



Agartala Diocesan Newsletter

DIOCESE OF AGARTALA

Lead Us Onward



Vol. XXVI; No. 5; May 2022



Pastor's Corner

26-05-1996 to 26-05-2022 – That's 26 Years!

The 26th day of May always brings back memories of 1996, the day I was consecrated the first Bishop of the Diocese of Agartala, even though the

Diocese itself was established on 11th January 1996 by Pope St. John Paul II. Emotions of joy and gratitude well up in me as I sit and reminisce. Lead Us Onward has been my motto and prayer since the day of my Episcopal Ordination. Pentecost Sunday was when I was ordained a Bishop by the late Archbishop Resto Phanrang, SDB, then Archbishop of Shillong. I always felt the power of the Spirit guiding me, empowering me, enlightening me, and sending me forth... my duty was to obey in faith. Today I thank Almighty God for His numerous blessings throughout the last 26 years. The Holy Spirit who descended on the Apostles and set them on fire precisely that they in turn would set the world on fire is the same Spirit who sends us forth to be witnesses. On 26th May while we pray for our Diocese on its 26th Anniversary, let us beg the Spirit to give all of us the spiritual gift of fortitude especially at this time when the Catholic Church is under threat by the secular forces.

Let me close with this piece Ukraine, Russia and Easter...! Bob's Banter wrote: "Last week was Easter. It was also Easter for those fighting the bitter war in Ukraine and the forces from Russia. Also, for the countries who are supplying arms and ammunition that can be used against Russia. Most probably they declared a ceasefire, for their men to attend church. Attend church and do what afterwards? Take up their guns and shoot each other to pieces again?"



How we have made a mockery of religion. Each and every religion in the world talks about peace and love, and yet we allow ourselves to kill using that same religion we believe in to goad us into hatred for one another.

It was Easter! A day when a man on the cross who died on a Friday rose from the dead, conquering the wicked intentions of evil. When life won over death! When love won over hate! When peace won over war! When non-violence won over violence!

When some soldiers entered a church last week and lit a candle for the prince of peace, did they come out realizing what hypocrites they'd made of themselves? And it's not just the religion of the Orthodox Christians of Ukraine and Russia that are being made a mockery of. Look at our country. A country where the religion of the majority teaches us to live side by side with each other is now being used by politicians to polarize people into 'us' or 'them'! And sadly, yes very sadly, all in the name of religion.

Today, a week after Easter as we celebrate the victory of good over evil, using the method of non-violence let us make a vow that for good to triumph we will use methods that good uses. That good does not need violence to make it sit on the throne of righteousness. For good to reign, good methods have to be used." God Bless. +Lumen, CSC

Happy Anniversary

26 years ago, on 26 May

CONGRATULATIONS TO BISHOP LUMEN MONTEIRO CSC, DD ON COMPLETING 26 YEARS AS THE FIRST AND ONLY BISHOP OF AGARTALA TILL DATE. -THE FAITHFUL OF THE DIOCESE



EDITORIAL

It is noteworthy that many of our would-be couples take advantage of the 'Marriage Preparation Courses' that have become a regular feature in the annual calendar of most of our parishes. It is, no doubt, a commendable service by the Church, as it purportedly helps the duo prepare themselves for the big day and also for the life thereafter. Naturally, a program with such lofty objectives would also have scope for betterment. However, that possibility does not in any way undermine their value or the service they render. If a would-be couple after having attended a



Unforeseen Impediments

marriage preparation course organized by the parish end up as a case of 'living together', that's quite rightly considered rather strange. Although cases of 'Living together' are not as rare as we would like to think they are, by and large, our villages are free from the fad. That is precisely why, when our young people from villages, that too after having attended a prenuptial course in all good faith, unceremoniously set up house together, it gets noted and talked about.

Understandably, it's not a big number, but even if it is a single case, it's something. The fact is that there is a small segment of young

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people who do not settle down into properly married ways solely because they do not have the money required to organize a marriage feast and nothing else, period. Of course, granted, there might be a percentage even there that finds this a convenient alibi to escape the hard work and sacrifice inbuilt into marriages. But let that be, for the moment.

With regard to those other genuine cases, is there some extension service our pre-nuptial courses can incorporate to address this rather embarrassing scenario?

Maybe a common marriage celebration and feast of

moderate proportions organized by the Parish itself the expenses of which are shared by all stakeholders and well-wishers? There is also the possibility of scaling down on the size and stature of our enterprises – structures, celebrations, projects, and productions so that a couple of bed and board sharing couples get past this purgatorial phase of their life together as man and wife.

The fact that our marriages are getting unnecessarily bigger by the day is no help either.

J. Pulinthanath, SDB

The face of war



This is a photo of an eight feet tall mosaic painstakingly created by Ukrainian artist Daria Marchenko - titled by the artist as "THE FACE OF WAR".

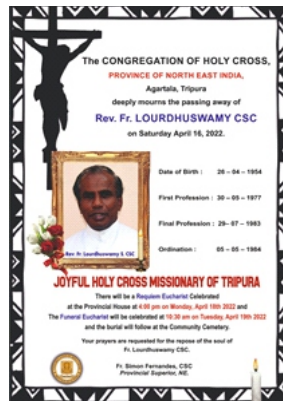
The mosaic has been made with 5000 empty bullet shells picked from the streets of Ukraine. Just zoom into the photo and realize why Edgar Degas, the 19th century French artist philosopher famously said, "Art is not what you see, but what you make others see."

Tribute

A Tribute to Rev. Fr. Lourdhuswamy CSC. Excerpts from the Provincial Superior's Speech at the funeral Mass.

Fr. Lourdhuswamy, CSC, was born in Rangoon, Burma, on April 26, 1954, and was ordained a Priest on May 5, 1984.

His missionary journey in Holy Cross began with his first appointment as an associate pastor at Kathalcherra in October 1984. In September 1988, he was installed as the parish priest of the same parish and remained there until October 1991. In November 1991, he was elected as the Assistant Provincial and shouldered the leadership of North East India's missions. In 1994 he went to USA for his updates. In June 1996, he returned to the Northeast to shoulder the responsibility as the parish priest of Depacherra, where he served seven long years. During this long tenure at Depacherra, he faced many challenges, including an attempt to ambush the vehicle in which he and other co-missionary team members were traveling. After serving as the Principal of Holy Cross School in



Panisagar, he was appointed as the parish priest of Kumarghat in April 2004 where he served the next three years. In July 2007 he was back to Kathalcherra as parish priest till he retired due to ill health in 2012. From then on, he was a resident at Andre Home, Agartala, till the good Lord called him to his eternal reward on April 16, 2022.

Fr. Lourdhuswamy was a great missionary, and he opted to work in the missions of North East India all along his life. He was a very affectionate and passionate pastor. He was an ardent, faithful religious of Holy Cross. He possessed a generous heart, especially for the children. He was a cheerful person with a positive attitude and an inspiration to many generations of Holy Cross religious. His passing to eternal bliss saddens us. But we celebrate his life here on earth, especially his missionary zeal and love for the people he served. We will miss his physical presence but console ourselves with the thought that the Congregation of Holy Cross, Province of North East India, will now have a heavenly intercessor in the person of Fr. Lourdhuswamy, CSC. May his soul rest in peace.

Parish News Briefs

MANDWI PARISH

Bishop's Pastoral Visit

As a good pastor our Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC had come to visit Mandwi Parish. As usual he always looks for an opportunity to come and see and bless his flock. On 27th March the Bishop reached Don



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Bosco School Mandwi and went straight to the site of the Parish Church Construction. He met the Fathers over there and spent time to discuss pastoral matters with them. From there he proceeded to Kainta Kobra village. He was warmly welcomed by the people with traditional rishi and dance. Later, the Bishop presided over the Holy Eucharist and gave a meaningful homily. 24 persons received the Sacrament of Confirmation and 12 of them received the first Holy Communion. After the Holy Mass there was a short felicitation program. The coming of Bishop to our parish brings lots of joy to the Fathers, the Sisters and the Faithful. People of Kainta Kobra took his visit as a blessing for the whole village.

Fr. Hubert Thyriang SDB

KUMARGHAT PARISH



Women's Day Celebrations

Women's Day was celebrated at the Parish on 3rd April. Total 65 Women participated in the program. The Women themselves undertook the whole Liturgy. In his speech Fr. Lancy said that Women are the backbone of the family. If the women are not in the house that house feels the absence of a woman. The woman is the first teacher for her child. The child learns many good or bad things from the mother. Women also play a dual role in the family. She sees to the household work and also earns the daily bread and helps in the economy of the family. Women take active part in the church and in the society. Fr. Lancy appreciated the Women and wished them success and happiness in life. He told them to keep up the good works and march forward in faith and trust in God. During the Holy Eucharist all the Priests blessed all the Women individually. Mr. Roitua the Secretary of Kumarghat Parish Council thanked the Women for organizing the program. At the end snacks were distributed to all. Sr. Bastian FS the Animator of the Maria Sango organized the whole program and thanked all those Women who participated in it. *Sr. Bastian FS*

KAILASAHAR PARISH

1st Anniversary

The first anniversary of the erection of St. Ignatius Parish Kailashahar was celebrated on 20 March at Jamtalbari. The day began with a mini-retreat preached by Fr. Davis CSC leading to the Solemn Eucharist at noon. Bishop Lumen Monteiro graced the occasion by presiding over the Eucharist. The



Parishioners prepared a sumptuous meal for all in a true spirit of synodality that the Bishop highlighted in his homily. Earlier, on 6 March, the International Women's Day was celebrated in a grand manner under the guidance of Fr. Jothi SJ. It brought together nearly 200 Women from far and near cutting across boundaries of tribe, village and religion. It was a rare experience of sisterly fellowship enhanced by input sessions, dancing and games, and finally, a community meal. A workshop on synodality was held on 9 April and was animated by Fr. Jothi. The lively interaction among the participants made the Sessions very fruitful and the participants articulated the nature of the church that they wanted to build together. They also emphasized the need for better faith formation and deeper study of the Bible. *Fr. James Morais, SJ*

CATHEDRAL PARISH

Report on Women's Day celebration



Parish level Women's Day was celebrated on 27/03/2022 at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, Agartala. Fr. Bosco Lathees, the Director of Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) was the main celebrant of the Holy Eucharist. During Holy Mass Fr. Lathees said about the role and responsibilities of mothers in the family as well as in the society. Every mother needs to be given more time in the family; especially to bring up their children. If mothers are exemplary in the family, then children will be inculcating good values. He also said, they have to get involved in the activities of the parish. the more they are committed in the life of the parish then the parish will be more vibrant and shelter for everyone. After the Holy Mass a special prayer and blessings were given to them. On this day Sr. Jolly Kottarathil FS the Secretary for Women Commission of Agartala Diocese was present. *Fr. Bhuban Sarkar*

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CHALENGTA PARISH

Chapel Blessing, PP Installation & Welcome cum Farewell



Countless blessings of God come in many ways and through different people. St. Joseph's Parish Challengta, witnesses God's blessing on three occasions: Firstly, St. Thomas Chapel blessing at Tuichanda Para mondoli on the 2nd April by Bishop Lumen Monteiro. Bishop acknowledges all the hard work and efforts put in by Fr. Thomas Pereira CSC

and also thanks Sr. Nandhita Pereira SRA for her generous contribution towards the church building. Sr. Natalina SRA unveiled the plaque and Bishop Lumen blessed the new Chapel. Secondly, Bishop Lumen Monteiro installed Rev. Fr. Harry D'Silva CSC as the new Parish Priest on the 3rd of April 2022. In his homily Bishop emphasised the importance of Spiritual Leadership and reminded the faithful to cooperate with their Pastor. CSC Fathers Valerian and Jilson and SRA Sisters were part of our celebrations.



Finally, a warm welcome was extended to Fr. Harry D'Silva CSC. A farewell program was organized for Fr. Thomas Pereira CSC, the pioneer, after his years of service and dedication as a Parish Priest and Principal of Holy Cross School. All the *mondolis* expressed their words of gratitude and appreciation, with enchanting dances and melodious songs. A festive Agape meal was served for all with the support and contribution of the parish council members and generous faithful of the parish.



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Fr. Friny Peter CSC

JUST News Briefs

Training on Child Psychology, Peace Building Skills and Conflict Resolution Skills



Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) organized training on "Child Psychology, Peace Building Skills and Conflict Resolution Skills" for the School Peace Club Members and Animators on 23rd April 2022 at JUST Hall Agartala. 72 peace club members and 20 peace club animators attended the training. The Resource persons were Fr. Pappy Valan, Assistant Director of ASHA and Miss Anima Debbarma, Social Activist. Fr. Valan shared on peace building skills and child psychology. He also talked how the animators could play a role in the school with the children in bringing peace within the school campus and where substance abuse and misusing of Social Media could be neutralized through counseling and teaching moral values in the classroom. Miss Anima Debbarma trained the school peace club members with understanding of peace and conflict, conflict resolutions skills, and communication skills. The Resource Persons motivated the school peace club Members and Animators to build confidence and

have mutual respect in the society with the people of different communities living in Tripura.

JUST distribute Dry Rations

As the impact of COVID-19 is still around, Feeding India



brought some consolation to the people through JUST. Feeding India by ZOMATO, a Nonprofit Organization which is aiming at reducing hunger among underserved communities in India, distributed 500 dry food kits in different villages of Tripura in the month of April 2022. JUST facilitated the distribution. JUST selected the places and the beneficiaries for the distribution. The beneficiaries are the daily laborers, Tea Garden workers and Landless laborers from Bishalgarh, Jampuijala, Chakmaghat and the outskirts of Agartala Town areas. Each beneficiary was given a pack of 10kgs of dry food which included Rice, Dal, Oil, etc... They were very happy to receive the support from ZOMATO through JUST. They expressed their satisfaction on receiving the food kit.

Mr. Cyril Darlong



I was overjoyed to meet with Emeritus Archbishop Thomas Menampampil SDB, at his office turned library cum writing desk, buried in a huge pile of books, reading and writing. It was a sight to behold the senior prelate buried in his Books spread across every nook and corner of the room. Keep up that spirit Your Grace and may we learn from you! **+Lumen, CSC**



Five of our young men from Tripura are now pursuing their Philosophy studies at St. Clement Seminary in Nagaon, Assam. The opportunity came to me as we were driving back from Itanagar to Guwahati in the gracious company of Archbishop John Moolachira who was a generous host. Four of them will soon be completing their Philosophy and Degree studies and coming back to the Diocese for their Regency. **+Lumen, CSC**

Laughter Time

It seems a farm boy accidentally overturned his wagon load of corn. The farmer who lived nearby heard the noise. "Hey Willis!!" the farmer yelled. "Forget your troubles. Come in with us. Then I'll help you get the wagon up." "That's mighty nice of you," Willis answered, "but I don't think Pa would like me to." "Awe, come on," the farmer insisted. "Well okay," the boy finally agreed, and added, "but Pa won't like it." After a hearty dinner, Willis thanked his host. "I feel a lot better now, but I know Pa is going to be real upset." "Don't be foolish!" the neighbor said with a smile. "By the way, where is he?" "Under the wagon" said the boy!



Bishop's Program for May 2022

01:	Parish Church Blessing, Mandwi
02:	Don Bosco School Program, Agartala
03:	ADPC Meeting, Agartala
04:	SAC Sisters Foundation, Tuichakma
08:	Pastoral Visit, Bodhjungnagar Parish
11:	Golden Jubilee Sr. Vijaya FCC
12-21:	International Conference, Rome
29:	Pastoral Visit, Moharpara Parish

Our Distinguished Guests

- Mar Pauly Kannookadan from Irinjalakuda, Kerala
- Sr. Elizabeth Miranda, Superior General of SCC from Switzerland
- Sr. Gracy Sundar, Asst. General of SCC from Switzerland
- Sr. Concepta FS, General Asst. for Finance from Pune
- Sr. Santan Nago, FS Regional from Rangia, Assam
- Sr. Mary David, FS from Agra, UP
- Sr. Amali, FS, from Rangia. Assam