

## Old School Values for Today



[www.asiacatholic.com](http://www.asiacatholic.com) tells the story of a young man who went to seek an important position at a large printing company.

He passed the initial interview and was going to meet the director for the final interview. The director saw his resume which was excellent, and asked, 'Have you received a scholarship for school?' The boy replied 'No'. Did your father pay for your studies?' 'Yes' he said. 'Where does your father work?' 'My father is a blacksmith'. Then the director asked the young man to show him his hands. The young man showed a pair of hands soft and perfect. 'Have you ever helped your parents at their job?' 'Never, my parents always wanted me to study. Besides, my father can do the job better than me.' The director said: 'I have got a request: When you go home today, go and wash the hands of your father and then come see me tomorrow morning.' The young man felt his chance to get the job was high. When he

returned to his house he asked his father if he would allow him to wash his hands. His father felt strange, happy, but with mixed feelings and showed his hands to his son. It was the first time that the boy noticed his father's hands were wrinkled with so many scars. Some bruises were so painful that his skin shuddered when he touched them. This was the first time that the young man recognized what it meant for this pair of hands to work every day to be able to pay for his studies. The bruises on the hands were the price that his father paid for his education, his school activities and his future. After cleaning his father's hands the young man stood in silence and began to tidy and clean up the workshop. That night, father and son talked for a long time. The next morning, the young man went to the office of the director. The director noticed the tears in the eyes of the young man when he asked him to share what he learned yesterday at home. The boy replied: 'I washed my father's hands and when I finished I stayed and cleaned his workshop. Now I know what it is to appreciate and recognize that without

my parents, I would not be who I am today. By helping my father I now realize how difficult and hard it is to do something on my own. I have come to

appreciate the importance and the value in helping my family." The director said, "This is what I look for in my people. I want to hire someone who can appreciate the help of others; someone who knows the hardship others go through to accomplish things, and someone who realizes that money is not his only goal in life."

"You are hired", said the director.

As I celebrate yet another year of life I remember and thank my parents, teachers, and all those who instilled values in melike life is about giving and serving. Values like these were taught in my home, at school, in the seminary. I am deeply indebted to God and so many wonderful people for the innumerable blessings I have received. With an attitude of gratitude I say 'THANK YOU' to God and to each of you.

+Lumen, CSC



**Pastor's Corner**

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

## Season of Mercy and Grace



**Editorial**

The Year of Mercy which commenced about a couple of months ago is already beginning to show a difference in our churches. There is better attendance at services, longer Communion queues, and more movement in the corners where the confessional is situated. The Year of Mercy, it seems, rather easily strikes a chord in the hearts of most faithful.

With the Season of Lent round the corner one hopes, it gets even better. The central themes of Lent and the numerous practices inbuilt into the Season make us meditate better the depths of God's mercy and love. There is no doubt, the Year of Mercy programs are going to find a sort of fitting culmination in the Season of Lent which we are about to step into.

The importance that Jubilee puts on certain spiritual exercises, like the pilgrimage, has reawakened among large sections of the faithful an interest in the Sacraments, particularly of Reconciliation and Holy

Eucharist. The effects of this spiritual reawakening will surely be reflected in the way one lives out one's life.

And yet, one gets the feeling that we



ought to give equal, if not more, emphasis to the other aspects of the Year of Mercy. For example, the spiritual works of mercy and the corporeal works of mercy. Following the example of Christ

whose mercy found expression in real life situations, we ought to extend our YoM celebrations to real life situations we find ourselves in.

There is something disconcerting about passionately engaging in YoM celebrations that are merely confined to the four walls of the Church but evaporates into thin air when one steps outside its confines. The Year of Mercy offers a wonderful opportunity to translate the much needed concept of mercy and compassion into real life

**LINK** and the entire faithful of Agartala Diocese, extend prayerful birthday wishes to Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC, our beloved Bishop. He has blessed so many lives through his faithful ministry and truly exemplifies what it means to serve as a faithful Shepherd. May God bless him on that special day.

situations. Perhaps the greater challenge that YoM poses for us, as individuals and collective entities, is to extend reconciliation and forgiveness beyond the safe confines of the Church into the streets and alleys, corridors and kitchens of life.

The rigor that the Season of Lent imposes on us is perhaps our God-sent opportunity to address long standing rivalries, factions, feuds, and conflicts, in realms both private and public. It is unfortunate that as a society we are easily prone to division; it is even more unfortunate that we allow divisions to persist and intensify. In such a context we cannot overemphasize the relevance and need of reconciliation that is understood as restoring of relationships.

May the exercises of the ongoing Year of Mercy and the rigors of the approaching Season of Lent make this an exceptional Season of Mercy and Grace for our families and parishes! **J. Pulinthanath, SDB**

## Parish Teams set to launch Year of Mercy programs at Parish Level

Taking advantage of the public holiday on 15<sup>th</sup> January, the Coordination Committee of the Year of Mercy organized a day-long Animation program for the Leaders of all the parishes of the Diocese at Don Bosco Parish Nandannagar. As planned in the Committee's first Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> December, the sole objective of the program was to ensure that every Parish in the Diocese had an effective Team of its own to animate the rest of the parish throughout the Jubilee Year. All parishes of the Diocese barring



four, sent in their 'Teams'. The enthusiastic gathering numbering 97, however, found the day's proceedings a near perfect start for the Year of Mercy programs at the parish level. The Animation programs in Kokborok and Bengali by Frs. Pulinthanath and Bhupon respectively, helped them understand better the spirit of the Year of Mercy. Fr Sunny, the Coordinator of the Year of Mercy in the Diocese discussed with the Group the meaning, significance, plans and practices of the Year of Mercy and how they could implement these in their respective Parishes. It was so good that the Leaders felt the time was not sufficient. During the Adoration that followed, all had an opportunity to approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation as many priests were available. The high point of the day was the Holy Eucharist that Fr. Jeevan presided over. The opportunity the participants got to spend time in prayer and receive the Sacraments made it a day of pilgrimage, a day to experience the mercy of the Lord and reorient their lives.

*Fr. Joseph Palamthattel SDB*

## Good Shepherd Parish, Kathalcherra Jesus the fount of mercy and model of Youth



The Kathalcherra Catholic Youth Movement (KCYM) organized the annual catholic youth meet at Kukicherra village on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> January-2016. More than 150 youth attended the program. Various Talks were given to the Youth who were enlightened to be more personally responsible and goal oriented. The importance of family life, sacraments, individual life, and life of Christian values, were taught by respective Resource Persons--Fr Lancy, csc, Mr Lokhoram Reang, Mr Paul Sangma and Fr Ishwar, csc. There were Singing and Quiz competitions. Seeing the talents of the youth people were filled with joy. This was an enriching program for the youth. We wish many more youth to participate in such joyful events.

Now the people of Good Shepherd Parish are busy preparing for the upcoming Silver Jubilee of the Parish Maria Songho which will held on 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> February -2016.

After the long Winter Vacation once again the campus is filled with joyful noise of the students and hostellers. The new accademic year began on 19<sup>th</sup> of January. *Fr. Ishwar, CSC*

## Holy Spirit Parish, Ambassa

### Social Communication and Media Education



Agartala Diocesan Coordinator conducted class on Social Communication and Media for all Tripura Garo Catholics at Bagmara in Ambassa Parish. 300 Garo tribe delegates from different parishes of Tripura attended from 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> January. Executive members of Tripura Catholic Garo union had long preparations along with host

Bagmara. All three days were full of activities of faith sharing, discussion, talks, holy Eucharist and Cultural nights. Many Garo leaders and youth of different villages joined together to discuss on how to enhance their language and culture. Taking the advantage of the annual gathering, Fr. Ivan D' Silva, svd the Communication Coordinator of Agartala Diocese gave class on media and advertisements. He alerted them how the modern media with gadgets can crumble the tribal culture. He ornately spoke on commercial films and T.V serials which can take away the precious time and chances to fall prey to advertisements, if not become aware of this silent killer. Many of the participants expressed that they were not aware of this reel reality and would like to have more of these awareness classes on Media.

### News Desk, Ambassa

## St. Arnold Parish, Gandacherra Spirit-filled Feast

St. Arnold Parish had a wonderful time in celebrating its patron's feast. The preparation for the feast began on 14<sup>th</sup> January with a Charismatic Retreat for the parishioners for 3 days. The Retreat was preached by Fr. George Arackal and his Team from Kolkata. It was for the first time the parishioners had this opportunity. The second day was kept for Reconciliation and the third day was for healing. Being the year of Mercy, it was really a spirit-filled feast celebration. People tasted the Word of God preached by Fr. George. On Sunday, the feast day, we had a meaningful Eucharistic celebration presided over by Fr. Jeevan SVD, where he emphasized the importance of having relationship with God through His Word all through this Year of Mercy. He also explained about the power of the family. 13 people received Baptism and Holy Communion. The long celebration ended with a family meal.

*Fr. Bosco Lathees*

## St. Alphonsa Parish, Khumulwng Farewell with Tears Social

The first local diocesan priest Fr. Lawrence Darlong came to St. Alphonsa Parish Khumulwng with his first appointment in 2014. God heard my prayer during his Ordination that he should be appointed to assist in the Parish and diocesan Formation House. His presence in the Parish and Minor Seminary was a great help pastorally



and in promoting vocation. The Youth of the Parish were given new lease of life and have become active in church activities. He was given an affectionate farewell by the Parishioners and the Seminarians with heavy heart. The heavy heart was lightened by the arrival of a diocesan Bro. Praveen Yeddanapalli who will do his Regency with us at the Parish and Seminary. He was warmly welcomed by the people and the Seminarians.

### New Couples get ready for new life

Marriage preparation course for six couples was conducted for 3 days in the parish. The classes began at 9am and ended at 2pm every day. The couples were very much enthusiastic to know the values of marriage and thus their preparation was very meaningful. It is an eye opener for most of the boys and girls about marriage and family life. We have taken a step in the parish to make marriage preparation course necessary and compulsory. *Fr. Arun Minj, SVD*

### St. Mary's Parish, Tuikarmaw

#### Village Chapel at Kathaliya



A newly built Village Chapel was blessed by Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, and was inaugurated by Fr. K.J Abraham CSC on 26<sup>th</sup> December

2015 at Kathaliya. The Village Chapel is dedicated to St. Theresa of Child Jesus. The Village Chapel was partially funded and built by the villagers. Bishop in his homily encouraged the people to form faithful Christian families and he appreciated the efforts of the faithful. The joy of the occasion was shared by a cultural extravaganza and a common meal prepared by the people. Some were heard saying: "Today is Christmas for us!"

*Fr. Alfred CSC*

### Diocesan Catholic Youth Meet under the banner of ICYM



A three days Catholic Youth Meet under ICYM was held for the Youth of Kokborok speaking Parishes from 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> December 2015 at Bajjalbari Parish. "Be Merciful as your heavenly Father is Merciful" (Lk.6:36) was the theme taken the Year of Mercy. 260 youth participated from different Parishes. The Resource Persons were all from the Diocese itself. Fr. Binoy CSC Parish Priest of Bodjungnagar, Mr. Tarun Kanti Debbarma, Mr. Sanjib Debbarma, Fr. Lawrance Darlong and Mr. Uttam Debbarma. There was a general and group discussion on some life related issues such as Abortion, Family life, abuse of Internet, Leadership, Economic, Education, and related issues. On 28<sup>th</sup> December Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC, presided over the Holy Eucharist which was followed by a short felicitation program. Mr. Maniklal Molsom the NERYC President was present and animated the musical part. Fr. Sunny SDB too was present for the Mass and animated the prayer of the Year of Mercy. On 29<sup>th</sup> there was an evaluation on whole program and existing youth activities. All the Youth participated actively and the Youth Meet 2015 was concluded with the Mass followed by lunch. All the expenses were met by Fr. Paul Panachikal SDB. We thank him.

*Fr. Remol, SDB*

### "Looking at TEACHING AND LEARNING with FRESH EYES"

An extremely enriching and productive Seminar was organized in Auxilium Girls' School, Agartala, from January 11-13, 2016. The theme of the Seminar was



"Looking at Teaching and Learning with Fresh Eyes." Sr. Celine

D'Cunha, Principal, welcomed everyone for the Seminar. Also present for the Seminar were three teachers from Twimairang School. The Resource Person of the first day was Sr. Celine who introduced the topic and discussed the meaning of the theme of the Seminar. With the help of PPT and various video clippings and interaction, she made us comprehend the purpose of educating the students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. She elaborately explained to us the importance of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, such as Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Media Literacy, Creativity, Information Literacy, and Capacity for Team work and Collaboration.

On the second day Shri VS Tiwary, AGM East, and his team from 'Extramarks Education Private Ltd' gave a detailed and elaborate presentation of the components, contents and the creativity and easy ways of making the students understand from their digital content: extramarks.com (India's most advance Digital Learning solutions).

The first half of the third day was spent in elaborate planning for the academic year 2016-17. The second half of the day was dedicated for the extra training and coaching in Computer Classes and Mexus Digital Classes by Ms Kavita Khatri and Kaushik Saha respectively. The Seminar proved to be a highly beneficial and enriching experience for all.

*Sr. Rihun, FMA*

## Congratulations

### Link CONGRATULATES

#### The new Provincial Team of the SSpS Sisters:

Sr. Alphonse Mary	--Provincial
Sr. Juliana Vaz	--Councilor
Sr. Jeena Joseph	--Councilor
Sr. Ashrita Ekka	--Councilor
Sr. Sunita Kujur	--Councilor

#### UFS Sisters:

Sr. Mary C.J.	-- Provincial
Sr. Benny Fernandes	-- Vice Provincial
Sr. Florence Lalrinpuii	-- Delegate Superior of Mizoram
Sr. Mary Dukru	-- Coordinator of Pastoral Apostolate
Sr. Elsie Castelino	-- Province Secretary

#### The new Provincial Team of the



## Celebrating World Disabled Day

A strong will and a burning drive to win all sorts of barriers, even with physical challenges, was the focus of the Disabled Day. A spark of fire is enough to bring tremendous change in the lives of PwDs and CwDs. JUST observed World Disabled Day on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015 at Telaimura Town Hall as part of its activities for the disabled. Mr. Dasamani Debbarma, with locomotor disability inaugurated the



program by lighting the lamp. Fr. Jeevan, SVD, Director of JUST, welcomed the participants and explained the role of JUST to bring the PwDs and CwDs to the mainstream, whereas Mr. Prasanta Chaudhury, Coordinator presented an overview of the Project. The CDPO, Teliamura and the Panchayat Extension Officer of Teliamura Rural Development Block elaborated various schemes to strengthen PwDs and CwDs in the field of education and livelihood. There were 167 disabled and their guardians who were part of the celebration.

### LLIN Distribution

JUST plays a vital role in Malaria



control in Tripura. In order to mitigate Malaria in Tripura, JUST is implementing various steps. LLIN distribution is one such step. JUST received 17,820 LONG LASTING INSECTICIDAL NETS (LLIN) from the Govt. of Tripura under the program Intensified Malaria Control Project-II for distribution in the project areas. 14,100 is the amount to be distributed in Dhalai District and 3,720 in Khowai District of Tripura. 9,200 LLIN have been distributed as of now in the target villages and the remaining distribution will be done by January 2016. *Mr. Vincent Debbarma*

## National News Roundup

### Broad Gauge Train reaches Tripura



The first ever BROAD GAUGE (BG) trial run up to Agartala

has been conducted successfully on January 13. in presence of Union Minister of State for Railways Manoj Kumar Sinha and other dignitaries. Thousands of people thronged to Agartala railway station to witness the historic event- virtually brining Agartala, the Capital Town of the 'landlocked' State under the country's BG

rail network. People busted into cheers when the BG trial train having six compartments touched Agartala Railway Station today around 2.45 pm. Even NFR officials, who had made a history in completing the BG conversion work within just three months, were elated after seeing the first BG train touch Agartala Station Platform. *(Courtesy Tripura Times)*

### The First National Convention of Bethany Champions, Mangalore

The Bethany Educational Society organized the First National Convention of student representatives, so called the 'Bethany Champions' with the theme 'On Wings of Excellence towards Harmony' drawn from Bethany Schools all over the country for four consecutive days starting from 24 October 2015. Sr. Wilberta BS, the President of the Bethany Educational Society and Superior General of the Congregation

of the sisters of Little Flower of Bethany presided over the inaugural function and hoisted the Bethany Champion Flag at St Theresa's School ground. The Bethany Champions paid their tribute to the Founding Visionary, Servant of God Msgr Raymond FC Mascarenhas at his tomb. As many as 273 student representatives, from different States of India, from the Punjab to the Arunachal and from the Great Himalayas to Kanyakumari felt proud to be the torch bearers to usher in the change needed in our society by



promoting harmony with oneself, with others, with nature and ultimately with God. The curtain was drawn on 27<sup>th</sup> evening on the First National Convention of Bethany Champions, held at St Theresa's School Grounds with Sr. Wilberta BS, the President of the Bethany Educational Society declaring it closed, at the Grand Finale of Synthesis and cultural fusion. The young and energetic Bethany Champions were sent forth on 'Wings of Excellence' to be the harbingers of peace and harmony!

*Sr. Rose Celine, BS*

### Bishop's Program for February 2016

- 01: Clergy Meet, Agartala Birthday Mass
- 02-03: Meet with VC Provincial
- 04-05: Site Meetings with Architect
- 06-07: Parish Sabah, Kathalcherra
- 09: JUST Picnic
- 10: Ash Wednesday
- 13-14: Raypara Chapel Blessing, Tuikarmaw Parish
- 15-16: PSC Meet, Delhi
- 17-18: Caritas Advisory Meet, Delhi
- 20-21: Kudunsei Chapel Blessing, Gachiram Parish
- 22-27: Caritas Field Visit, WB
- 27-28: Nabinpara Chapel Blessing, Depacherra Parish
- 29-March 10: SCM & Plenary Assembly, Bengaluru

### Our Distinguished Visitors

- Fr. Willy, CSC, Family Ministries International Director, from USA
- Fr. Arulraj, CSC, Family Ministries India, from Bengaluru
- Fr. Dan Grudy, CSC, & Ms. Dianne, from Notre Dame University, USA
- Fr. Tom McDermot, CSC, from Notre Dame University, Dhaka
- SCV Sisters Ancita, Primosa & Roselind from Kerala
- SCV Sisters Salvia, Gracy, Ambika and Rosina from AP & Assam