



## PASTOR'S CORNER

Victor Frankl, one of the great psychiatrists of the 20th century, survived the death camps of Nazi Germany.



His little book 'Man's Search for Meaning' is one of those life changing books. Frankl once told the story of a woman in the middle of the night to calmly inform him she was to commit suicide. Frankl kept her on the

phone and talked her through her depression, giving her reason after reason to carry on living. Finally she promised she would not take her life, and she kept her word. When they later met, Frankl asked which reason had persuaded her to live? "None of them" she told him. What then influenced her to go on living? Her answer was simple; it was Frankl's willingness to listen to her in the middle of the night. A world in which there was someone ready to listen to another's pain seemed to her a world in which it was worthwhile to live. Often, it is not a brilliant argument that makes a difference.

Sometimes, the small act of listening is the greatest gift we can give.

## The Relationship between religion and Covid-19

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the relationship between religion and Covid-19 has been a tormented one. During the first few months of the pandemic, says Michel Chambon, various media reported that religious places were not enforcing social distancing and, therefore, were responsible for the spread of the virus. Others claimed that naive beliefs cultivated by religious leaders were interfering with health policies. Whether in



Korea, India or the USA, religion was easily portrayed as a brake against containment strategies. For these observers, sanitizing States were our only saviors. Months later, the role played by religion during the pandemic appears more nuanced. In a time of isolation and distress, a vast number of people have turned toward religious practices and networks. Their motivations might greatly vary, but they illustrate the relevance of religion during a pandemic. **+Lumen, CSC**



## EDITORIAL

For the second time in a row the virus has deprived us of the November Eucharistic Procession. We feel sorry at

having to skip the mega annual celebration that brings together the Diocese in a most beautiful manner, even if for a short time.

Held uninterruptedly since 2009 under the aegis of the laity organization of the Diocese, the procession has, over the years, evolved into a wonderful celebration of faith.

In a city that had mostly seen only political rallies of the fire and brimstone type, the Eucharistic procession struggled to create a genre of its own, at first quite to the surprise and amusement not only of onlookers, but participants themselves. After a dozen years and as many editions, we have come past those twilight zones and arrived at what easily feels like a faith event of simple believers. A comforting thought, certainly, for a Diocese celebrating its silver Jubilee.

In the absence of a Diocesan level Eucharistic Procession this year, the Bishop has exhorted the Parishes to hold it at the parish level. Which is good too, because Parish level celebrations have a flavor



## THOUGHTS ON EUCHARISTIC PROCESSION

of their own and allow more people to participate. There is need to do whatever we can to promote and nurture such events especially as our faithful are beginning to realize the centrality of the devotion to the Holy Eucharist in our faith life. The parish procession will surely fan the flame of faith in a way that only they can. It more than makes up for what we shall miss by not coming together as a Diocese – heartwarming sight of the conglomeration of tribes, tongues and cultures all united by the same faith. May the Eucharistic Lord have mercy on us all.

As we step into November, our thoughts also go to those who have preceded us in our common journey into eternity. As we pray for them, visit the cemeteries and hold memorial services, we remember we too are pilgrims awaiting our disembarkation points.

**J. Pulinthanath, SDB**



The Diocese of Agartala mourns the tragic death of dear Sr. Joseline, FCC, Superior of Sindukpathar Convent, who died on October 9 in a road accident. We pray for the repose of her soul and ask God to grant her eternal rest.

## KARBOOK PARISH

### First Parish Feast

3<sup>rd</sup> October 2021 was a memorable day for the faithful of our Lady of Good Health Parish, Karbook, as they celebrated their Parish Feast for the very first time. The Parish was erected in



December 2020 by Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC. The spiritual preparation for the Feast began with nine days of Novena. Each novena service started with a rosary procession followed by the Holy Mass celebrated by a guest Priest. On the ninth day the Parish *Sabha* was held through which the faithful were enriched with various important teachings of the church. Frs. Amalraj, Balan and Bosco animated some Sessions of the *Sabha*. During the *Sabha*, the faithful of various sub-stations had the privilege of presenting their *mondoli* Reports as our dear Bishop animated the Session. He also gave his reflection and guidance for the betterment and growth of the Parish. The Parish *Sabha* was concluded with a Solemn Marian procession. On the Feast day, we were privileged to have the shepherd of our Diocese along with four other priests. After the Holy Eucharist there was a short cultural program which was followed by a sumptuous meal.

*Bro. Khakchang Uchoi*

## AMBASSA PARISH

### Annual Mothers Association

Holy Spirit Catholic Church organized two days of annual meeting of Women in Naithungul village. Around 80 Mothers participated in the gathering to report their yearly activities and discuss action plans for the



next one year. They arrived on 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct. and were accommodated in the houses in the village. After the Rosary, a Bible Quiz was conducted. It was well prepared and the winners were rewarded with prizes. Next day Reports were presented of the monthly activities. Sr. Sushila Xess SSpS the main Resource Person from JUST Agartala gave input sessions on 'women's role in the church & family'. The next annual gathering will be in Kekmachara village in October 2022. But prior to that a few other programs will be held, like collecting clothes for the poor and distribution before Christmas; celebration of girl child day; formation of SCC groups and Bible sharing; Bible procession & enthronement in all the village Chapels; regular family prayer and rosary.

### Youth Colloquium

Holy Spirit Catholic Church arranged a three days Seminar for the Youth of the Parish from 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>

October. There were 87 Youth participating from different sub-stations of the Parish. The theme for the three day program was 'Arise'. There were input sessions, ice-breaking games, competitions, discussions and time for



prayer. Fr. Jothi S.J, Human Rights activist, gave a session on the theme 'Arise'. He inspired the Youth with his personal experience of working in different places and called on the Youth to wake up. Sr. Rini SSpS interacted with the Youth on the subject 'Feed my sheep'. Dr. Asok Debbarma addressed the Youth on the topic 'Our body, God's temple'. He guided the Youth on good health with regular exercise, sleep, diet and work. Fr. Ivan D'Silva, SVD, trained the Youth on the theme 'Social Communication'. In between the input sessions various competitions were held like group Song, group Dance, Preaching, and Bible Quiz, for which cash prizes were awarded. During the intervals action songs, ice-breaking games and surprise items were animated to make Youth come alive. The food was cooked and served by different SCC group members. In the evaluation the Youth have appreciated all the proceedings and planned for more active participation in the coming days.

### Renewal Program for Parishioners

Our Parish organized a day of reflection and renewal for the parishioners. There were more than 250 participants in the yearly Retreat preached by Fr. Leenus V.C., a charismatic preacher from Agartala. The faithful keenly attended the Preacher's talk from morning 9 to



evening 3:30 without any break! Fr. Leenus is well versed in the Bengali language and the people appreciated his preaching and many people experienced the healing touch of Jesus. As the Lord Jesus told his disciples that he wouldn't like to send the people away hungry, the parish leaders arranged late lunch for all the participants.

### Marriage Preparation Course

Holy Spirit Parish conducted three days of Marriage Preparation Course from October 18 to 20. There were 28 participants who attended. Agartala Diocesan Plan (DPP) mentions in the #7.7 "Enliven the parish life by conducting programs such



as retreats, pilgrimages, formation of pious associations of choir groups and marriage preparation course". One of the priorities of SVD's in the ING region is strengthening the family life. The Diocese of Agartala has made the Marriage Preparation Course compulsory.

In the DPP #3.10 it is written, "We prepare our young men and women for the sacrament of marriage..." Ambassa Parish regularly conducts systematic courses for the Youth on Marriage. Fr. Ivan D'Silva, SVD the Parish Priest of Ambassa prepared the course schedule much in advance and the Resource Persons were invited to give class. Fr. Hormis John CSC, Mr. Sankunga Darlong, Fr. Ivan D'Silva SVD, Dr. Asok Debbarma, Mr. Indrajit Sangma, Mr. Prabath Marak & Mrs. Lata Marak were the Resource Persons. The participants were given Certificates at the end of the Course.

*Ivan D'Silva, SVD*

### KUMARGHAT PARISH

#### First Holy Communion

October 3<sup>rd</sup> was a memorable day for St. Paul's Parish Kumarghat as 93 boys and girls received their first Holy Communion. This event took days of preparation and hard work of many. Around 400 parishioners including the candidates for the First Holy Communion were present. Through the guidance of Fr. Lancy D'Souza CSC, Catechist Mr. Subiah, MC Sisters and Fatima Sisters trained the children for more than a month. MC Sisters were staying in villages and taught catechism to the children. Sisters covered almost all the villages in the Parish. The candidates for first Holy Communion had gathered in the parish church on 2<sup>nd</sup> October for confession. Frs. C.V. Jose, Lancy and Francis helped in the confessionals.

#### Bible Camp

Bible Camp was conducted in five villages by grouping the villages in the parish into five Zones: On 11<sup>th</sup> Kumarghat, 14<sup>th</sup> Kurmapara (Kurmapara, Saida, Soigoripara and Monaipara), 15<sup>th</sup> Kanchancherra (Kanchencherra, Shantipalli, Bethcherra, Rathacherra), 16<sup>th</sup> Masli Reang (Twinaisa, Reang, Garo I and Garo II), and 17<sup>th</sup> Sonaimuri (Sonaimuri and Attaramuri). The Camp was conducted from 9am to 4pm. Sr. Bastian FS was the main Resource Person. She was accompanied by Fr. Francis Xavier and MC Srs. Vera Anthony and Ann Lawrence. The children were taught about the importance of the Bible, prominent stories in the Bible, ten Commandments, Precepts of the Church, etc. A Bangla documentary film on the life of Jesus was shown and Bible Quiz was conducted. The local *mondolis* were very cooperative and they provided lunch to all the participants of the Camp. The Camp was concluded with the Holy Mass.

*Fr. Francis Xavier, CSC*



### KAMARANGA PARISH

#### Youth Awareness Seminar

Puja fever had already enveloped the State but our Youth escaped the virus and gathered for an awareness program at St. Raphael Parish Kamranaga. There were about 100 Youth who attended the awareness program with the theme: "Come to me... and I will give you rest" (Mt. 11:28). Fr. Lawrence Darlong, DYD and Parish Priest of Depacherra Parish was the main Resource Person. Various awareness topics were dealt with such as Drugs and social media addiction, Youth leadership, participation in the Church, Catholic marriages and family, etc. The Youth also availed spiritual nourishment such as Praise and Worship, Confession and Holy Eucharist. Games and Sports united the Youth of the Parish. Awareness programs of this kind will certainly give right direction to the confused and disturbed Youth of today.

*Fr. Arun Minj SVD*



### MOHARPARA PARISH

#### Training for SCC Leaders

Immaculate Conception Parish Moharpara organized one day training for SCC Leaders of the Parish on 14<sup>th</sup> October. The event commenced with Bible Procession and followed by enthronement of the Bible. Fr. Jothi SJ, the Resource Person conducted the Sessions and people took active part. Fr. Jothi emphasized the importance of SCC in the participatory Church and invited the participants to connect SCC with real life situation by living with the word of God. The participants were divided in Zonal wise groups and were asked to discuss some important current issues. At the closure the participants were given the opportunity to give their feedback and many of them expressed their enriching experience about the Sessions and its usefulness in daily life. The event concluded with a common meal and they returned home with their faith enriched.

#### Family Prayer Fest

Family Prayer Fest 2021 in the Parish commenced from 8<sup>th</sup> of September and concluded on 31<sup>st</sup> of October. During these 54 days, Holy Hour families were organized in every *motha* as part of renewal program for the families. Every family was given an opportunity to pray together before the Eucharistic Lord where husbands and wives prayed for each other and for their children. During the Holy Eucharist husbands and wives renewed their marriage promises as a sign of renewal in their families. Thanks be to God, may our families be blessed.

*Fr. Arbok, CSC*



## KHUMULWNG PARISH

### 7<sup>TH</sup> Youth Fellowship 2021



The 7<sup>th</sup> Youth Fellowship 2021 was organized from 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> October by St. Alphonsa Parish at Charkolok *motha*. 160 Youth participated in this Fellowship. The theme for the Youth Fellowship 2021 was, "I can do all things through Jesus Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13) in relation to the faith and commitment of the youth in their life. The Youth Fellowship was organized to inculcate Christian faith, gospel values and moral principles in the life of Youth to strengthen and guide them to make Christ as the center of their life. It was also an opportunity to make them an agent of transformation in the family, society and Church. The Youth Fellowship was animated by Fr. Leenus V.C. He spoke about God experience, importance of prayer life, pray rosary in the family. He also spoke on the challenges of Youth like substance abuse and lack of spiritual life which leads to lack of motivation in life. He provided necessary remedies from the Bible to make life successful and fruitful. There were various Sessions, action songs and group activities that kept the Youth active and made the program very lively. Fr. Valentine Dungdung SVD celebrated Mass for the Youth. The program was concluded

with a short evaluation. *Deacon Valson Colaco, SVD*

## GANDACHERRA PARISH

### Vocational Bible Study

Vocational Bible study course was organized to the Catholic Children of St. Arnold Parish, Gandacherra from 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> October 2021. About 45 catholic



children from different *mondolies* had participated in the Program. Fr. Praveen Asst. Parish Priest, Sr. Valsina, SSpS, Superior of the Community, Mr. Thoshiram Reang, Parish Secretary and the youth from the Diocese were the resource persons. The aim of this program was to help the children to be familiar with Bible and to know the basic tenants of Catholic Faith. During these three days program the participants learned about the Rosary, Eucharist, Sacraments and popular devotions in the Church. Besides theory classes, they were also shown movies on Saints, bible quiz, Gospel songs competitions were conducted and prizes were given to the winners. Children were enthusiastic and expressed to have more such camps organized in the future for the progress of their spiritual well-being. The program concluded with Eucharist after which they had festive meal. *Fr. Praveen*

## DIocese NEWS BRIEFS

### Women Leaders Meet at JUST Hall Agartala

Women Commission of Agartala Diocese organized one day program for the Sister in charge and Women Leaders on 19<sup>th</sup> October in collaboration with JUST. Women Leaders from 17 Parishes were present. There were



15 Sisters and 37 Women Leaders present. Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC, Fr. Bosco Lathees, Director of JUST, and Dr. Mrs. Mousomi Debbarma were present for the Meeting. In his message Bishop Lumen encouraged the Women to take up leadership in all Church activities and be in the forefront to support and lead others. Dr. Mousomi Debbarma in her speech quoted from the Bible many examples of Women who were courageous and in the forefront at various situations. She encouraged the Women to be a good wife and mother in caring for the family and be a good leader in supporting the society. Fr. Bosco Lathees

encouraged the Women to bring out their leadership qualities and take initiatives in caring for the family, church and the society. Sr. Jolly FS, the Secretary of Diocesan Women Commission with the help of Mrs. Babita Jamatia, the President of Women Commission and Sr. Susheela SSpS took initiative in organizing this one day Meet. During the program the Office Bearers for the Executive Committee from all four Deaneries namely, Agartala, Moharpara, Depacherra and Kumarghat, were elected for the next three years.

*Sr. Jolly FS, Commission for Women, Diocese of Agartala*

### Sr. Joseline, FCC, died October 9, a day after she met with a road accident

The 66-year-old FCC nun died at GB Pant Hospital in Agartala on October 9. Bishop Lumen announced the death at 2:49 pm on the diocesan WhatsApp group. The Holy Cross prelate had earlier visited Sr. Joseline and asked his people to pray for her. Sr. Joseline was the Superior of St. Alphonsa Convent at Sindukpathar in South Tripura. The Tripura Times reported that a Goods Carrier had collided with a car carrying three



women, including two Clarist nuns, and a layman, on NH 8. All of them were injured and rushed to the hospital. The other nun, Sister Maria Therese, 73, fractured both the legs while others had milder injuries. The other companions in the car were Bina Thomas and

husband Tom, who are reportedly out of danger. Sister Joseline was working with the MSFS, who set up the Sindukpathar Parish in 2008. The Franciscan Clarist Congregation started its Agartala mission in

2011 and they have two communities. The other community is in East Harina, where Sr. Maria Therese is stationed. The Sisters are from the Sacred Heart Province of Ernakulam.

The Provincial from Kerala reached Agartala and took the mortal remains of Sister Joseline to the congregation's headquarters in Aluva, Kerala, for burial. En route to the airport the body was brought to the Cathedral Church where a large number of Priests, Religious and Laity gathered for the Mass of the Resurrection. *Irudhaya Jothi, SJ*

### International Peace Day

On 21<sup>st</sup> September 2021 Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) observed International Peace Day by organizing Blood Donation campaign for Youth Peace Volunteers at JUST Hall. There were 28 Youth Volunteers who attended the program and 22 volunteers could donate their blood for peace. Fr. Bosco Lathees the Director of JUST motivated the volunteers by giving a



message on peace and the importance of donating blood. Dr. Rajib Dasgupta the Resource Person for the blood donation camp shared about the crisis of blood in the Blood Bank of Tripura. Since the pandemic started due to COVID-19 there has been very less blood donation camp held in the entire state of Tripura. The Resource Person encouraged the Youth see health improvement after donating blood. He thanked JUST for organizing Blood Donation camp during the International Day of Peace.

### Village level Sensitization and Interactions for Community Collective Action

Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) conducted a

program on village level sensitization and interactions for community collective action for the Farmers on different dates in the month of October 2021 at all 14 target villages. The Facilitator shared on different good



traditional practices of agriculture that can be practiced by the farmers collectively. Many farmers also shared about what they could remember and that could be practiced by the

farmer's Clubs collectively. The Facilitator encouraged the community to make maximum utilization of all their cultivable land for farming to increase food production for consumption which again should be only through natural farming practices which is free of chemicals. The Facilitator motivated the Farmers to do more commercial collective farming through which they will have better income and it will also ensure the sustainability of the group in the long run.

*Mr. Cyril Darlong*

### Pope Francis asks FMA Sisters to pray for him: 'It is not easy to be the Pope'

Pope Francis paid a visit to the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians on Oct. 22 and asked the religious sisters to pray for him as they live out their mission of service to the young and the poor. "Thank you for who you are and what you do. I am close to you with prayer and I bless you and all your sisters in the world," Pope Francis told the Salesian Sisters on Oct. 22. "And I ask you to pray for me; it is not easy to be the Pope!" Pope Francis



spent the morning at the General House of the Salesian Sisters of St. John Bosco. He encouraged the Sisters to imitate the Blessed Virgin Mary, who "always points to Jesus." The Salesian Sisters have held their 24th General Chapter in Rome from Sept. 11 to Oct. 24 focused on the theme: "Communities that generate life in the heart of the contemporary world" (Courtesy CNA)

[Our very own Sr. Celine FMA adorned the Holy Father with a risha from Tripura.]

- Fr. Clement Amo CSC, from Mizoram
- Fr. Pinto Paul CSC, from USA
- Fr. Roby CSC from Meghalaya
- Mr. Benny Behanan, MP from Kerala, & Family
- Sr. Philo, SCV Superior General from Kerala
- Sr. Gracy, SCV Asst. General from Kerala

### OUR DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

- Sr. Nanditha, SRA Superior General from Austria
- Sr. Berchmans, SRA Provincial Superior from Mumbai
- Sr. Sarah Grace, MC Regional Superior from Shillong

## BISHOP LUMEN MONTEIRO, CSC, DD

### A walk down memory lane



It was in 1980 that I met Lumen Monteiro for the first time. The meeting took place at the Pune Railway Station and ever since our journey as friends continued non-stop. The years we spent together in

Pune and subsequently in Bengaluru laid the foundation for a lasting friendship. Along the way, Lumen became Father Lumen and then Bishop Lumen and though our physical locations have changed, our friendship has endured and is something we continue to cherish and treasure.

Bishop Lumen has come across to me as a wonderful human being who is genuine to the core and is keenly interested in being at the service of others. What I have found most striking in him is his uncompromising commitment to his duties and responsibilities.

From our days at Bengaluru, I can recall numerous instances of his politely declining my tempting offer of a cup of coffee after a tiring Volleyball game at St. Mark's Road because he feared that he would be late for his next programme with his students at Museum Road, just a stone's throw away. He allowed no personal interests to come in the way of his duties and responsibilities.

Another outstanding aspect of Bishop Lumen's personality that I have always deeply appreciated is his simplicity. He is easy to befriend, has no airs about himself and is ready to serve 24x7 without counting the cost. He welcomes everyone and loves being with people attending to their spiritual and temporal needs. As a Bishop, he makes it a point to reach out to people even in the most remote areas of his diocese. His calendar of activities stands as a clear testimony to his commitment to tending his sheep. I have often found it impossible to reach him over phone as he

would be in some remote village engaged in serving the people there. He has shown by example that being Bishop is a call to selfless service in the footsteps of the Master.

Building up a new diocese from scratch – physically and spiritually – can indeed be a daunting task. Lack of funds, priests and proper infrastructure are but some of the challenges that a new Bishop would face, and Bishop Lumen was no exception. But what indeed was exceptional about him that helped him surmount these challenges were his people skills and administrative acumen, besides his complete

dependence on the God who provides. With his motto "Lead us onward", Bishop Lumen, in all humility, allowed himself to be led forward by the light of Christ resulting in the diocese of Agartala being what it is today.



25 years as a Bishop is an important milestone in Bishop Lumen's life that deserves celebration. His vocation as Priest and Bishop has given him the opportunity to celebrate life in the service of God and people – a task he has been doing with total dedication and commitment in a spirit of true love. I take this opportunity to wish Bishop Lumen God's continued blessings, in every form that he requires, as he continues his mission to make life more meaningful and less burdensome for the people he serves.

Dear Bishop Lumen, you are different, and you make a difference! You are blessed, and you are a blessing! May the good Lord lead you onward to your Golden Jubilee and beyond. God bless.

**Appachan J. Kuttiyath**  
Former Holy Cross Religious  
Dubai

# MY JOURNEY WITH BISHOP LUMEN

I landed at the land of Bamboo, Tripura in the year 2002. Since then I have been associated with Bishop Lumen at different capacities. However, my close association with him began from Gandacherra when I became the Parish Priest in 2006.



Gandacherra then, was considered by the people as place of punishment transfer, for its remoteness, underground activities and lack of facilities. Every visit of Bishop Lumen to Gandacherra, those days be it planned or



unplanned, had rejuvenating impact on the mission and personally for me.

One of the inerasable memories of his pastoral visits to Gandacherra, was our stay at a tiny Bamboo hut in the year 2008. He was invited for the inauguration of a new substation at Ratanagar a remote village 20 km away from Gandacherra. After travelling from Agartala in the morning via Ambassa with two escorts, he reached Gandacherra at 6.30 in the evening. The strenuous and tiring journey did not deterred him to reach to the substation for the night stay in a Bamboo hut with no facility at all. That night hostel children presented a cultural programme, following day was the inauguration of the new substation. To my amazement he just adjusted with whatever the villagers provided. This incident was great inspiration for me to adapt to the situation and his commitment and love for the pastoral ministry is always commendable.

It was from 2013, I had much close Association with him as the Director of JUST, the Social service wing of the Diocese. JUST has established a name for itself with the hard works of my predecessors. However, with the ever encouraging support, and active involvement of Bishop Lumen we could take JUST to a new heights in terms of variety of interventions in multiple sectors, and net working. His interests in field visits be it be in Caritas India Project area as the chairman or the project villages of JUST, always gave us new impetus to take the development interventions to the next level.

He always believes in networking and combined efforts, thus, able to generate synergy to achieve the aims and objectives of institutions and organizations. He is straight forward in expression yet able to take along people in decision making. His participatory decision making ability has been the strength and secret of the success of his Shepherdship for the past 25 silver years. He is the person who least bothers about his health and comforts when it comes to socio pastoral commitment. After his major surgery in 2019 in Chennai, Doctors advised him one month bed rest but he could not resist his enthusiasm for the pastoral commitment that he traveled to Telengana on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of post surgery recovery to ordain Fr. Pravin.

As he has faithfully walked 25 Silver years in shepherding the Diocese, wish him good health in the coming years too.

**Fr. Jeevan Kennedy, SVD**

*Former Parish Priest, Gandacherra Parish  
Former Director of JUST*