



Pastor's Corner



A story is told of a hunter who once lost his way deep inside the jungle while chasing a deer. He used all his navigation skills but neither did he find any way out of the jungle nor could he find any food to eat for eight days at a stretch. He felt severe hungry that he could eat an entire elephant at one go. Disappointed, he lost all hope. And that is exactly when an apple tree caught his sight. He collected a dozen apples to feed him for the rest of his search. With the 1st apple, his joy knew no bounds and he just couldn't stop feeling grateful and blessed. He thanked God. He could not believe his luck when he ate the 1st apple; but he was less grateful while having the 2nd apple and even lesser grateful when he had the 5th apple. Somehow, with each passing apple, the hunger still kept on increasing and the joy kept on reducing drastically. He just could not enjoy the 10th apple. Why? He had already taken for granted the gift of having found an apple tree in the middle of a forest after eight long days of wandering with hunger. When he took the 10th apple in his hand, he was still very hungry but he just did not feel like having it any more.



Economics calls this 'diminishing marginal utility'. I would like to call it diminishing gratitude. In simple words, taking things for granted. Or let's just call it the 10th apple effect. The 10th apple did not lack taste; it did not lack the potential to satisfy his hunger; but the only thing lacking was his gratitude for finding food in the middle of the jungle.

The hunter represents us. And the apple represents the gifts that life gives us. The 10th apple

The Law of Diminishing Gratitude!

represents our lack of gratitude for these gifts of life and our 'take everything for granted' attitude. As we continue receiving the gifts of life, our hunger, our greed keeps on increasing, and the joy we get from these gifts diminishes. If the 10th apple fails to give you as much pleasure as the first one, nothing is wrong with the apple; everything is wrong with you! If you get bored on a dull day, it is not because the day is dull and boring. It is because your gratitude has become dull and boring. The gift of life for another day cannot be taken for granted. The Nth year of life should seem as exciting as the 16th year, as the 25th year, as the 50th year.

Never let the '10th apple effect' make you take these gifts of life for granted. Never let your gratitude for life fade away. **+Lumen, CSC**

Editorial

Some disparate Covid thoughts!



The Covid conundrum has done strange things to our days and ways. Days of lockdown ironed out the differences between days - no black Mondays, no

Thursday mid-week break, no weekends, no Sundays even. All days became alike equally same, equally monotonous or equally exhilarating. Days are the same; it's what we do with them that make them unique.



With lockdown restrictions extending for more months, the uniqueness of months too got wiped out. With no celebrations to jolt us out of tiresome and unvaried routine of ordinary life it didn't seem to matter if we're in springtime March, sweaty May or rainy July. Being alive was reason enough to be grateful for.

The amazing capacity we have to get used to something! When the State did not have a single positive case, the rigor and severity we put into the observance of the lockdown! And the free-for-all scenario today when the count has crossed 8000 in the State of Tripura! Oh yes, we get accustomed to anything!

The young boy who, when asked, "Did you pray?" said in all sincerity, "No, the Church is closed," makes us want to consider "What has the Covid layoff done to my faith?" Has it grown, has it weakened? Have I realized I cannot do without God and without prayer or have I realized I can do without God and prayer?

J. Pulinthanath, SDB

HAPPY TEACHERS DAY

Link wishes all Teachers a **Happy Teachers Day on 5th September** and thanks them for their dedicated service. Here's why Teachers Day is celebrated on 5th September: Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan believed that "Teachers should be the best minds in the country". When he became the President of India (1962-1967), some of his students and friends requested him to allow them to celebrate his birthday on 5th September. He replied, "Instead of celebrating my birthday, it would be my proud privilege if September 5th is observed as Teachers' Day." His birthday has since been celebrated as Teachers' Day in India.

MARIAMNAGAR PARISH:**New Priest to mother Church**

The priestly Ordination of Fr. Sekhar Robin Das SFX was on 30th July 2020 a memorable day for the Diocese of Agartala and for the Missionaries of St. Francis Xavier (SFX), commonly known as the



Pillar Fathers, of which he is a Member. The Holy Order was conferred on him by Most Rev.

Lumen Monteiro, CSC, the Bishop of Agartala, at Shantir Rani Church Mariamnagar. The parents of Deacon Sekhar, SFX, and a selected few relatives, participated in the solemn Liturgy due to the strict Rules and Regulations of COVID-19. Fr. Abraham VC, Parish Priest of Mariamnagar Parish, presented the candidate for Ordination. Rev. Bishop then ordained the candidate by imploring God's grace and anointed him as a priest to proclaim the Gospel, to baptize, and to administer the Sacraments. The occasion was very solemn and our dear Bishop made it even more solemn with his presence and personal exhortation to the new priest during the homily. Fr. Sekhar is the first ever Priest from Mariamnagar Parish. We all join in congratulating him. *Fr. P. Amalraj*

GANDACHERRA PARISH:**Vianney Day 2020**

"The priest is not a priest for himself he is for you; after God, the priest is everything". *St. John Vianney*. All the Diocesan Fraternity came together on 3rd and 4th of August at St. Arnold Parish,



Gondacherra, to pray, to meditate and to celebrate our Patron. On 4th August the actual Feast of St. John Vianney, our Lordship Bishop

Lumen Monteiro, CSC, presided over the Holy Eucharist. All the parishioners and Sisters were invited for the holy Mass. The celebration became more memorable and meaningful, especially in the midst of the pandemic. It was also a magnificent time for all our Priests from the Diocese to reunite, renew and reenergize our selves with the spirit of St. John Vianney, who is the Patron of Priests. Certainly, it was a prodigious venue for us to think deeply about the mission and vision of the Diocese of Agartala. The Meeting for all the diocesan priests which followed was chaired by Bishop Lumen Monteiro. We reflected on the mission and vision of the Diocese and its various needs. Every priest contributed his personal experience of mission. It helped us to nourish and admire each other's

success, happiness, difficulties and struggles. In fact, it was a new eye-opener for all of us to measure all our efforts in quality of time and hard work. The message of our dear Bishop was clear -- to reach the greatest heights of faith and work for others just as St. John Vianney had done. *Fr. Praveen Yeddapanalli*

KHUMULWNG PARISH:**St. Alphonsa Parish Patroness**

Our Parish which is dedicated to St. Alphonsa, celebrated the Parish Feast on Sunday 26 July 2020, instead of on 28th August, the actual Feast Day. Fr. Valentine, SVD welcomed everyone and Mr. Subal Debbarma gave brief life history of the life of St.



Alphonsa. The solemn holy Eucharist was presided over by Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC, and Fr. P. Amalraj was the homilist for the day. In his homily he emphasized the need to Witness to Christ's Values as St. Alphonsa did during her lifetime. Unlike every year, due to the COVID 19 restrictions, the Feast day was celebrated with a small community and minimum festivity. Few parishioner-representatives from the neighborhood, Montfort Brothers, MSMHC Sisters and Jesuit Fathers from St. Mary's School Jampuijala, joined the celebrations. After the Holy Eucharist, the new Assistant Parish Priest, Fr. Fredy Madukkakuzhy SVD, was welcomed in the Parish with *risha* and flowers and song. In his address our dear Bishop mentioned about the need for family prayer in this hour of pandemic. The celebrations ended with the festive meal for a small group of people.

Fr. Fredy, SVD

AMBASSA PARISH:**Media Awareness Class on Youth Sunday**

Youth Day was celebrated in Ambassa Parish on 9th August. 56 Youth participated in the one day program conducted by the Parish Youth Leaders from different villages. Holy Mass for the Youth was offered at 07:00am by the Parish Priest Fr. Ivan D'Silva,



svd, along with the other concelebrants. After the Mass Fr. Ivan D'Silva the Diocesan Social Communication Secretary spoke on the Social Media and Pastoral Communication. He spoke on the Barriers of Communication and how the Youth can overcome these barriers. The second Session was taken by Mr. Antony Debbarma the Agartala High Court Lawyer and Human Rights Activist. He dealt on 'How to communicate and delete what is false'. He spoke about the wrong use of Mobile to spread the fake news and forward the

messages and pictures which create tension and mayhem. Dr. Asok Debbarma took a short Session on Covid-19 Pandemic and called on the Youth to be safe by wearing mask, main social distance, and sanitizing hands. It was decided that another follow up of the Class will be held after 3 months.

News Bureau, Ambassa

News Briefs from the Diocese

Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit (SSpS)

The Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit, the Province of North East India, in particular Sisters at Nandannager, joined together to celebrate the 25 years of their existence in Tripura. Following the legacy of their Founder St. Arnold Janssen and Co-Foundresses Bl. Maria Helena Stollenwerk and Josepha Hendrina Stenmanns, the



Congregation spread gradually to North East India. The first missionaries Srs. Mary Palati, Valsina Thomas, Pushpa Ekka and Ashrita

Dung Dung, ventured into an unknown horizon and arrived at Ambassa, Tripura, on 23rd July 1995. It was an occasion for multiple remembrances and memories of the beginnings. It was a relived experience of persons, events and places that were instrumental precedents for their Mission. It was a moment of joy and gratitude to Almighty God for His blessings and graces since 25 years. On this auspicious occasion, the Holy Eucharist was presided by Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, along with concelebrants Frs. KennadySVD and Antony SVD. The Bishop expressed his immense gratitude and appreciation to the Sisters for rendering their service in the Diocese. He mentioned that he was there from the beginning and witnessed the initial struggle of the pioneer Sisters in Ambassa. After the Holy Mass there was a short felicitation program for Rev. Bishop Lumen on his 25 years as Bishop. This was followed by a fellowship meal.

Sr. Susheela Xess, SSpS

Silver Jubilee Online Competition TALENT HUNT 2020



To mark the Silver Jubilee celebration of our Diocese and the Episcopacy of Bishop Lumen Monteiro, the Youth Commission organized an Online Competition from 1st to 15th August, 2020. Christened as Talent Hunt 2020 it was launched in the ICYM Diocese of Agartala- Facebook page and YouTube Agartala Diocese

Youth Commission, through Posters and Video clips inviting the Youth to participate. TALENT HUNT attracted many Youth to contest in the trio competitions Solo Singing, Dancing and Painting. The Dexco Members of ADYC expressed their gratitude to the PYAs and Youth Leaders of different Parishes for the positive response received. Taking this not just as Competition but something beyond, the DYD Fr. Lawrence said that this Online Competition is a means to evangelize. On behalf of DEXCO he said "we are glad that Jesus is praised through the songs and dances of the talented Youth. We are glad that His life is reflected through the artists' participation in the Talent Hunt 2020." *News Desk-ADYC*

Youth Sunday celebrated in Agartala Diocese

Every 2nd Sunday of August is dedicated for the Youth in India and this year the National Youth Sunday was observed on the 9th of August. Many of the Dioceses took recourse to online Masses and programs. The theme for this year's Youth Sunday is "Young Man, I say to you arise" (Lk 7:14.) In our Diocese Youth Sunday was observed in the respective Parishes with minimal participation of Youth from Parish units, owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. With safety measures and guidelines well maintained the Youth Sunday was observed in some of the Parishes that are not in the 'containment zones'. Youth Mass was celebrated for the Youth separately, followed by inspirational and motivational Talks and interactions based on the theme. *News Desk-ADYC*

Some Pictures from Bishramganj, Ambassa and Depacherra Parishes



Bible Quiz in Kokborok: Top 8 Winners

08.08. 2020 Biblia Quiz 01/3 ni Top 8 Winners

1. Bapan Debbarma (Bishramganj, 100 marks),
2. Shivani Jamatia (Hadupa, 100 marks),
3. Diari Jamatia (Hadupa, 100 marks),
4. Valley Rose Debbarma (Agartala, 100 marks),
5. Kwthar Debbarma (Prakash Chandra para, 100 marks),
6. Jakob Debbarma (Lefunga, 95 marks),
7. Bijoy Debbarma (Kumaritilla, 95 marks).
8. Bharat Bijoy Jamatia (Killa, 85 marks).

15 Aug 2020 (Biblia Quiz 01/4 ni Rem: Mathai 13-16)

JUST News Briefs

JUST Supports Covid-19 Beneficiaries with Livelihood Resources for Income Generation



The COVID-19 lockdown has impacted the livelihood of the communities because the Farmers were unable to do any farming or livelihood activities during the lockdown. The Socio-economic condition of the target population revolves around agricultural activities which came to a

virtual standstill. Economically, they are poor and agriculture is the main source of their livelihood. 90% of the people of the target area are engaged in farming. Having realized the deplorable conditions of the Farmers under Hezamara and Padmabil R.D Blocks in connection with their livelihood, JUST with the support of Caritas India distributed 10,000 fingerlings, 3 Turmeric Grinding Machine (multi-purpose) and 20 piglets to the JUST Farmer's Club Members. This is a small way to assist those who are in dire straits.

Village level sensitization and interaction for community collective action

Our Organization JUST conducted a program on sensitization and interaction for community

collective action at the Village level. The program was for the Farmers of all 14 target Villages and was conducted in the month of July 2020. 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 from their experiences which could be practiced by the Farmers Clubs collectively. The Facilitator motivated the Farmers to do more collective farming through which they will earn more income and it will also ensure the sustainability of the group in the long run.

Mr. Cyril Darlong

News Tidbits from all over

Youth 'Say No to Drugs'

Celebrating the National Youth Sunday on 9 August 2020 with the rest of India, Bishop George Pallipparambil of Miao Diocese, Arunachal Pradesh, appealed to the Youth of North East India to give up drugs and create a better society and Church. Recalling



the theme of National Youth Sunday 2020, 'Young man, I say to you, arise' (Lk7: 14), Bishop George, who is also the Chairman Bishop of the North East Regional Youth Commission (NERYC), said, "Our youth in most parts of the North East Region, need to rise above their addictions to drugs, for they live as though they are dead." Highlighting the direct implications of drug addiction to the society and to the Church, the NERYC Chairman said that as long as the Youth fail to rise above their addictions, the Church will suffer. In the context of Covid-19, the subdued celebration of the Youth Sunday had mostly online events this year, like Bible Quiz, Drawing and Singing. (CNUA)

How Joe Biden's Catholic roots have shaped his public life

As uprisings sparked by George Floyd's death erupted throughout the nation, Joe Biden turned to his Catholic faith to offer inspiration to a nation gripped by yet another killing of an unarmed Black man at the hands of a white police officer. "I grew up with Catholic social doctrine, which taught me that faith without works is dead, and you will know us by what we do," he said in a videotaped eulogy June 9, lamenting that there is still much work to be done "to ensure that all men and women are not only created equal, but are treated equally." A "prayer to overcome racism" in a recent church bulletin at St. Joseph on the Brandywine in Greenville, Delaware, offered similar sentiments. The suburban Parish north of Wilmington is where Biden and his wife, Jill, worship and where, Msgr. Joseph Rebman told NCR, "they arrive a little late and leave a bit early, just like a lot of Catholics." Biden's faith is cited on the first

page of his 2007 memoir, *Promises to Keep*, firmly situating himself in the context of an Irish Catholic family and a working-class community that revolved around the family's religious practices and not just on Sunday. Biden credits those Catholic roots which first took seed in parishes and parochial schools in Pennsylvania and Delaware with teaching him the importance of the human dignity of all people, a core principle of Catholic social teaching. They also shaped his understanding of solidarity, especially with the poor and the working class, which he regularly cites when talking about job security and economic policy. *Christopher White NCR*

India's Catholic Church for Dalits

Dalits form about 60 percent of India's Christian community, which makes up about 2.3 percent of the country's largely Hindu 1.3 billion population. Muslims form some 14 percent. The Catholic Church of India has very much at heart the cause of Dalit Christians. This concern of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) is largely carried out by its Office for Scheduled Castes/Scheduled classes, through actions such as lobbying, advocacy, memoranda, court petitions, movements and protests. First observed in 2009, Black Day is organized annually by the CBCI, the National Council of Churches in India, and the National Council of Dalit Christians. On the occasion of this year's Black Day, Archbishop Felix Machado of Vasai Diocese, Chairman of SC Commission said that the cause of Dalit Christians assumes an added poignancy under the impact of Covid-19 and the closedown. Speaking to Vatican News, he said the "first victims of all the effects of coronavirus are poor people like Dalits". They are doubly and triply poor because they are not just deprived economically and have no essential means of livelihood but they are regarded as the "useless of society", despised, neglected and discriminated against. Even though Covid-19 strikes anyone who comes in its way, the Bishop of Vasai said, the Dalits, in many ways, are the first and biggest victims of the pandemic. This is why the action of the Catholic Church of India is particularly focused on the Dalits. *Vatican News Service*

