



DIOCESE OF AGARTALA



Link

Agartala Diocesan Newsletter

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Pastor's Corner

Good Deeds for the New Year



A man was asked to paint a boat. He brought with him paint and brushes and began to paint the boat a bright red, as the owner

asked him. While painting, he noticed that there was a small hole in the hull, and quietly repaired it. When finished painting, he received his money and left.

The next day, the owner of the boat came to the painter and presented him with a nice cheque, much higher than the payment for painting. The painter was surprised and said "You've already paid me for painting the boat Sir!"

"But this is not for the paint job. It's for having repaired the hole in the boat." "Ah! But it was such a small service... certainly it's not worth paying me such a high amount for something so insignificant." "My dear friend", insisted

the owner, "you do not understand. Let me tell you what happened. When I asked you to paint the boat, I forgot to mention about the hole. When the boat dried, my kids took the boat and went on a fishing trip. They did not know that there was a hole. I was not at home at that time. When I returned and noticed they had taken the boat, I was desperate because I remembered that the boat had a hole. Imagine my relief and joy when I saw them returning from fishing. Then, I examined the boat and found that you had repaired the hole! You see, now, what you did? You saved the life of my children! I do not have enough money to pay your 'small' good deed."

So, no matter who, when or how, in the New Year 2018 just continue to help, sustain, wipe tears, listen attentively and carefully repair all the 'leaks' you find; because you never know when one is in need of us or when God holds a pleasant surprise for us to be helpful and important to

someone. You may have repaired numerous 'boat holes' along the way... of several people without realizing how many lives you've saved.

The New Year 2018 has dawned and our Diocese enters into its 22nd year of existence. A new issue of LINK, the 239th, is in your Inbox. In the past year we succeeded in publishing the LINK on the first day of the month without a miss! I could do this with the help of Fr. Pulinthanath the scribe of the Editorial piece and Fr. Prasad the Designer, who have untiringly supported me in this venture, month after month. I thank them very sincerely. And yes, we shall try our best to keep the deadline this year too! You dear Readers have encouraged us with your occasional one-liners of appreciation, comments and suggestions to improve. I certainly value that and hope that you will continue. Thank You! **+Lumen, CSC**



Editorial

Is 'Intolerance' invading our spaces?



We have just bid farewell to a year and stepped in to a new one. Each passing year reminds us of interminable change and of time's winged chariot hurrying past. We thank God for all what has been and look to the same God to take us through what lies ahead.

Amidst the numerous changes we see around, a rise in 'intolerance' is most disturbing. Is 'intolerance' on the rise the world over? It seems so, and our own sacred spaces are no longer proof against this nefarious onslaught.

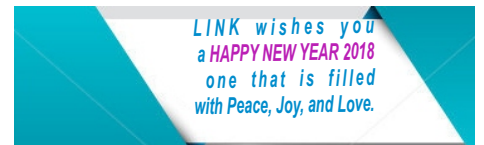
Are we too unwittingly becoming part of the increasing intolerance around? By virtue of our being part of clergy and religious, we perhaps would like to think of ourselves as good enough examples, if not paragons, of tolerance and inclusiveness. Do our actions exemplify the same?

To consider an example, the way some of us

conduct ourselves in the virtual legroom that WhatsApp groups provide is intriguing. Especially when, as is won't to happen time and again, a confused post from some well intentioned but confused member clogs normal traffic. When that happens most members would perhaps choose to ignore the posts in question; presumably, for their own reasons, and get on with life and further postings. But some would see them as opportunities to set things right. The alacrity and anger with which they take on the sender of such 'irrelevant' posts is disconcerting. Quick to point out that by no stretch of imagination such posts fit into the 'raison d'être' of the group, they demand punitive measures, even expulsion of the defaulter! Almost always the person is the target, not the content of the post.

By reacting thus, are we unwittingly setting ourselves up on high moral pedestals and arrogating powers that even angels fear to stake claim? Are we innocently giving away more of ourselves than we think?

Most groups seem to have a few who



naively think that the flurry of messages and images they frenziedly disseminate can change the world. The point is how to deal with them in a group? While opinions may vary on that, it is clear that by not allowing any leeway for such enthusiasts we betray a superficial understanding of life's delicious variety and diversity.

Can our WhatsApp groups also be like the wartime playground hospital that Pope Francis says he would like the Church to be a gathering place of all sorts of people - the strong, the weak and the vulnerable, having a clear direction? A place of trust, help and understanding; a platform where one's weaknesses will be tolerated, even treated and may be healed, but never encouraged, ridiculed or amplified. Just a thought; perhaps it syncs with the times we find ourselves in.

Happy New Year. *J. Pulinthanath, SDB*



GANDACHERRA PARISH

Parents Day celebration

St Arnold High School, Gandacherra celebrated Parents Day on 4th November, and honored them through a colorful event. Shri. Jitendra Chowdhury, Member of Parliament, was the Chief Guest. Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, and the SDM of Gandacherra graced the occasion as the Guests of Honor. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Guest said that our missionary Schools play a very vital role in imparting knowledge and education to the children of Tripura, especially in the remote areas. He lauded St. Arnold School for producing good results in the past. He also said that our missionary Schools are role models because of the dedicated service of the Fathers and Sisters. Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, spoke on the quality education that our missionary Schools are providing for the children in every part of the State, be it urban or



rural. This was a great occasion where the children showcased their talents. Parents and Guests were overwhelmed with the children's performances. The celebration ended with the school anthem.

Pastoral Visit and conferring the Sacrament of Confirmation

Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, made his pastoral visit to St. Arnold's Parish, Gandacherra on 4th and 5th November, 2017. After the interaction with the faithful and the Hostel children, the Bishop met the candidates of the Sacrament of Confirmation. On 5th he began with the solemn Eucharistic celebration during which he catechized the faithful and the candidates about the sacrament of Confirmation and the gift of the Holy



Spirit that calls us to witness the faith boldly. After the Holy Mass a short felicitation was presented by the Parishioners.

Blessing of the foundation for new Presbytery Youth

The foundation for the new presbytery at Gandacherra Parish was blessed by Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC, DD, Bishop of Agartala, on 18th December, 2017, in the presence of Fr. Bosco, the Parish Priest, along with Parish Secretary Mr. Bijay Reang and Parishners. After the blessing Bishop Lumen wished the Parish Priest and the workers for the successful completion of the construction of the presbytery and invited the workers of the construction site and the Parishners to lay the foundation.



Dn. George. S.

BODHJUNG NAGAR PARISH

Youth Program

A three days Youth Program was held at St. Andre Parish, Bodhjungnagar from 16 to 18 December. 60 Youth from different *mothas* attended the Youth Program. The theme was The Role of Youth in the Family and in the Church (*Nukhung tei Mothani bisingo Sibla Sibivabni Poitoni Khlaithai*). The



Importance of the Sacraments of Initiation and Eucharist, Sacrament of Marriage, Moral Challenges to Christian Faith of the Youth today. The Youth program began with a prayer, lighting of the lamp, and hoisting of the Parish Youth Flag by Mr. Biswarai Debbarma. The program was motivational and inspirational. Besides the Sessions, entertainment programs, group games, group dance competitions, singing, volleyball matches and Bible Quiz Competition were conducted. The Youth Program ended with the Holy Eucharist and Prize distribution. The parish youth flag was lowered by Fr. Lawrence Darlong.

Pre-Christmas Celebration

The Principal, Staff and the Students of St. Andre School had a wonderful and meaningful celebration of the pre-Christmas celebration in the School campus.



The children put up mind-blowing performances of the enactment of the birth of Christ with Christmas Carols and dances in honour of the Child Jesus. An inspiring and motivating message was delivered by Fr. Devadoss, CSC, the Counselor of St. Andre School, to the children and the parents.

Dn. Antony Balan

Editorial

Binoy, CSC, Fr. Jeevan, SVD, Fr. Lawrence Darlong and Mr. Ananda Debbarma. They spoke on topics like, Sacrament of Confession,

KATHALCHERRA PARISH

First World Day of the Poor

Heeding to the call of our Pope Francis, above all to show our solidarity with the poor, the First World day of the Poor was celebrated in a befitting manner in our Parish. We visited one of the villages-Koraticherra. Sr. Suman and Mr. Chandrojoy Reang enlightened the people on health and social issues and conducted a free health camp where around 50 people were the recipients. We too distributed some clothes and blankets for the deserving people.

Senior Citizens Day



people coming together to experience Gods Love and warmth of the Parishioners. It was on 3rd December that we celebrated Senior Citizens Day in our



Parish. They were welcomed with a flower and led in procession for the Eucharistic celebration. Mr. Muringh spoke on the occasion and highlighted the role of Senior Citizens in the society. After the Holy Mass all were facilitated and were given a token of Love. Along with the spiritual nourishment they too enjoyed physical nourishment.

Children's Bible Camp

3 days Bible Camp was organized for the Students from Class III to class IX from 16th to 18th December. Children from the villages gathered at the Parish centre on 16th. They were animated by the Sisters, Village Leaders and the Youth. Prior to the Camp the Animators were trained for the purpose by the Bethany Sisters. It was a unique experience for the children as they were led through various spiritual and intellectual activities along with fun and frolic. Light was thrown on the meaning of the Bible and its importance, Prayer, Sacraments, Christmas and its message. Singing, dancing and games kept them lively and energetic. Competitions added spice to the program. Thanks to Fr. Lancy for organizing this Camp where 145 children experienced the love of God, enjoyed each other's company, and which helped them instill some good values in them. **Sr. Prema,**

was a joyous scene to see around 100 senior

KUMARGHAT PARISH

Marriage Preparation Course

Marriage Preparation Course was held on 15th and 16th at St. Paul Parish, Kumarghat. Eleven Couples participated and benefited from the Course. It was well organized by Fr. Arul CSC the parish priest. The Resource Persons were Sr. Pushpa M.C, Sr. Karuna M.C, Catechists Mr. Santhosh, Mr. Subia and Mr. Tarsisius. Sacrament of



Marriage, Parenting, Unity and Indissolubility were the topics which were dealt at length. The modes used were Lectures, Group discussion, Video clippings and Sharing. The participants expressed their appreciation to the Team and said that they learned a lot and request to have many more such programs.

Inauguration of Multi Purpose Hall

On the 17th of December the newly built Multipurpose Social Centre was inaugurated by Rev. Fr. Davis CSC, the Principal of Holy Cross School, Panisagar, and blessed by Rev. Fr. Aneesh CSC, Principal cum Assistant Parish Priest,

Kumarghat. The ceremony was held in the presence of the Sisters, Parish Council members and faithful. Fr. Arul the Parish Priest acknowledged and thanked all those who contributed in different ways starting with Fr. Jilson CSC who began the work and Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC for recommending the Project, and to our benefactors Missio Germany, and the diocesan administration for the implementation of the Project. It is a joyful moment for the Parish as we now have a new facility for social work and Meetings.

Bro. Amalraj

KHUMULWNG PARISH

Christmas Mela and Silver Jubilee celebrations unite Youth and People

Amidst their busy schedule the Parish Council organized Christmas Mela at Belbari, St. Alphonsa Parish Khumulwng from 15th to 17th December 2017. Bishop Lumen Monteiro inaugurated and declared the Christmas Mela "open" by placing the statue of baby Jesus in the crib, blessing it and venerating it, followed by all the guests and church leaders. Christmas carols and other programs were presented by

different village communities and Hostels. It was wonderful occasion for the Youth of Bodhjungnagar Parish to meet and interact with our Parish Youth besides their two beautiful dances. One of the outstanding items of the program was skit presented by the Seminarists "life is an opportunity" meaningfully taught and directed by Fr. Stany Pereira SVD and Dn. Sushil Machar SVD. Belbari Motha celebrated the Silver



Jubilee of faith coming to the area with the theme "acceptance of faith is our blessing". All work and entire expense for Silver Jubilee celebration, such as printing Souvenir, Memento, new PA system, Food and Decorations were borne by Belbari Motha Committee. It was truly, a celebration of faith, unity and harmony.

Fr. Arun Minj SVD

BLESSING OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI FRIARY, KANCHANPUR

The Blessing and the Inauguration of St. Francis of Assisi Friary, Kanchanpur: The blessing of the newly built house at Kanchanpur namely, 'St. Francis of Assisi Friary' was done by Most Rev. Bishop Lumen Monteiro, Agartala Diocese and was inaugurated by Rev. Fr. Dolphy Joseph Pais, the Provincial Minister of the Holy Trinity Province of Karnataka on 16th of Nov, 2017. There was a Solemn Eucharistic Celebration presided over by the Bishop along with other twelve priests and a few nuns from the neighboring



communities. Rev. Fr. Stany Roshan D'Souza, the Provincial Delegate of Christ the King delegation of Mizoram-Tripura, Fr. Alban D'Souza, the first Counselor were present for the event. A descent crowd of around 150 people witnessed this great event after which a meal was served to all. St. Francis of Assisi Friary at Kanchanpur is a substation which comes under St. Francis of Assisi Parish at Gachirampara. Hence it will be a great boost to the new challenges and the mission work in North Tripura.

Fr. Walter D'Souza, OFM Cap



Inter School Peace Meet

In the month of November JUST organized Inter-School Peace Meet at Don Bosco School Nandanagar, Don Bosco School Baijalbari, Synod Foundation School Lefunga, Saint Andre School Bodhjungnagar, Montfort School Dukli, Don Bosco School Kairai, and Holy Cross School Panisagar, under the banner of Peace Project. The Facilitators of the Peace Meet were Ms. Larisa Debbarma and Ms. Momita Reang (District Coordinators) under Peace Project. During the Meet, the peace club members were trained on "Leadership Skills" with the aim to create good and effective leaders. The Peace Meet was organized successfully in all the Schools.



Pre Christmas Celebration

On 19th December JUST organized Annual gathering and 'advance Christmas' at JUST premises. The celebration had two parts of which Capacity Building of the Staff on "Media Documentation" in the morning and Advance Christmas in the evening. Fr. Sahaya Lourdu Raj, CSC, was the Resource Person for the morning session. He gave us the meaning of Media and how Photos should be used for documentation. The evening celebration started with prayer and carolsinging by JUST Team. The Chief Guest was our very own Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC and the Guest of Honor was Fr. Maxim SVD, the Regional of SVD Northeast Region. Many other guests were present for the celebration. The



Director of JUST, Fr. Jeevan Kennady, SVD gave the welcome address and closing words of gratitude. The meaningful celebration ended at 8:00pm with a festive meal.

World Day of the Disabled

The World Day of the Disabled was celebrated in different parts of the State. Our Director Fr. Jeevan, SVD, was the Chief Guest at a Public Function in the Town Hall at Teliamura. His speech which gave a clarion call for action towards those who are differently-abled, was well appreciated. We stand committed to the cause of the differently-abled.

Mr. Vincent Debbarma



Catholic Youth Festival draws tens of thousands in Australia



The Church in Australia kicked off Advent with a Catholic Youth Festival in Sydney last weekend, drawing some 20,000 attendees and including the country's largest Mass since the World Youth Day in 2008. The

event was also the opening of a "Year of Youth" meant to "open new horizons for spreading joy for the young Church and our communities." The festival was held Dec. 7-9, shortly after Archbishop Denis Hart of Melbourne, president of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, invited the nation's Youth to participate in the 2018 Year of Youth, which will last until Nov. 25, 2018. The festival mostly took place at the Sydney Olympic Park. There young people attended Workshops, Mass, faith-filled discussions, and even interactive games, such as a Saint John Paul II video game. However, the highlight of the weekend was a pilgrimage through Australia's largest city followed by the closing event. The nearly three hour praise and worship concert included Matt Maher and tributes to the country's aboriginal groups. A Saturday anticipated Mass soon followed the event, celebrated by Archbishop Fisher, who cancelled all other anticipated Masses to encourage attendance at the youth Mass. *CNA/EWTN News*

John Dayal honored for lifetime contribution to minorities

Bhubaneswar: The Odisha Minority Alliance (OMA) has honored John Dayal, a leading lay Catholic human rights activist and senior journalist, for his lifetime



contribution for the cause of religious minorities in India. The award was given on December 18 by Ramesh Chandra Majhi, Minister for Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Caste Development, Other Backward Class and Minority Welfare, Government of Odisha, on behalf of Odisha Minority Alliance (OMA), Bhubaneswar in Bhubaneswar. More than 300 religious minority leaders, human right defenders, social workers and academicians coming from different parts of Odisha attended the function organized on the occasion of International Minority Day.

Dayal, while acknowledging the honor, stressed the need for sustained and collective efforts to address the issues and concerns of the minorities in India. Today they seem more vulnerable than before, he added. The Catholic lay leader urged minority leaders to come forward to check attacks on their communities. Odisha has witnessed several such attacks, he pointed out. "We need to multiply our efforts to foster peaceful co-existence of all communities." *mattersindia.com*

Christmas Celebrations in the Diocese



Bishop's Program for January 2018

- 01: Parish Sabah, Bodhjungnagar Parish
- 02: Clergy Meet, Agartala
- 04: Silver Jubilee Paisouha para, under Depacherra Parish
- 05: Andre Home Blessing, Agartala
- 07: Kochucherra Chapel Blessing, Ambassa Parish
- 09: Sr. John of the Cross, RNDM, Golden Jubilee, Mariamnagar
- 13: Ordination of Dn. Rabindra Debbarma, Mandwi Parish
- 14: Parish Feast, Amarpur Parish
- 15-25: Home Visit, Goa
- 27-28: Parish Sabah, Kumarghat Parish
- 30: Ordination of Dn. S. George, S.TN
- 31: Ordination of Dn. A. Balan, Anneyari Parish TN

Our Distinguished Visitors

- Sr. Margaret Gallagher, SJA Gen. Councillor from France
- Sr. Berchmans, SRA Provincial from Mumbai
- Sr. Swetha, SRA Provincial Treasurer
- Fr. Michael Fernandes, OFM Cap General Councillor from Rome
- Fr. Francis Fernandes, SVD, from Lumshnong Meghalaya
- Fr. Leo D'Souza, CSC Provincial from Bengaluru
- Fr. Jose Sarpathil, CSC, from Salem, TN
- Fr. Nathan, CSC, from Palani, TN
- Mr. Joseph Kunnath, from Asangaon, MS
- Fr. Pius CMF Provincial from Shillong
- Fr. John CMF Bursar from Shillong