



Pastor's Corner

Thoughts as I commemorate 21 years!



The story is told of two people who lived in two independent houses, separated by a compound. In one lived a retired person and in the other a techie. They had planted identical saplings on either sides of the compound. The techie used to water the plant and manure it regularly. The retired person on the other hand just gave a small quantity of water and little manure. The techie's plant grew into a lush green, leafy and robust plant. The retired person's plant was a near normal but much more luxuriant than his neighbor's.

One night there was a heavy rain with gusty winds. The next morning both came out to see the fate of the plants.



To the techie's surprise his plant had gotten uprooted whereas his neighbor's was unharmed. The techie asks the retired man as to why his plant was uprooted despite such good care whereas the neighbor had hardly cared.

The retired person's answer should be a lesson for all of us: "Look young man, you had supplied every thing a plant would need in abundance, and the plant did not have to go in search of it. Your roots did not have to go down; whereas mine were supplying just enough to keep the tree alive. For the rest, it had to go down into the ground to fulfill its needs. Since your roots were superficial the rain and wind could easily fell it. Since my roots were pretty deeply grounded they could withstand the onslaught of nature... The same applies to your life" he said.

Soon we will be celebrating Pentecost and remembering the birthday of our Diocese. As I recall the 21 years of existence of the Diocese and my own Episcopal Ordination, there is joy and satisfaction in my heart; not because life has been a bed of roses, but because I had to go deep down like the root to find strength for my sustenance. This strength came from prayer and through hard work. Today I can see that the tree has grown, withstanding the onslaught of many storms and trials. This Pentecost I will be praying that the Holy Spirit who came down on the Apostles and likewise on me in 1996 continues to inspire, empower, ennoble and guide me. You too please pray for me too. Thank you. **+Lumen, CSC**



Editorial

Nursing Unnecessary Anxieties



The Blessing and Dedication of St. Francis Xavier Cathedral on 23rd April brought together thousands of faithful from all parts of the State. Even if only for a few hours, the gathering highlighted the underlying unity of the Church, visible at the Diocesan level. Two

Church dignitaries - Cardinal Patrick of Dhaka in his talk and Archbishop Jala of Shillong in the homily spoke of the Cathedral as a structure that among other things, is also a symbol of the unity of the People of God, the Church.



Unity is a compelling message at the moment for Tripura and its people. Each day brings news of fresh divisions and factions among political parties and other entities. One cannot but wonder if the ballot-bound direction of the State has a bearing on other areas of life?

In a Diocese like Agartala, with its rich collection of tribes, tongues and traditions, the urge to fragment is ever real and requires quick looking into. The tendency to divide, on the basis of Language, is an old temptation that keeps coming, time and again.

And yet, it needs to be acknowledged perhaps, that over the years the Diocese has made considerable strides in the use of Kokborok language in liturgy and church matters. If one were to compare the increase in the extent of the use of Kokborok in the official spaces in the secular sphere with that of the Church, one would better appreciate the direction in which the Diocese is moving, on the Kokborok front.

It only takes a refreshing of memory to realize that we have come a long way from the time when Kokborok Masses were few and far between. Or from the time when only one or two knew how to converse in that language. If Kokborok were to enjoy such prominence and scope also in non-Church yet official forums, the shape of the language would have been different.

In multilingual Tripura, the work has just begun. The ideal of presenting the Good News and the liturgy in the language that a person's 'heart' best understands is a dream worth keeping alive and working towards. In the meantime, it's equally necessary to keep track of comforting directions and milestones. Or else, at a time such as this, when 'otherness' seems less a virtue and more an obstacle, issues related to language can, all too easily, become a dividing factor, even within our Diocese.

J. Pulinthanath,

Congratulations!



LINK congratulates Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, on his Episcopal Anniversary on 26th May. We thank God for our Bishop and assure him of our prayers in his Episcopal ministry.

The high point for our Diocese after celebrating Easter was the Blessing and Dedication of the Cathedral Church at Agartala. Several news reports in the print and electronic media have been circulating. While we thank God for the successful program, especially given the fact that it rained all day Saturday, the only time it did not rain was right through our 4-hour program. If this is not a miracle, what else is? Thank you God and thank you everyone. Several people wrote notes of appreciation to me; but I share with you just one, from our dear Apostolic Nuncio, which I think says it all! Some photos too for your viewing pleasure. **+Lumen, CSC**

New Delhi, 24 March 2017

His Lordship

Rt. Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC, DD
Agartala 799009, TRIPURA, INDIA



Your Lordship,

I thank you for the courteous communication about the Inauguration and Blessing of St. Francis Xavier cathedral, Agartala on 23 April 2017. I am glad to send my sincere greetings and felicitation on this auspicious occasion. As the Representative of His Holiness Pope Francis, I take this opportunity to convey apostolic greetings and blessings from the Holy Father.

Dear friends, it is great to see that you have built this beautiful Cathedral with your wealth, time and energy. I congratulate you for this marvelous church.

At the same time, remember what Paul says: that you, the People of God, are real "God's building" and "God's temple". As the Apostolic Nuncio, I exhort you to build a solid community of Christians, a dynamic faith living parish on the strong foundation who is Jesus Christ. Pope Francis has the following words to such a faith-living community which is the genuine church: The Holy Father says: "We are called to go forth, to be an evangelizing community, even if that simply means opening the front door of our homes and stepping out into our own neighborhoods. An evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed in people's daily lives; it bridges distances, it is willing to abase itself if necessary, and it embraces human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others".

May the Lord bless you all, with his choicest blessings through the intercession of your Patron St. Francis Xavier.

I gladly avail of this opportunity to confirm my best regards and I remain in communion of prayers,

Yours sincerely in Christ, Archbishop Giambattista Diqna, New Delhi



MANDWI PARISH

Bishop's Pastoral Visit

Our dear Bishop Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro CSC, DD made a two-day pastoral visit on 1st and 2nd April 2017 to Mandwi Parish. His visit leaves an indelible mark of grace for the people of Kosomkwbra and for all the parishioners. Arriving the Parish on April 1 in the evening he was welcomed by the hostel children and some parishioners with 'rishha' followed by a short cultural programme organized by the children, after which we had dinner and shared some pastoral experiences on the possible ways of evangelization. Next morning, he went around the parish complex and was happy to see the school building, hostel and attached presbytery going to be completed. Then we moved towards Kosomkwbra village for the Holy Eucharist. On the way, we visited the Syro Malankara mission and met the Sisters who were having 'Kurbana'. After this we went to our spot and the Bishop was welcomed with a bouquet of flowers by the faithful. After holy Mass there was a short felicitation program and lunch. Fr. Lucas Murmu, SDB the Rector of St. Xavier and Fr. KA Thomas the Principal of Herma Don Bosco School were also present for the program. **Fr. Remol, SDB**

KUMARGHAT PARISH

Marriage Preparation Course

Marriage Preparation Course was organized for two days from 17th to 18th March at the Parish. The Resource Persons were: Sr. Mary David FS, Sr. Pushpa MC, Fr. Arul CSC and Catechists Santosh and Subia. The main topics discussed were: Marriage as a sacrament, how to form a model of Christian family, how to manage the family financially, parenting, children as gifts from God, and challenges of family life. A movie on family life and its challenges was also screened. The couples were given time to share their experiences of family life among themselves. The program was attended by 7 couples.

Leadership Training Program

Kumarghat Parish organized two days of Leadership Training for the Parish Council Members on 25th & 26th March. The Resource Persons were Fr. Lancy CSC, Fr. Jilson CSC and Fr. Arul CSC. The program was attended by all Presidents and Secretaries of the various *mondolis*. There were 37 participants. The main objective was to instill leadership qualities and to improve teamwork among our church leaders. During the two days program, games and group discussion were

organized to motivate the leaders to become responsible and to work as a team. The Resource Persons helped the leaders to formulate the vision and mission statement. The leaders discussed the different strategies to realize the vision and the objectives of the parish for the coming years.

Regent Stephen, CSC

KATHALCHERRA PARISH

Village Chapel blessed at Nutanbari:

On April 18 we had the long awaited church



blessing at Nutanbari *mondoli* under Good Shepherd Parish Kathalcherra. St. Peter's Chapel, though incomplete, was blessed and inaugurated by Bishop Lumen Monteiro,

CSC. The *mondoli* has a diocesan priest who was ordained on 2014. The strong faith of the people led them to build this beautiful chapel. This was indeed God's blessing and guiding hand that strengthened the small community to build such beautiful place of worship. Thanks to Church in Need Germany, as well as the local people who generously contributed to build the church.

Peace Rally

Holy Cross Higher Secondary School Kathalcherra conducted Peace Rally on March 18 from the School ground to Birashi Miles. All the students from VIII to X participated in the Rally. It was led by the Peace Team of the School. The purpose was to convey the message of peace to family, nature and to one another. The Rally was supported by the Jana Unayan Samiti Tripura.

Retreat for Couples

The month of April was a month of joy and celebration. We began the month with Retreats for Couples on the first Sunday. More than 100 couples were

present and attended the Retreat. The main preachers were Frs. Abraham VC from Mariamnagar Parish and Fr. Bennet from



Gondacherra Parish. It was a full day Retreat. The theme was- Renewal of Family. The Retreat concluded with fellowship meal.

Rite of Initiation

Several children and adults were given the Sacraments of Initiation at Kukicherra, Demdum and Dangacherra *mondoli*. The Risen Lord blessed us with some new disciples of household who believed in the resurrection of Jesus and decided to follow Him. *Fr. Ishwar, CSC*

News from the Diocese

Announcement: KOKBOROK for PRIESTS and RELIGIOUS

Announcing Koborok Learning Course (basic) for priests and religious, 27 May to 10 June 2017, at Peace Centre (includes lunch and refreshments). Starts at 9.00 AM on 27th and ends at 2.00 PM on 10th.

FOLLOW UP: There will be two short follow up sessions for those attending the course. The first follow up will be in September and the second in January or Feb. Each of the follow up sessions will be of three days duration only. The exact dates of the follow up classes will be announced later.

JUST News Roundup

Certificates for the Disabled

On 9th March 2017, DDRC West Tripura arranged a Certification Camp in Teliamura R.D. Block with the support of JUST and Block Administration.



The main purpose of the camp was to distribute Disability Certificate, Renewal of Certificate, Assessment of PwDs & CwDs degree of disability, Distribution

of Aids & Appliance. DDRC registered names of PwDs & CwDs and Doctor's checked their (PwDs & CwDs) degree of disability and registered them for Certificate and Aids & Appliance. JUST CBR Staff facilitated camp activities to organize entire program smoothly. 98 PwDs/CwDs were registered in the camp. 53 PwDs/CwDs got Certificates and 17 PwDs/CwDs got Aids & Appliance.

Workshop on Peace Promotion

JUST organized a School level Workshop on "Peace



Promotion" in the month of March. The theme of the workshop was "Living together in the Multi-cultural, Multi-lingual and multi-religious society".

There were 101 students who participated in the workshop. The Peace

Staff asked 'Is Conflict good or bad' and then gave an illustration and spoke on peace in the Multi-cultural, Multi-religious and Multi-lingual society. They gave an exercise on 'Pottu' which speaks of different labels; where the society sees and labels a person based on the color, race, religion, marginalized community and stigmatize them from our society. They also spoke on **Unity in Diversity**. Human beings display differences but the basic human realities are the same for the entire human race for their hunger, thirst, pain, loss, aging, illness, death, happiness, laughter.

Mr. Vincent Debbarma

Sr. Rani Maria cleared for Beatification

Sister Rani Maria, Franciscan Clarist nun who



was assassinated in central India 22 years ago, has been cleared for beatification by the Vatican. Beatification is the penultimate stage in the four-phased canonization process in the Catholic Church. Rani Maria's cause of canonization began in 2003 and she was declared a Servant of God four years later. Rani Maria was 41 when Samandar Singh stabbed her inside a bus on February 25, 1995. Singh was hired by some landlords who were upset with the nun's fighting for just wages and other rights of the laborers. She was attacked while travelling to Indore on her way to her native place in Kerala. The attacker followed her when she ran out of the crowded bus and continued to stab her. She died of 54 stab wounds on the roadside at Nachanbore Hill near Indore. She was buried at Udaingar in Dewas district where she had worked among poor landless agricultural laborers. *Vatican News*

Growing number of Americans love Jesus but don't go to church, Barna finds

While an increasing number of Americans are reportedly abandoning the institutional church and its defined boundary markers of religious identity, many Americans still believe in God and practice faith outside its walls, a new Barna study has found. Barna has released a report on the first of a two-part exploration of faith and spirituality outside the church, looking at the "fascinating segment of the American population who, as the saying goes, 'love Jesus but not the church.'" One-tenth of the population comprises those who self-

identify as Christian and who strongly agree that their religious faith is very important in their life, but are "dechurched," meaning they have attended church in the past, but haven't done so in the last six months or more, the Barna study says, adding that only seven percent of the population belonged to this category in 2004. More than 60 percent of the people in this group are women, and 80 percent are not millennials, between the ages of 33 and 70. *UCANews*

The "Mother of all bombs" kills scores of IS fighters

The US military's largest non-nuclear bomb killed at least 36 militants, Afghan Defence sources said. The GBU-43/B Massive Ordnance Air Blast bomb better known as the "Mother of All Bombs" hit Islamic State (IS) hideouts in Achin district in eastern Nangarhar Province. The huge bomb, which has a blast yield of 11 tonnes of TNT, was dropped from a US MC-130 special operations transport, and slowed by a parachute. "The explosion was the biggest I have ever seen. Towering flames engulfed the area," said Achin District Governor Esmail Shinwari, adding "we think a lot of Daesh fighters may have been killed." According to Army General John W. Nicholson, commander of US forces in Afghanistan, the strike was designed to minimise the risk to Afghan and US forces conducting clearing operations in the Achin area "while maximising the destruction" of IS fighters and facilities. So far, the only dissenting voice is that of former Afghan President Hamid Karzai. In a tweet, he said "I vehemently and in strongest words condemn the dropping of the latest weapon, the largest non-nuclear bomb, on Afghanistan by US". Although



the Pentagon has so far only mentioned the Islamic State group as a target, experts think that such a bomb could be used against Iran's nuclear facilities and underground labs. *AsiaNews/Agencies*

Announcement

INSIGHT IAS is an Institution under the aegis of North East Regional Catholic Bishops' Council. It has a vision to advance the career prospects of the youth, who have the potential to join high ranking Civil Services, but who have been deprived of quality civil service exam coaching. INSIGHT IAS gives 10 Months intensive Civil Service exam coaching programme for Graduates and Post Graduates.

The students need to fill the online application and book the seat in advance for course as well for the hostel. The coaching fees for UPSC Mains cum Prelims Course (General Studies, CSAT and Sociology Optional) is Rs. 60,500/- (inclusive of: text books Rs.5000 + library fee 500). Food and accommodation extra.

Note: It would cost more than Rs. 5.5 lakhs for a student to prepare for IAS exams in New Delhi for 12 months. Hence, INSIGHT IAS is offering affordable civil service exam preparation at a least possible cost. Contact:

Email: insightcsa@gmail.com The next Session of INSIGHT begins on 3rd July, 2017.

Our Distinguished Visitors

- Sr. Rosily, SABS Vicar General from Kerala
- Sr. Catherine, SABS Vicar Provincial from Dimapur
- Sr. Pushpa, CSC, Area Coordinator from Dhaka
- Sr. Parbati, CSC, from Shillong
- Sr. Liss Grace, SD, Provincial from Ghaziabad
- Sr. Navya Latha, SD, Superior from Nongstoin
- Cardinal Patrick, CSC, from Dhaka Bangladesh
- Archbishops & Bishops from India and NE India
- Fr. James, CSC, Provincial from Dhaka Bangladesh
- Fr. Jolly from Caritas India, Delhi
- Fr. Valeriano Vaz from Goa
- Priests, Brothers & Sisters from NE India
- Sr. Assunta, FMM and Sr. Daisy, FMM from Delhi

Bishop's Program for May 2017

- 01-02: Caritas GB Meet, St. John's Bengaluru
- 02-05: SCM Meet, St. John's Bengaluru
- 06: SCC Zonal Meet, Kathalcherra
- 07: Parish Priest Installation, Agartala
- 09: Clergy Meet, Agartala
- 10: USA/Canada: Program & Appeals