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NEWS LETTER OF THE DIOCESE OF AGARTALA



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## PASTOR'S CORNER



### EMPTY YOUR CUP

*Pam England* tells this anecdote. When a Zen Master meets a new student, there is a tea ceremony. Tea is poured into the student's small hand-held cup until he or she

gives a small gesture to indicate "enough, thank you." A long time ago there was a mind-full, accomplished, self-certain monk who arrived at a temple for training. The Master poured tea. The young monk gestured and gestured to stop pouring, but the Master kept pouring tea until the cup overflowed. Why? The Master explained, "When you arrived, your cup was already so full, there was no room for new. Empty your cup."

The "empty cup" becomes a powerful metaphor for personal practice. The "cup" represents your heart, senses, or mind. At every moment, the holy, life itself, wants to pour itself into you, into your "cup." When your "cup" is full of your ideas, plans and judgments, there is less room to receive the holy, the unexpected seeing, light, or gifts, that the moment is offering.



It must become a living practice to consciously "empty your cup," again and again and again. The cup fills up easily; often we want to fill it with the "tea" that we "like." It takes fierce courage to choose Love over being right or comfortable.

It takes commitment and courage to be empty, open, and receptive. It takes courage to hold out your empty cup to receive something new and unexpected, including what seems to us the dark, not-so-sweet side of the Mystery of Life.

So learn to empty your cup. Think in a new way. Your thoughts guide you to your destiny. If you always think the same you will always get to the same place. Think in a new way and you will be a new person. Give happiness to all and you will live in peace. Create peace in your mind and you will create a world of peace around you. But first, empty your cup!

+ Lumen, CSC

### LAST THINGS FIRST!

November comes with the grim reminder that 'Golden lads and girls all must, as chimney-sweepers, come to dust.' We know well enough how death has the habit of snuggling up to just about everything.

If someone were to compare the amount of space allotted to various sections in Logesong, the official book of prayers and hymns of the Diocese, he would find that the section titled 'Thwimung' (Death) gets the most, thanks to over a dozen services connected with death. Nothing to write home about that, may be; and yet there's in it a reason to feel good that we have accorded 'death' the importance it demands.

During the month of November, the Church traditionally remembers those whom God has called through death to eternal life. We remember and pray for our loved ones who have gone before us and whose loss we feel. The celebration of All Souls Day on the 2nd day of the month is fast catching up all over our Diocese, even in the villages. This, despite the fact that by and large our villagers are at a transitional stage in many matters pertaining to this. The idea of a common cemetery for the village church continued to be a challenge for a period of time even after the traditional practice of cremation was replaced by the practice of burial of the dead. Now, many villages have their own cemeteries, where the memory of the dead are honored, not only on All Souls Day, but at



other times too. Another gradual transition we are witnessing in this area is the people's attitude towards

the body of the person after life has departed from it. Traditionally, the corpse was something scary and hence to be disposed of at the earliest. Some change has come about in this regard too among our faithful. The dead body is now treated not as a distasteful thing but as something that has dignity and needs to be honored. The urge to get rid of it hurriedly too has vanished to some extent.

Reflecting on the November commemoration of the Dead, there's something about its timing too that we cannot miss. November, the time of the year when everything seems to be coming to conclusions and closures - we see plants, grasses and trees going dormant appearing to be even dead - we know, however, that they are merely protecting themselves against 'the harsh winter that will come, so that they can re-emerge to a robust growing season next spring.' This cyclical movement in nature is a visible sign to us of new life emerging after what appears to be certain death. On the subject of 'remembrance of the dead' Pope Francis says, "The remembrance of the dead, the care of graves and prayers of repose are a witness of the confident hope, rooted in certainty that death is not the final word on the human fate, since man is destined to a life without limits which has its roots and its God."

### Editorial



J. Pulinthanath, SDB



## Khumulwng Parish

INAUGURATION AND BLESSING OF  
KILLA VILLAGE CHAPEL

The village Chapel at Killa was inaugurated and blessed by Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, on 2nd September 2023 in the presence of priests, religious and parishioners. The Chapel is named after St. John Bosco. Many from the neighboring villages also attended the blessing program. Killa motha welcomed the guests in a traditional way. After blessing the Chapel Bishop Lumen presided over the holy Mass, which was concelebrated by many priests. All were in festive mood and the people were served traditional tribal food. There were around 600 people for the chapel blessing. The new chapel building will provide sitting capacity of 200 people. This beautiful chapel is a sign of God's presence in the village. It has brought hope and life to this community at Killa. The villagers are indebted and very grateful to Church in Need, Germany, and our Bishop Lumen for supporting the project.

*Fr. Valentine, SVD*

## Tuikarmaw Parish

## SACRAMENTS OF CONFIRMATION



It was a special day of joy and spiritual nourishment for St. Mary's Parish, Tuikarmaw, on 8th October, when Bishop Lumen Monteiro offered the Holy Eucharist and administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to 54 children & adults and gave first Holy Communion to 24 children. Prior to that, four communities of Sisters, UFS from Lakhichara, SSpS from Belonia, SABS from Tuikarmaw and SABS from Ichachara had taken keen interest for a month in preparing these Candidates for the first Holy

Communion and Confirmation in their villages. Added to that these candidates were brought together in Tuikarmaw for two days in a camp to give them intensive training and catechism.

There was real excitement and joy for 24 little children when they first received Jesus in their heart, and also for the 54 who received the Holy Spirit.

The day's celebration ended in sharing of a common meal with the celebrities, their parents and relatives and the members of the Parish council.

*Jagdish Uchhoi, Parish Secretary*

## Kamaranga Parish

PARISH SABHA AND THE PARISH  
FEAST

The parishioners of St. Raphael Parish, Kamranga, celebrated its Parish Sabha and Feast on 21st and 22nd of October as the Puja celebration fever set in. It was a well-planned parish program in terms of holiday and availability of the parishioners. People from different sub-stations gathered on Saturday for Parish Sabha and feast day celebration on Sunday. The Sabha began with parish flag hoisting followed by seminar on family and marriage and importance of tithe by Fr. George SJ. There was an interesting Bible Quiz on St. John's Gospel by Fr. Amit Soreng SVD and Mr. Poresh Halam. Fr. Nabin Lakra SVD conducted class on Church Leadership. There were 35 children who received first Holy Communion on the feast day. The children were prepared well for one month. The purpose of the parish Sabah and Feast was faith formation, unity and harmony among the parishioners. The entire program was well participated and successful.

*Fr. Arun Minj SVD*

## Bodhjungle Nagar Parish

LEFUNGA MOTHA CELEBRATES 35  
YEARS OF FAITH

Celebrating Jubilee in any church is a time of joy. It is celebration of achievement of the faith journey. Jubilee celebration reminds us of our growth in faith. On 21st October Saint Josephs' motha at Lefunga, celebrated 35 years of Faith. It was a long awaited dream of the people of Lefunga motha. The motha has grown in faith and numbers. More than 400 hundred faithful from the Parish gathered to celebrate the faith journey. The program began with reception and welcome of our dear Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC. He was the main celebrant of the Mass and the Chief Guest of the celebration. On this auspicious occasion of the Jubilee a new grotto dedicated to mother Mary was blessed and inaugurated by the Bishop. A short cultural program was organized, a pictorial Souvenir was released, and the whole celebration ended with a fellowship meal.

*Fr. Ishwar, CSC*

## Baijalbari Parish

CELEBRATING THE 10<sup>th</sup> PARISH DAY

On October 22, the Parish of Baijalbari held its 10th Parish day. The Holy Eucharist was presided over by Most Rev. Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC. Fr. Paul Panachikkal SDB, the PR, welcomed everyone to the solemn celebration with a word of introduction. During the homily, the Bishop spoke about the mission of Baijalbari Parish and also about the life of St. John Paul II, who is the Patron of the Parish. After the homily, the Sacrament of Confirmation was given to 79 persons. Thirty-eight children received their first Holy Communion. There was a large number of people who participated in the Holy Mass. Seven priests concelebrated with the Bishop and a good number of Sisters from various convents also attended the Eucharistic celebration. After the Holy Eucharist, there was a cultural program, during which the Bishop felicitated the Sunday's School animators. Prizes were awarded to those students who participated in the Catechism competition which was held on the 8th of October. After the cultural program, food was served to all. This Parish Day program created great enthusiasm and fellowship among the faithful. The Committee set up by the Parish Council for budgeting and execution of the program did a wonderful job.

*Fr. Panachikal, SDB*



**Kumarghat Parish**

**3 DAYS BIBLE CAMP**



The Parish at Kumarghat was lively, vibrant and sparkling with young boys and girls milling around, for three days from 13th-15th October, attending the Bible Camp. This was the first of its kind held in the recent past at the parish. Over 150 registered participants. Later, few more joined in. The theme of the Camp was – Know and Love the Bible. The theme was well displayed on posters and flexes to create an interest to know the Bible, love the Bible and keep reading God's Word from the Bible. Along with input Sessions, the students were taught biblical action songs and were shown a short film. Rosary prayers were conducted each day. On Saturday evening all participants were encouraged to avail the opportunity of confession. Later, every group presented two parables from the gospels of Matthew and John, each group competing to be the best. Fr Lancy conducted a mesmerizing magic show which kept the audience enthralled. At the concluding session there was an evaluation.

**FIRST HOLY COMMUNION**



The interiors of St Paul's Church, Kumarghat, were brighter than usual on that Sunday morning of 8th October, 2023. It was an important day for the 25 young children from different mundolis of the parish, who with their extra-white outfits and wearing white wreaths on their heads looked like little angels. They had been looking forward to this big day to welcome Jesus in their hearts for the first time. The children were well prepared, by the MC Sisters and the Catechist of the parish. The Holy Eucharist was celebrated by

Fr Lancy, CSC, along with Fr Lourdu, CSC. After the Holy Mass the new communicants were greeted, given a Rosary, a Scapular and refreshments.

*Sr. Santan Nago, FS*

**Mandwi Parish**

**JOYNAGAR GETS A NEW VILLAGE CHAPEL**



7<sup>th</sup> October 2023 was a day of great joy for Mary help of Christians Parish Mandwi, especially for the people of Joynagar motha. On the Feast of our Lady of Rosary the Chapel of Joynagar village was blessed by Most Rev. Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC. After blessing and inaugurating the Chapel the Bishop presided over the holy Eucharist, concelebrated by six Priests. During the holy Eucharist he exhorted the people to thank God for their faith and for the beautiful Chapel. He urged them to have more devotion to Mary by praying the rosary daily. Soon after the holy Eucharist there was a short felicitation program. The people in their simplicity thanked the Bishop, Fathers, Sisters, Catechists, and all those who came. The people were overjoyed to see Bishop in their village after more than 15 years. The beautiful day ended with a fraternal meal served with love by the village people.

**ONE DAY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM AT THE PARISH**

On 22<sup>nd</sup> October the Parish organized a one day Leadership Program. Fr. Joe Paul CSC was the Resource Person. 55 participants, both men and women attended. Most of them were the leaders from different villages. Fr. Paul drilled and touched many aspects especially the qualities of a good leader. The Sessions was very lively and everything was based on the Word of God. The program ended

at 3:30 pm with the Holy Eucharist presided over by Fr. Paul. After the Holy Eucharist there was a fellowship meal served for everyone.

*Fr. Hubert, SDB*

**Depacherra Parish**

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL (VBS)**



Christ the King Parish recently orchestrated a transformative event that left an indelible mark on the lives of the Catholic children. From the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October, the parish hosted a Vacation Bible School that brought 176 enthusiastic students on a spiritual journey, deepening their understanding of the Bible, Sacraments, Catechism, the Ten Commandments, and invaluable life lessons. The primary focus of the program was to nurture a stronger connection between the young students and their faith. Throughout the three days, a myriad of activities, lessons, and discussions were designed to foster spiritual growth and a profound understanding of Catholicism. The success of this event was undoubtedly a collective effort. The dedication of the catechists, parish leaders, and energetic youth who volunteered their time and knowledge was commendable. They used innovative methods and interactive activities to keep the students engaged and motivated throughout the program. The Parish Priest played a pivotal role in guiding and supporting the students, offering his spiritual wisdom and experience to the program. The parents of the 176 students also attended the enlightening program.

*Fr. Amalraj*

**HOLY FATHER'S PRAYER INTENTION FOR NOVEMBER 2023**



**We pray for the Holy Father; as he fulfills his mission, may he continue to accompany the flock entrusted to him, with the help of the Holy Spirit.**



## REFRESHER PROGRAM FOR CATECHISTS



A refresher program was organized for the Catechists of the Diocese on 28th and 29th September at Pastoral Center, Champaknagar. 28 Catechists participated in this program. The renewal program began with adoration and confession followed by praise and worship. Fr. Ivan D'Silva was the resource person for the program, who instructed on the duties and responsibilities of a catechist through his session based on SCC. He also emphasized on the need of SCC in the villages and encouraged them with the spirit of faith and evangelization to proclaim the Word of God in their parishes. The Catechists were filled with a renewed spirit and blessings through this program.

*Fr. Valentine Dung Dung*

## FOUNDATION BLESSING OF GOKULNAGAR SCHOOL



The foundation for the new school block at Gokulnagar was laid and blessed by Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, on 6th October, in the presence of Fr. Antony Balan Principal, SMC Members, Diocesan Fathers, AC Sisters, Brother, Teachers, non-teaching staff and construction laborers. Fr. Antony Balan in his introduction said that this new building is an initiative to cater to the growing needs of the school which will benefit thousands of students. Bishop Lumen in his address said that the mission of the church is to make education available and accessible to all. He added that young minds and hearts must be formed here and prepared to face the challenges of the world. Bishop Lumen also fondly remembered and prayed for the benefactors because of whom this project has seen the light of day.

Fr. Antony Balan, the Principal, thanked everyone and prayed for the successful completion of the construction of the new school block.

*Br. Sebin K. Thampy*

## SEMINARY DAY



Seminary Day was held on 14th October. Fr. Praveen, the Vocation Promoter, Brothers, Sisters, parents of the Seminarians and some parishioners attended the celebration. The program commenced with a prayer song and lighting of the lamp. Fr. Valentine SVD, the Rector, welcomed the esteemed guests. On this day the Seminarians acknowledged the support from the Bishop, Administrator, Diocesan Priests, SVDs, Montfort Brothers and MHMHC Sisters, parents, and benefactors towards their formation.

Fr. Praveen, recollected the memories of his seminary days and expressed gratitude for the formation he received in the seminary. Likewise, he also highlighted the importance of the formation to priesthood. He spoke on the four pillars of formation namely: spiritual, intellectual, community and apostolic. He instructed the Seminarians to be strong in discerning their call through prayer. The need of local vocations was also emphasized. Everyone expressed their happiness and gratitude. The celebration concluded with the sumptuous meal.

*Fr. Valentine Dungdung, SVD*

## FAMILY FEAST

Family Feast is a celebration where community members come together to celebrate the joy of being together and recognize the talents and skills, and encourage the community members to promote a sense of oneness in the community.

Jeevadhara Diocesan Minor Seminary celebrated the Family Feast from 7th to 14th October with the motto "Live to Give." It was an opportune occasion for the Seminarians to discover their hidden talents and share their creative and innovative ideas.

*Aspirant Boison Joy Reang*

## DIOCESE OF AGARTALA GETS A NEW PRIEST



The Diocese of Agartala rejoices with another newly ordained priest. Dn. Derrick Augustin was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Agartala, on October 18, 2023 by Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, the Bishop of Agartala. Most Rev. Francis Kalist the Archbishop of Pondicherry-Cuddalore, presided over the Holy Eucharist along with Bishop Lumen Monteiro and many other Priests from both Dioceses. The Ordination ceremony took place at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral in Pondicherry in the presence of a large number of priests and religious from different dioceses and congregations, family members and lay faithful. Bishop Lumen thanked the Parents and the Archbishop. Fr. Derrick too expressed his sincere gratitude to everyone who assisted him to reach the altar of God. The celebration ended with a reception at Petit Seminaire Higher Secondary School, Pondicherry.

*Fr. Antony Balan*





## Refresher Trainings to the Clusters



To strengthen the Cluster, JUST organized a one-day Refresher Training on 5th October, for all the Members of Ganganagar Cluster Group. The Training was based on how to conduct Cluster meetings periodically, training on some issues and accounting procedures. The Members were also apprised of Self Help Groups. The objective of SHG's and Cluster, were explained along with the rules of the group pertaining to membership, election, meetings, periodicity, presence at meetings, discussions and decisions in such meetings, process and importance of savings and inter-loaning amongst the group members, water and sanitation, and income generating activities. The facilitator explained in detail about cluster, its concept, basic principles, characteristics and stages of formation and growth. He also explained to the SHG members about the rules and regulations for better management of the group, systematic accounting system, maintenance of records and registers, and so on.

## Promotion of indigenous and improved varieties of seeds



A training program was conducted by JUST on Promotion of indigenous and improved varieties of Seeds at different FARM NE villages under Amarpur and Karbook Blocks. The purpose of the program was to promote knowledge sharing, preserve indigenous knowledge, document traditional knowledge, provision of indigenous and improved seeds to farmer collectives for seasonal cultivation, build capacity, and foster networking and collaboration among Farmers in the Region. This can help to enhance their understanding of sustainable agricultural practices, traditional food systems, and promote more indigenous seeds to stop hybrid seeds. Farmers shared their experiences of cultivation of indigenous seeds and hybrid seeds. The program has also helped the Farmers to realize the need of protecting local biodiversity, promote cultural identity, and improve the resilience of local communities to climate change. The program included documentation which can help to ensure that this knowledge is preserved for future generations and can be used to inform policy and research in these areas.

*Mr. Robert Lushai*

**PRAYER FOR THE SOULS  
OF OUR DEAR LOVED ONES IN PURGATORY**


Good Jesus, whose loving Heart was ever troubled by the sorrows of others, look with pity on the souls of our dear loved ones in purgatory.

O thou who didst "Love Thy Own!" hear our cry for mercy and grant that those whom Thou hast called from our homes and hearts, may soon enjoy everlasting rest in the home of Thy Love in Heaven. Amen

Eternal rest grant unto them,  
O Lord, and let Your perpetual light shine upon them. Amen.

**Bishop's Program for November 2023**

- 01 : Gyaan Sansar Office Inauguration, Agartala
- 02 : Cemetery Mass, Mariamnagar
- 03-05: Tura Diocese Jubilee
- 09-12: Bible Convention by POTA Team, Nandanagar
- 12 : Diocese level Eucharistic Procession, Nandanagar
- 13 : Kulai Chapel Blessing under Ambassa Parish
- 18 : Silver Jubilee, Don Bosco School, Udaipur
- 19 : Sridam Kobra Chapel Blessing, under Mandwi Parish
- 21-24: National Seminar on Environment @ DVK, Bangalore
- 25 : Holy Cross School Kathalcherra, Ruby Jubilee
- 26 : Christ the King Feast, Depacherra Parish
- 28 : SDB Pre-Novitiate program, Herma

**Our Distinguished Guests**

- Sr. Pauline SSpS, from Udupi
- Sr. Nirmala SSpS, from Rajkot
- Bro. Prodip CSC from Generalate Rome
- Fr. Andrew Gawrych CSC from Generalate Rome