



## Pastor's Corner

Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav is an initiative of the Government of India to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of independence and the glorious history of its people, culture and achievements.

Azadi Amrit Mahotsav means elixir of energy of independence; elixir of inspirations of the warriors of freedom struggle; elixir of new ideas and pledges; and elixir of Aatmanirbharta. Therefore, this Mahotsav is a festival of awakening of the nation; festival of fulfilling the dream of good governance; and the festival of global peace and development. Like the history of the freedom movement, the journey of 75 years after independence is a reflection of the hard work, innovation, and enterprise of ordinary Indians. We are proud of our Constitution and our democratic traditions. Just a few days ago India got a new President in the person of Mrs. Draopadi Murmu who is India's first tribal President and the second woman to occupy this post. We congratulate our President who has become a ray of hope for Indians, especially the poor, marginalized and the downtrodden. It is a great triumph of inclusiveness and empowerment.

August 15 is the Independence Day of India. The Catholic Church also commemorates the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mother Mary on that day. I always say how lucky we are that our country, which we call Bharat Mata (Mother India), got its political freedom with the blessings of Mariam Mata (Mother Mary) on that very day! Happy Feast of the Assumption of Mary. Happy Independence Day.

Today is a time for every citizen to feel proud to be an Indian and celebrate the day joyfully. It is fitting that on this day, we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people. Prof. Rajendra Pratap Gupta a senior strategist says, "It is a milestone to reflect back on as to what all we achieved in these 75 years, and what more we need to achieve. India has moved fast forward on all fronts, but due to lack of holistic approach, the success of one side is decimated by the ignorance of the other side... We need an Ecosystems approach and systems thinking; else we will remain a land of contradictions. In the last few decades, India has faced extremism fuelled by vile neighbors, but if we don't pay heed to the climate emergency, we will face internal catastrophes due to ignoring our environment which will decimate development. Already, according

## India@75. Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav!

to UN, India has lost about 25% of its GDP due to climate change."

Alongside our achievements and dreams we as a nation are undergoing tremendous challenges. Kalyani Shankar, a senior journalist says, "It has been a long and bumpy journey... The freedom fighters recognized that with the hard-won independence came tremendous challenges and responsibilities. The primary challenge in 1947 was to remain united, sovereign, democratic, and free, harmonious, and diverse. Partition left behind a mess. However, disproving many prophets of doom predicting India's balkanization, the country has moved forward in many areas. There were tall leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru, and Sardar Patel who laid the foundation for building the country. Indeed, it is the story of success, yet a story of unfulfilled potential."

"In the initial stages, the challenges were too many. One major challenge was to establish democracy. Except for a brief period during Emergency, democracy survived in a country that was bogged down with illiteracy, massive poverty, and other ills. There were challenges in education, health, and other sectors, and they still remain as the recent pandemic proved the inadequacy. Today India can boast of being the largest democracy in the world."

"But some other elements of democracy have suffered. The values of the freedom struggle based on which Independence was achieved in 1947 are under threat. Communalism and divisive tendencies are spreading. There is a growing influence of money power and muscle power in politics. Institutions have become weaker. Political parties resort to the crudest, violent and polarizing techniques to mobilize voters in their quest for power. There is a need for a political consensus to restore those lost values."

Now that India is moving towards its ambition to becoming a global power, it needs a roadmap for the future. Looking forward, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has identified five agendas for the future. "Freedom Struggle, Ideas at 75, Achievements at 75, Actions at 75 and Resolve at 75 — we have to move forward with these five aspects." Every Indian has a role and should feel proud of being an Indian and take a vow to share in building a 'New India.' This would take the country to new heights and be a befitting tribute to India's 75th birthday. Jai Hind!

+Lumen, CSC

Editorial on the next page



Acronyms such as CLAT, CUET, JEE, NEET, NIFT, etc. seem to have invaded common parlance in Tripura. Suddenly it's on everyone's minds and lips – children, youth, parents, grandparents. The level of awareness of the need for quality education to make life something is amazing all the more as it's relatively new.

So we come across average families that have clearly thought out the career paths of their children well in advance. On entering Class IX, they are already preparing for B Tech, or Medicine, and for the required entrance exam. This is why some cannot think of an alternative to Science when it comes to admission to Class XI. The bright side of it is that it is probably a good thing.

The awareness that education is important is by far the greater education our people have received, far more significant than the content of textbooks they have grappled with in the course of studies. But this is only half the story. In fact, much of it is an illusion because what you've been reading up to now is the story of only a small section of society in our State. The stories of the vast majority can be found on the other side of the pendulum where talks of competitive exams and career options sound irrelevant, almost indecent. For them staying on in school till the end is a challenge, forget about making those school years



have a bearing on their lives ahead. On the one hand we have a segment of society, however microscopic, who are prepared to stop at nothing in their march towards educational Eldorado. They won't let any kind of issues - Money, migration, family bonds, come in between them and their dream. On the other hand, there is the larger segment that struggles to make ends meet, buy medicine, and eat adequately. The annual admission furore that afflicts the former segment thankfully excludes these carefree souls on the fringes.

The acronyms we spoke of at the beginning are thus also symbols of the deep divide that exists in society. As an education-providing entity, the Church has reasons to feel satisfied at its achievements. Year after year when the Board results come out the achievements of our educational efforts become happily evident. While we bask in the satisfaction our achievements give, we know we cannot rest on our laurels because the bigger challenge of levelling the divide still remains.

We have a twin celebration coming up on the 15<sup>th</sup> of this month. May Mary assumed into heaven bless us and remind us that we are on a heaven-bound journey. And may our country that celebrates its Independence Day get the grace to rid itself of all shackles that bind.

*J. Pulinathan, SDB*

Parish News Briefs

**KARBOOK PARISH**

**SCC Training Program at Our Lady of Good Health Parish**



There is no more effective way of growing in faith than to be part of a Small Christian Community where that faith is shared, listened and celebrated. Small Christian Community (SCC) is a wonderful way to articulate the connections between faith and life. On 7th July, 2022 a training program for the Karbook Parishioners was organized from 9.00am to 1.30pm in the Church. Around 15 Parishioners participated. The Resource Persons for the day were Fr. P. Amalraj and Mr. Osim Uchoi from Depacherra Parish. The training

began with invoking God's blessings by the enthronement of the Bible. Mr. Osim Uchoi elicited information regarding the importance of SCC and its seven steps Method of praying. Fr. Amalraj enlightened the participants to build up strong Christian communities by sharing the word of God and thus form a better relationship with one another. The participants were very much benefited by the program. This would certainly help in the coming days in making parish SCC active and vibrant. The Assistant Parish Priest Fr. George in his welcome speech stressed the need of training to make SCCs vibrant. At the end Catechist Mr. Thockendra Uchoi proposed the vote of thanks. The training program ended with the lunch at 1.30pm. *Fr. S. George*

**TUIKARMAW PARISH**

**Women's Seminar**

A daylong Seminar was held for the Women of St. Mary's Parish Tuikarmaw, on Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2022 at the parish Centre. The Seminar came after the Holy Mass and it went on till 3p.m. The Seminar was held in collaboration with the Women empowerment programme of JUST. Sr. Jolly FS, the Diocesan Women Commission Secretary, along with Sr. Renuka CSC and Ms. Prahali were the Resource



Persons. They were first welcomed by Fr. Thomas Pereira, CSC the Parish Priest, along with all the participants. The Seminar focused on the health and family welfare of the people living in this area. After the Lunch there was the election of the Office Bearers of the Central Team of Maria Sangha of the Parish.  
*Reported by Sr. Christi USF, Maria Sangha Advisor*

**KUMARGHAT PARISH**

**Parish Feast and Green Sunday**

The Parish feast Day was celebrated on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2022. The Feast Day celebration began by hoisting the Parish Flag by Fr. Lancy CSC the Parish Priest. The parishioners were prepared for the feast spiritually by having *triduum* in their respective villages. The Feast Day program began with a Talk by Mr. Lala Darlong after which people welcomed Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC with a traditional *risha* and a bouquet of flowers. The Holy Eucharist began with the entrance dance by Fatima Hostel girls. Bishop Lumen presided over the Holy Eucharist which was concelebrated by many Priests from the nearby Parishes. Bishop Lumen in his homily encouraged faithful to become ardent



Christians by living in unity and love. After the final blessing Fr. Lancy CSC thanked everyone for attending the feast day celebration. To mark the Green Sunday, saplings were planted by Bp. Lumen and Fr. Lancy CSC and then distributed to the different *mondolis* of the Parish. Sr. Bastian FS along with Mr. Francis Darlong conducted Games for the children, youth, women and men of the Parish and winners were given prizes. It was a great day for all the people. The Feast Day ended with a fellowship meal. *Sr. Bernadette FS*

**Marriage Preparation Course**

On 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> June, Marriage Preparation Course was organized. 13 couples were enrolled. They were given two days training on various aspect of family and married life. The Resource Parsons were Mr. Lala, catechist Subia, Fr. Joachim SVD, Fr. Lancy CSC, Sr. Vera MC and Sr. Bastian FS. All the participants attended the two days training on marriage preparation. The Resource Team prepared the Couples well and helped them to make a good Confession. On 25<sup>th</sup> June the Couples had their marriages rectified. Fr. Lancy CSC thanked all the participants and the Resource Team.

*Sr. Bastian FS*

**News Briefs from the Diocese**

**World Environment Day & Science Exhibition at St. Joseph School, Gokulnagar**



Saint Joseph School, Gokulnagar, celebrated 'World Environment Day' and 'Science Exhibition' on 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2022 to raise global awareness to take positive environmental action to protect nature and the planet



earth. It is a day that reminds everyone on the planet to get involved in environment friendly activities. A short program was presented by the students. Shri Subrata Sen the eminent environmentalist, the Forest Range Officer, Bishalgarh was the chief guest,

Sr. Louise, the Superior of Carmel Convent, Gokulnagar was the guest of honour and presided over by the Principal Fr. Antony Balan. He welcomed each and every one. A play on the theme 'Modern Earth and Old Earth' which was highly applauded by all gave us a message that we need to preserve and protect the planet earth. The Chief Guest gave a speech in which he highlighted the need of protection of forest and conservation of natural resources. It was followed by the plantation of saplings by the Chief Guest, Principal, Sisters, Teachers and Students. Later, the Chief Guest inaugurated the 'Science Exhibition'. Every class participated in the exhibition. The exhibition was kept open till 12.30noon and all the parents were invited. It was a grand success and program went on well.

*Fr. Antony Balan*

### Revolving Fund for Self Reliance



Ambassa (Tripura) June 26, 2022: Oisho Bani Society, a NGO with a vision: 'Towards a holistic Society based on Human Values' had a Review Meeting of all the beneficiaries in Ambassa. The revolving fund for self-reliance had started in a small way in 2019 helping the poor families to rear livestock with only Rs.1,20,000. The rule of the revolving fund is, at the end of the year, money has to return back with a few extra as interest. In 2021 the number of beneficiaries increased to 59 and the revolving fund committee could lend money Rs.4,64,000. Around 50 beneficiaries were present to assess the situation. Mr. Sunil Debbarma, the Secretary of the Revolving Fund welcomed them and briefed them about the agenda. Mr. Joy Manik Bongcher, the Assistant BDO talked at length about the benefits of the fund and encouraged the livestock rearing. Dr. Asok Debbarma, the active member of Oisho Bani Society praised the beneficiaries for being responsible and promised to help in different capacities. Fr. Ivan D'Silva the Parish Priest of Ambassa and the Treasurer of the OBS reiterated all that has been said. It was found in the review that 80% beneficiaries benefited and were economically self-reliant.

*Ivan D'Silva, SVD*

### Blessing Foundation for new Presbytery at Karbook

The foundation for new Presbytery at Karbook was laid with a special blessing of the corner pillar by Bishop



Lumen Monteiro, CSC, on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2022. Fr. Allwin, the Parish Priest, Fr. Francis, CSC the Administrator of the Diocese, and Frs. Lawrence and Amalraj from Depacherra Parish, along with the Students of Karbook School and the SRA Sisters were also present for the Blessing.

After the Bishop blessed the foundation stone for the new Presbytery, Fathers, Sisters and Students added some cement aggregate on the steel structure, to express the unity, dedication and cooperation for the work and the Centre.

Prior to the blessing Bishop Lumen was welcomed by the officials of the School Parliament with a song, speech, flower bouquet and *risha*. The Bishop appreciated the School authorities and the students of Holy Cross School Karbook for their dedication and hard work in spite of the inadequate infrastructures of the school building.

*Fr. S. George*

### Inauguration of the Higher Secondary School at Depacherra



"Education breeds confidence. Confidence breeds hope. Hope breeds peace" said Confucius. Holy Cross School, Depacherra, is overwhelmed to have inaugurated the first batch of Class XI with approximately 55 students; thus upgrading it to a Higher Secondary School on 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2022. This auspicious occasion was graced by the Most Rev. Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, as the Chief Guest of the grand ceremony. Other Guests of Honour were: Shri David Halam the BDO of Karbook, Shri Raju Reang the SDPO of Karbook, Shri Burba Mohan Tripura the MLA of Karbook constituency, Shri Ranjit Das the MLA of Amarpur constituency, Frs. Bosco, Balan, Praveen and other Invitees.

The Chief Guest and the distinguished Guests were invited to light the lamp followed by a prayer dance.

Fr. Lawrence Darlong, the Principal, welcomed all the Guests and honored them with a sash, bouquet of flowers and a memento. This was followed by declaration of Class XI open and the Speech by Bishop Lumen Monteiro. Other Guests also spoke and expressed their gratitude and praised the Principal and the School for bringing light to the dream which all dreamt for, in the path of educating young minds. Such grand opening added its beauty by the cultural side of the program like Mamita dance, 'One in Love'

group choir, and drama on 'Never give up'. The releasing of its first ever School Magazine titled "WINGS" on such an auspicious gathering, served to round up the enjoyable program. In his Vote of Thanks, Fr. Amalraj expressed his heartfelt gratitude towards all the Guests and the entire corps of organizers, performers, and helpers, for their collaboration in making the function an outstanding success. *Fr. P. Amalraj*

### JUST News Briefs

#### Motivating Youth to take up Agriculture Practices of Traditional Knowledge



Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) conducted programs on Motivating Youth to take up agriculture practices and transfer of traditional knowledge at 14 FARM NE Project Villages under Hezamara and Padmabil R.D Blocks in the month of June 2022. During the programs JUST distributed different varieties of seeds like bitter gourd, cabbage, okra, cucumber, etc. to the farmers. Livelihood support like piglets and goats were also distributed to the Farmer's Clubs. Mr. Robert Lushai, the Project Coordinator, encouraged the Farmers to make use of the the materials given and make good profit out of it. He also encouraged the Farmers to be a model for every one in the villages and work for their development.

#### Capacity Building for Youth Volunteers for Peace



Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) organized a Capacity Building program for Youth Volunteers for Peace at JUST Hall, Agartala, on 23rd July 2022. There were 28 Youth who participated in the program. Fr. Pappy Valan the Asst. Director of ASHA Holy Cross was the Resource Person for the training. The Resource Person highlighted the socio political conflict and its challenges faced by the Youth in Tripura. He also shared the role of the Youth in the society by highlighting the current situation of the State which is witnessing a rapid increase in substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, superiority complex between the different communities, and so on. The Youth are the vulnerable group. He shared the ideas on how to involve the Youth in peace building processes and bring unity among different communities through group work, games and dialogue. *Mr. Cyril Darlong*

Link wishes its readers happy Independence day



Today is a day to feel proud about being a part of this great nation. May this spirit of freedom leads us all to success and glory in life

**Happy Independence Day**

### CARITAS INDIA Awarded with WCDM-DRR Excellence Award 2022 Trafficking



The WCDM-DRR Excellence Awards 2022 was announced to Caritas India, the social development arm of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India working in the field of Humanitarian Aid & Disaster Risk Reduction, Community Health, and Climate Adaptive Agriculture & Food Sovereignty.

Fr. (Dr.) Jolly Puthenpura, the Assistant Executive Director and Fr. Sushil Modi, Administrator of Caritas India received the award from Shri G Kishan Reddy, Hon'ble Union Minister of Tourism, Culture and Development of North Eastern Region of India. "This award further cements our solidarity with the poor of our country and gives us a time to consciously continue with the mission of rebuilding lives affected by different disasters," said Fr. Jolly, Assistant Executive Director of Caritas India after the award.

The award that recognizes excellence in disaster risk was presented at the WCDM-DRR Excellence Awards 2022 at India International Centre, New Delhi on 22nd June 2022. The award was given under the Development of Risk Resilient Infrastructure sub-category Disaster Preparedness for Effective and Efficient Disaster Risk Management (DRM). The award committee appreciated Caritas India for rendering selfless service and bringing innovation in managing natural and man-made disasters including pandemics and biological disasters and in mitigating their impact on society. The award was given under the "Pandemics, Biological Disasters" subcategory of Efficient and Exemplary Disaster Management (during disasters).

*Courtesy Caritas India*

### Pope Francis apologizes for harm done to indigenous Canadians at residential schools



In a speech in rural Canada before a crowd of indigenous Canadian people, Pope Francis publicly apologized for the Catholic Church's role in running much of Canada's government-sponsored residential school system. During more than a century of operation, the system worked to stamp out aspects of native culture, language, and religious practice.

"I am here because the first step of my penitential pilgrimage among you is that of again asking forgiveness, of telling you once more that I am deeply sorry," Pope Francis said in his July 25 speech. The speech marked Pope Francis' first public address since arriving in Canada on July 24 for a weeklong visit. The venue in Maskwacis, a rural town about an hour's drive south of Edmonton, is a circular arena typically used for pow wows.

Following a flight from Rome, the pope was greeted at Edmonton International Airport by Trudeau and other dignitaries July 24. On July 26, Pope Francis celebrated Mass at Commonwealth Stadium in Edmonton. Later that day, he participated in a pilgrimage to Lac Ste. Anne, one of the most sacred sites for Indigenous peoples of North America, long known as a place of healing. The pope also celebrated a Liturgy of the Word at the site. In his homily he said that Indigenous Peoples and grandparents are a precious treasure of the Church.

*Catholic News Agency*

### Bishop's Program for August 2022

- 02-14: Retreat and Refresh
- 14: Prison Ministry Sunday
- 15: Assumption of Mary & Independence Day
- 16: SDB Centenary Celebrations, Nandanagar
- 21: Confirmations, Nandanagar Parish  
Parish Feast, Mariamnagar
- 22: MC Society Feast, Agartala
- 24: Inauguration of St. Xavier School Kailasahar
- 28: Pastoral Visit, Sindukpathar Parish

### Our Distinguished Guests

- Fr. Abin VC from Krishnanagar Diocese
- Fr. James VC from Kolkata