



Pastor's Corner

Entering the Lenten Season

We begin the Season of Lent with Ash Wednesday on 2nd March. The theme for this year is, "Let us never grow tired of doing good" (Gal 6:9). Reflecting on the theme Pope Francis says, "Let us ask God to give us the patient perseverance of the farmer, and to persevere in doing good, one step at a time. If we fall, let us stretch out our hand to the Father, who always lifts us up. If we are lost, if we are misled by the enticements of the evil one, let us not hesitate to return to God who "is generous in forgiving". In this season of conversion, sustained by God's grace and by the communion of the Church, let us not grow tired of doing good. The soil is prepared by fasting, watered by prayer and enriched by charity. Let us believe firmly that "if we do not give up, we shall reap our harvest in due time" and that, with the gift of perseverance, we shall obtain what was promised, for our salvation and the salvation of others." I wish you a meaningful Lenten Season.

Metaverse – a phase towards the digitalization of the real world

What is metaverse? Han Seung-soo, Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the 2022 Seoul SIGNIS World Congress explains: The metaverse, a combination of the prefix "meta" meaning beyond and the word "universe", is a phase towards the digitalization of the real world, which enables interconnected virtual experiences through virtual representations or avatars. Thus, the metaverse



platform eliminates the need to be physically present in a shared place and at the same time, allows us to explore, interact and communicate across the geographic locations in a more integrated manner. With the grim prospect that the end of the pandemic may not be near, transition to the metaverse is expected to be accelerated at a faster pace. As a matter of fact, a range of large-scale gatherings and events have been hosted on metaverse platforms. For example, Travis Scott's virtual concert on Fortnite in 2020 drew 12.3 million viewers, making it their largest event ever.

Taking into consideration the COVID-19 epidemic rebound and social distancing measures still in place, 2022 SIGNIS World Congress will only be able to be held online with a few participants attending. Opportune enough, however, as the theme of 2022 SINGIS World Congress is "Peace in the Digital World," leveraging technology to host this event on metaverse will open a new chapter in SIGNIS as well as provide unique and wider opportunities to participate and engage in various activities during the congress. Against this backdrop, the Organizing Committee of 2022 SIGNIS World Congress in Seoul has decided to host the congress in a hybrid format. While having local events and programs in Seoul as planned, the 2022 SIGNIS World Congress will take place on metaverse as well. Moving beyond the old-fashioned video conferencing technology, the SIGNIS World Congress on metaverse will encourage much more Catholics across the world to attend the congress via their avatars and allow them to actively engage in various programs by providing an exceptionally realistic experiences as if they are on the scene. Among other programs, participants through their avatars, can attend and enjoy the live Mass and 2022 SIGNIS World Congress opening ceremony at Myeongdong Cathedral, as if they were there.

+Lumen, CSC



EDITORIAL

As we step into the season of Lent with ash-smeared foreheads and contrite hearts, we realize the great opportunity it offers us for conversion and renewal. It is undoubtedly the richest of the liturgical seasons, with its numerous signs, symbols and enactments, each of which are profoundly meaningful and salvific. For a relatively young church like ours, the season is also a challenge - to delve deep into the most important truths and mysteries of our faith.



The Journey of Lent

When we look back at the 25 years old history of our Diocese, we realize that the emergence of its parishes has been a notable feature. Parishes not merely as geographical units, but as collective entities, each of which has a distinct character, ethos and style. In other words one of the best things that has happened in the course of the build up to the Silver Jubilee of the Diocese was the intra Parish dynamics. Perhaps occasioned and motivated by the then approaching landmark (Silver Jubilee), the Parish

authorities got into the act like never before and arrived at the Silver Jubilee strengthened and more matured as faith nourishing units.

The season of Lent with its emphasis on returning to the Lord is an opportunity for the parish to grow in multiple ways. One can say that the season is an invitation for our parishes to further build on edifices already laid. Right from Ash Wednesday through Easter Sunday the Mother Church leads her sons and daughters through a variety of routes, rituals, signs, symbols and celebrations, all of which are oriented towards the one and common objective of immersing the believer in the life giving reality of

the Pascal Mysteries.

In our Diocese, our Parish set ups are similar in one sense but they are also very varied and unique in another sense. Hence the possibility, nay, the need, there is to lead the faithful of the parish through this Lenten journey in a manner most beneficial to everyone. This is perhaps another instance where some of the very challenges of our Diocese become possibilities for catechesis and spiritual growth. We enter this holy season with the Prayer that God will use the meager resources we have to draw is closer to Him.

J. Pulinthanath, SDB

ST. PAUL PARISH, KUMARGHAT

Parish Sabha

St. Paul's Parish Kumarghat organized its Annual Parish Sabha on 29th to 30th of January 2022 at Kurmapara village. The Parish Sabha was inaugurated by the Parish Priest by hoisting the Parish



flag. The theme of the Parish Sabha was Church & Synodality. Fr. Lancy CSC the Parish Priest explained to the participants the meaning and the purpose of Synodality. At the end of the meaningful interaction, the assembly was divided into six small groups for discussion and sharing. After an hour of discussion all the Secretaries were asked to share their group's report. Fore noon, the Holy Eucharist was celebrated by the Parish Priest. After lunch village Reports were presented regarding the village activities and finance. In the afternoon in the absence of our dear Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC, (due to his illness) his representative Fr. Francis Xavier CSC was welcomed by the Parish Secretary and he communicated the greetings and the blessing of our Bishop. In the evening we had an hour of Adoration and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. On the next day the solemn Holy Eucharist was celebrated by Fr. Lancy and concelebrated by Fr. Lourdu and Fr. Francis and during the Mass Silver Jubilee of the catholic faith of the local people was celebrated. After the Mass Jubilee memorial stone was blessed. This was followed by Parish pastoral Report by Fr. Lancy CSC the Parish Priest and on behalf of the PP the annual Financial Report was tabled by the Parish Secretary Mr. Roitua Darlong. At the end of the program we had election for the Parish Council Secretary. Mr. Roitua Darlong was re-elected for the coming three years and Mr. Prasanta Marak elected as Vice Parish Council Secretary. Then the Parish Secretary, thanked all those who assisted the Kurmapara village *mondoli* and the village people, for preparing well all the logistics, accommodation for the guests and the food arrangement. Everything was excellent. Everyone who were part of the celebration appreciated the

togetherness and hard work of the local *mondoli*. It was well organized Parish Sabha in spite of COVID. We thank God for all the blessing and loving protection during the year and especially during the Parish annual Sabha. **Fr. Lancy D'Souza, CSC**

SCC Village level Training



SCC is the internal part of the Parish activities. In order to re-activate the SCC in the parish, the parish council decided to focus on SCC revival in each of the villages.

Accordingly, we conducted in two of the villages three SCC training programs. In Kanchancherra village two SCC programs and Kurmapara village one. We had a good response from the faithful. Happy with the training they decided to revive the SCC and unit level Bible sharing and living the SCC spirituality. During the course of the training they were given the correct understanding of the Church. We also explained to them what is Synodality and our role in the Church. **Fr. Lancy D'Souza, CSC**

GOOD SHEPHERD PARISH, KATHALCHERRA

Maria Shango Annual Sabha



The Parish level annual Maria Shango Sabha was organized on 5th and 6th February at Josepnnagar Village. There were 200 Women who took part in the event. It was an occasion for the Members to evaluate their life and activities of the past year and to plan new activities for a bright future ahead.

Rev. Fr. Ivan SVD animated the Sabha. There were inputs, rosary procession, competitions and group singing and dancing. The Sabha came to end with a thanksgiving Holy Eucharist followed by prize distribution and a fellowship meal. **Fr. C. Abraham, CSC**

Annual Parish Sabha



The Annual Parish Sabha was held from 11th to 13th February at Garo III village. It was a dream come true for this tiny Goro III hamlet to host this annual Parish Sabha.

Yet the community undertook the responsibility and began a yearlong preparation for this big event. The Sabha began with flag hosting. A large number of people from different villages took part in it. Rev. Fr. Bosco animated the Sabha keeping in mind the synodality theme of the church. The theme of the Sabha was 'We are the Church'. There were input sessions, group discussions, village yearly reports, adoration, confessions and competitions. Our dear Bishop Lumen took a special session on Synodality. We also had the election for Parish Secretary in which Mr. Jonuna Darlong was re-elected to the post. The Sabha came to end on 13th afternoon with thanks giving Holy Eucharist and a common meal. *Mr. Lalrina Darlong*

ST. MARY'S PARISH, TUIKARMAW

SCC Parish level Training

A "new way of being Church" in the third millennium would have to be a community of communities lived through Small Christian Communities. With this intention in mind, a two day's training program was held in St. Mary's Parish Tuikarmaw. Fr. Lancy D'Souza

CSC the VG of the Diocese and Fr. Amalraj Bible Commission in charge, along with three lay faithful conducted the two days Seminar. They emphasized that the Small Christian Community (SCC) is a gathering of catholic families, who pray, share, and support one another, learn and go forth on mission, evangelizing one another....thus becoming the Church. A large number of parishioners participated in the Seminar. *Fr. Sojan Augustine, CSC*

ST. ALPHONSA PARISH, KHUMULWNG

SCC Deanery level Training program

A Deanery level SCC training program was organized on 15th February at St. Alphonsa Parish, Khumulwng. The Resource Person for the program was Fr. Lancy CSC. All the parishes participated and the representatives were present. They took active part throughout the program. It was started with a



Bible Procession by Fr. Paul SDB, the Dean. Fr. Lancy chose the Bible passage to be read and after the Bible reading two participants were asked to pray for the presence of God amidst

us. Fr. Paul welcomed the Resource Person Fr. Lancy and all the representatives. The Session was conducted by Fr. Lancy. It was done in a simple and effective way that all the participants could follow and understand the meaning of the Church, Family, Mondoli, Parish and Diocese. This program has given a new lease of life to the SCC in the Deanery, as many SCC groups were dormant due to Covid situation. During lockdown coming together was not possible. The program concluded with short evaluation and lunch.

Dn. Valson Colaco, SVD

CHALENGTA PARISH

First Parish Sabha and Parish Anniversary

St. Joseph Parish Challengta organized its first annual Parish *sabha* (Convention) from 18th to 20th February 2022, in Challengta. It was also marked with the 1st



Anniversary of the establishment of the Parish. A good number of Village leaders and faithful had gathered for the *sabha*. We were blessed with the presence of Bishop Lumen Monteiro throughout the Convention. The theme of

the *sabha* was ST. JOSEPH, MODEL OF THE FAMILY. Fr. Jeeven SVD, Fr. Cyprian SVD, and Sr. Natalina SRA were the resource persons. Fr. Jeevan spoke on the theme St. Joseph Model of the Family while Fr. Cyprian emphasized on faith and sacraments. Sr. Natalina spoke on the commandments and family prayer, and Bishop Lumen explained the concept of Synodality. Every *mondoli* presented its report on the first day of the *sabha*. Singing and dance Competitions were held to keep the participants in celebration mood. On the last day, Fr. Thomas Pereira CSC, the Parish Priest, gave a Power point presentation on the Parish pastoral and financial report along with the parish census. The hard copy of the report was given to the Bishop, Priests and *mondoli* leaders. Fr. Thomas also thanked Fr. Friny, Sisters, Parish Secretary Mr. Moshiram Reang and the Council members for their tireless work for the success of the *sabha*. The Parish *sabha* was concluded with Bishop's blessing and the agape that followed.

Fr. Friny Peter, CSC

Inter Youth Club gathering for Peace

On 13th February 2022, Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) organized an Inter-Youth Club gathering for Peace at Dasharam community Hall, Khumulwng. 45 Youth from Birchandra Thakur Para, Khrishna Kanta Para, Dashram Para and Nrindaban Para participated in the program. The Resource Persons were Mr. Sunish Chakma, the



Officer In-charge of the Radhapur Police station, and Journalist Mr. Samir Debbarma. Mr. Sunish Chakma shared on Drug abuse and its effect towards the locality and how it creates conflict within the village community. He also shared his personal experienced on how to deal and resolve conflict and gave ideas on how to control gambling in their villages. Mr. Samir shared how the Youth

Club can play a vital role in bringing peace in the society and engaged the youth with skill development programs and create awareness program on peace through social media.

Monthly Meeting and strengthening Peace Club

The peace staff of JUST conducted Peace Club monthly meeting in all the target Schools with the peace club members in the month of February 2022. During the monthly meeting the Peace staff shared about conflict transformation and Peace building process and motivates the Peace Club members to have mutual respect



and promote justice for peace in the society. The peace staff shared the seven basic principles of peace building during the meetings which are Spirituality for Peace, Reconciliation for Peace, Sacrifice for Peace, Volunteerism for Peace,

Self-Realization for Peace, Hospitality for Peace and non-Violence for Peace. The peace staff divided the participants into 4 groups and asked them to discuss how to promote peace in the society.

Mr. Cyril Darlong

News Snippets

India's new Saint is Martyr Devasahayam

The Church in India is eagerly looking forward to have a new saint in Martyr Devasahayam. Our beloved Pope Francis will canonize Blessed Devasahayam on 15th May 2022, at the Vatican, together with six others. In Martyr Devasahayam we have the first Indian who is acknowledged to have won the crown of martyrdom on Indian soil.



He is also the first lay person and the first married person from India to be conferred sainthood. This Canonization, therefore, has a special significance for the Church in India. The events connected with the Canonization of Martyr Devasahayam have been scheduled as follows: (1) Vespers on 14 May 2022 in St. Peter's Basilica, at 5 p.m., followed by a public meeting with a cultural programme at the Paul VI Hall. (2) The Mass of the Canonization celebrated by Pope Francis on Sunday 15 May at 10 a.m. The canonization of Martyr Devasahayam comes as a significant blessing for the Church in India, as it is engaged in a Synodal Journey, seeking to make a genuine discernment of the pastoral challenges of today. The Church in India will join in the celebrations taking place in the very place of the martyrdom of Devasahayam, organized by the Dioceses of Kottar and Kuzhithurai on Pentecost Sunday, 5 June 2022 at 4 p.m. + *Filipe Neri Ferrão. President, Conference of Catholic Bishops of India*

Akash Bashir, who died protecting Catholic worshippers in Pakistan, named Servant of God

When a suicide bomber attempted to enter a Catholic church in Pakistan in 2015, a 20-year-old volunteer security guard blocked him. "I will die but I will not let you go in," he reportedly told the terrorist armed with explosives. The attacker then set off a bomb, immediately killing himself and the man Akash Bashir.



Because of his actions, the church — with more than 1,000 Catholics inside — was saved from a direct blast. Bashir died on March 15, 2015, when suicide bombers attacked St. John's Catholic Church and Christ Church of the Church of Pakistan. Located in Lahore, the churches stands in one of the country's largest Christian neighborhoods. Nearly seven years later, Archbishop Sebastian Shaw of Lahore announced that the Vatican accepted Akash Bashir as a Servant of God, the title given to a candidate for the sainthood while his or her life and work is closely examined. Father Francis Gulzar, Vicar General of Lahore Archdiocese, responded by calling it a "great day for the Catholic Church in Pakistan. He offered his life as a sacrifice to save the lives of the Christian community at St. John's Catholic Church," the Vicar General said. He is the first Pakistani Christian who has been raised to the rank of the Holy People of God. (*CNA—Catholic News Agency*)

Fr. Michael Lapsley – 2022 Niwano Peace Prize Winner Akash

The Vatican's Flaminia Giovannelli is one of the members of the Niwano Peace Prize Committee that has chosen Anglican Father Michael Lapsley to be the 2022 recipient of its prestigious Prize for his "relentless struggle against apartheid and social discriminations, his support for the liberation movement in South Africa and for his peacebuilding activities." In a statement, the Committee writes that "Father Lapsley's non-violent, multi-faith peacebuilding efforts and activities of healing based on restorative justice, dialogue, and reconciliation are continuing to contribute to the healing of South Africans as well as many others all over the world." Father Lapsley receives the Prize during the presentation ceremony in Tokyo, Japan, on Tuesday, 14 June 2022. The Niwano Peace Foundation was chartered in 1978 to contribute to the realization of world peace and the enhancement of a culture of peace, promoting research and other activities based on the spirit of religious principles and serves the cause of peace in such fields as education, science, religion and philosophy. *Vatican News via CNUA*



Bishop's Program for March 2022

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| 01: Clergy Meeting, Agartala
Consulters Meeting | 05-06: Parish Pastoral program, Amarpur Parish |
| 02: Ash Wednesday, Cathedral
Meet FSM Provincial | 08: International Women's Day, Agartala |
| 03: Meet UFS Provincial | 11-13: Parish Sabah, Moharpara |
| 04: Meet SD Provincial Councilor | 19: Blessing of JUST Centre, Damdamia |
| | 20: Kailasahar Parish, 1st Anniversary |
| | 27: Kanthai Kobra, Mandwi Parish |

Our Distinguished Guests

- Sr. Mary Ponthempally, SCCG Provincial from Guwahati
- Sr. Maria Joseph, SCCG Economer from Guwahati
- Sr. Delphine, SCCG Councilor from Shillong
- Sr. Sunita Kujur,SSpS Provincial from Guwahati



- Fr. Abraham Vettuvellil, MSFS Superior General from Rome
- Fr. Emmanuel Uppamthadathil, MSFS, Rector of St. Clement, Nagaon, Assam