program. The resource person, miss Merelin Darlong, Assistant professor, National Law University discussed various topics relevant to the peace clubs' functions, peer mediation to resolve conflict among friends, function of teachers as counselor, mediator and role model. It was an interactive session where teachers too shared various problems they face in schools when dealing with children, mediating conflict, or when talking about sensitive topics such as culture and conflict.

The resource person stressed that the role of teacher is not always to solve but sometimes just to listen and show empathy to the problems of students.

There was also a group activity for teachers where the teachers through practical actions tried to understand the situation which the students might face and how a teacher should approach it as an impartial mediator. At the same time the resource person for students Mrs. Momita Reang, Soft skill Trainer had an interactive session with the students where she discussed various important topics such as verbal and non-verbal communication skill to develop confidence, importance of facial expression in communication, understanding how to behave in public and interact with one another, improve active listening skills and much more. She also used activities to make the sessions fun and interactive to ensure maximum participation and understanding.

**Robert Lushai**

## Green Sunday

15<sup>th</sup> June, 2025



### SEASON OF CREATION



### TAKE ACTION FOR OUR COMMON HOME

### Our Distinguished Guests

- Sr. Juliana UFS, Provincial Superior from Dimapur
- Sr. Jessy UFS, Vice Provincial from Dimapur
- Sr. Pushpa Gomes CSC, Area Coordinator from Dhaka
- Bro. Lourduma Reddy SG Provincial Economer, Hyderabad
- Bro. Vincent Reddy SG, Principal of Warangal School
- Mr. Sudhakar Reddy from Hyderabad
- Fr. Esack, NECHA Director, from Guwahati
- Bro. Stephen CSC, Principal of Holy Cross School, Salem
- Sr. Tina Mary, MC Regional from Shillong

### Bishop's Program for June 2025

- 01 : Parish Mass @ Chailengta
- 03 : Clergy Meet
- Consulters Meet
- 05-07: CHAI Board Meet @ Hyderabad
- 08-28: Out of station for health break