



Grief and Sadness... But we bow to HIS Plan.



It is with disbelief that I read this message in Germany as I woke up on 10th October. The message was from the Diocese of Oakland, CA: *"It is with a deep sense of shock, sadness and immense grief, that I inform you of the passing away of Archbishop Dominic Jala, SDB, on 10th October 2019. Fr Matthew Vellankal, Pastor of St Bonaventure Church, also passed away in the accident while Fr Joseph Parekkatt who was injured but is now in a stable condition in the hospital."* Archbishop Dominic Jala, SDB was



the last person I had met in Rome as we bid farewell, he too USA and me to Germany. His death leaves a deep void in the Church in India and especially the Church in NE India where he played a vital role in the NE Region. But we bow to HIS plan. Archbishop Jala was born in Shillong in 1951 and ordained a priest in 1977. He was the Provincial of the Salesians of Don Bosco, Guwahati Province, before

he was appointed the Archbishop of Shillong on 22nd December 1999 and consecrated on 2nd April 2000. He was a priest for 42 years and a Bishop for 19 years. For me his passing away is a personal loss and I grieve his untimely death. I pay my fond respect to Archbishop Dominic Jala, and offer our united prayers for the repose of his soul. We, the Priests, Religious and Laity convey our deepest sympathies to the Clergy, Religious and Faithful of the Archdiocese of Shillong, and to the Confreres of the Salesian Congregation who mourn his untimely loss.

Pope Francis urges Indian Bishops to continue working with courage



Encouraging Group III of Indian Bishops to continue their work with courage and enthusiasm, Pope Francis, on 26 September said that he was aware of the challenges confronting the Church in India and encouraged us to continue working for God with faith and patience. The Holy Father was interacting with 44 Bishops as part of our *Ad Limina*

visit. He asked the Bishops to be close to Jesus, to the priests, and the people. Some 200 Bishops from India, in five separate groups, had their respective *Ad Limina* visits in the month of September this year.

Jesus never fails

In the past weeks we in the Diocese have experienced daunting anxiety. These are trying moments for us; but we must be persistent in prayer and know that God is with us. The following allegory reminds us that God never abandons us. A man dreams his entire life journey as a walk on the shore with waves symbolizing turmoil hitting him time and again. However, there comes a moment where he is faced with dark clouds and a storm. Trusting that Jesus is with him he comes out without any harm. But as he looks back on the dark path, he finds only one pair of footprints on the sand. Disheartened, he calls out to Jesus: "Lord, were you not there with me when I was in trouble?" Immediately he hears a voice from heaven, "My son, I was always there with you. You see only one pair of footprints, because in the time of distress I was carrying you in my arms so that nothing may harm you." It is true, Jesus never fails us!

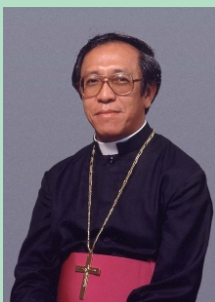
+Lumen, CSC

Pastor's Corner

As Sad October goes by...



In our part of the country, October is a month one generally looks forward to. With festivals and a set of holidays it provides a much needed break to everyone especially students. This year too, October came with all of these and yet, it has been



wearisome month in many ways. The sudden passing away of Archbishop Dominic Jala of Shillong in a tragic accident in the United States has

left the region of Northeast India poorer on many counts. Not only by virtue of the position that he held, but also as a person of outstanding caliber and compassion, he considerably influenced the collective thought that emanated from the region.

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Editorial

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The news of his departure brought a sense of sadness and gloom in the entire region. The funeral that the Archdiocese accorded him was indeed, a remarkable and fitting 'celebration of sorrow', the like of which the Diocese, probably has never witnessed in its 130 years of history! It seemed very fitting that some priests and laity of our Diocese went to Shillong to attend the funeral not only because our Diocese falls under Shillong Metropolitan but also because Archbishop Jala was a well known and much loved person even in Tripura. The presence of a galaxy of Government officials beginning with the Chief Minister at the Archbishop's funeral was a clear acknowledgement of the services the Church renders to society in North East India.

The State of Tripura at the moment presents a different scenario. Although the Church renders exactly the same kind of services out here too, its motives and actions are often misconstrued and misinterpreted by some. For the first time in Tripura, Catholic Priests have been arrested and jailed. As this is being written, one of our Priests is still behind the bars.

One of the undeniable but seldom acknowledged facts is that the Church has played and continues to play a constructive role in maintaining peace and harmony in the State. It substantially contributes to the education and general progress of the weaker sections of people in the State. Attempts to intimidate its work would amount to attempting to hamper progress of the weaker sections.

Tripura has come a long way from what it was decades ago. Its people cannot afford a restive atmosphere of suspicion, fear and stagnation. Tripura must continue to remain a bastion of peace, harmony and brotherhood that transcends all differences!

J. Pulinthanath, SDB

KHUMULWNG PARISH Parish Youth Convention



St. Alphonsa Parish Khumulwng was bubbling with joy to celebrate the Parish Youth Convention from 5th to 7th October, under the theme, "Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord (Rom 12:11). The Convention began with the lighting of the lamp by Fr. Valentine Dungdung SVD, the Parish Priest, Br. M. K Devassy SG the Principal of Montfort Higher Secondary School, and Mr. Mangol Debbarma, the Secretary of the Parish in the presence of other *motha* leaders. Sixty five youth from different *mothas* actively participated in this Youth Convention.

The speakers Mr. Uttam Debbarma, Mr. Subash Debbarma and Mr. Birendra Jamatia helped the Youth in different fields by dealing with relevant topics like, Love for God, Prayer as Youth, General Awareness, and Importance of Rosary. The personal experience and testimony shared by the Speakers was very encouraging and touching. The Holy Eucharist, Confession, and Adoration service, also helped the Youth to move closer to God. The melodious choir by our Parish Youth and the 'praise and worship' helped each and everyone to have the spirit of worship and zeal. The Youth Convention came to a close on 7th October, with the Holy Eucharist and fellowship meal with all the *motha* leaders. *Fr. Stany Pereira, SVD*

MOHARPARA PARISH Parish Youth Retreat



We conducted our Annual Youth

Retreat from 4th to 6th October, with the theme *Let no one despise your Youth*. The Retreat started with Praise and Worship led by Brother Ian D' Cruze who was the Resource Person for the Retreat. Large number of participants from all different centers took active part in the program. The participants were enabled to experience the power of the Word of God through powerful and spirit filled preaching by the Resource Person. Through the Sacrament of Confession many participants experience God's unconditional love and forgiveness. The Retreat concluded with the solemn Holy Eucharist presided by Fr. Laurence Darlong the Diocesan Youth Director and concelebrated by two other priests.

Fr. Arbok, CSC

AMBASSA PARISH Marriage Preparation Course



Ambassa, 12 October, 2019: Holy Spirit Catholic Church organized Marriage preparation Course from 10 to 12 October. Taking advantage of Hindu festival holidays, parishes are busy arranging programs for youth, children, mothers, etc. Ambassa Parish organized a Marriage preparation Course which was attended by 49 participants. This Course was for those wanting to rectify their marriages. The parish has been organizing this program continuously for four years now and each time many attend. This year the classes were attended by 6 different Parishes of our Diocese.

Various topics were dealt by different resource persons. Mr. Indrajit Sangma spoke on "Family and Spiritual Life." "Family Prayer: its necessity, models, obstacles and fruits". Other Resource Persons Mr.

Sopon Sangma, Mr. Prabath Marak & Mrs. Lata Marak, spoke on Importance of SCC & Participative Church, The Role of family in the Local Church, Christian Family, Family and Children” respectively. On second day Fr. Hormis John, CSC spoke on Christian Marriage; the Sacrament of Marriage; Unity and Indissolubility of marriage. Dr. Asok Debbarma spoke on HEALTH ISSUES. Mr. Sankunga Darlong gave classes on, “The Christian attitude towards Sex and the Morality of Marriage”. At the end of the Course, a Holy Mass was offered as thanksgiving and Certificates were distributed to all 49 participants.

Ivan D'Silva, svd

Spes Unica 2019 Faith and Youth Leadership



Under the auspices of the Holy Cross Educational Foundation, Spes Unica 2019 was conducted at Holy Cross School Agartala. There were 30 catholic students who participated in the Spes Unica program from 28th to 30th

September at Holy Cross School, Agartala. 'Rooted in Love' was the theme for the three day meet. A number of faith and leadership enriching classes and activities were conducted for the students who gained much from the program.

Fr. Ishwar, CSC

Vocation Camp, Khumulwng

The Commission for Vocation Promotion organized a 3-day Vocation camp in collaboration with the Diocesan Minor Seminary at the Pastoral Centre, Champaknagar.



Sixteen Catholic boys from different Parishes registered their names on 1st October 2019. The Vocation Camp began with the Holy Eucharist presided by Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC. The Bishop preached on the theme “Speak Lord, your servant is listening.” The two days of input sessions were organized systematically on various topics always emphasizing the “call to Priesthood”. Many Fathers from the Diocese as well as Laity from the Local Parish spoke to the boys. The young and energetic boys also had ample opportunities to show their unity and talents in different activities. The Camp ended on 4th

October with a thanksgiving Adoration and Holy Mass.

Fr. Antony Balan

North Zone Youth Convention

From 8 to 10 October we had first North-Zone level Youth



Convention. There were more than 300 Youth gathered from various Parishes of North Tripura at Good Shepherd Parish, Kathalcherra. Thanks to Fr. Abraham CSC the Parish Priest, KCYM President and Secretary, all the PYAs, the Youth and Leaders for their cooperation and participation. Many of the Youth gained much from the Convention which had the theme 'Christ is Alive' "Christus Vivit". It was beautifully presented through various competitions like singing, quiz etc. Fr. Lawrence Darlong, the Diocesan Youth Director along with his Team Members were the main Resource Persons of the program. The Convention brought unity and broader understanding of Christ who is alive and active in our Youth.

Fr. Ishwar, CSC

JUST News Nuggets

Training on Livestock Management



Training on Livestock Management was conducted at JUST Training Hall on 24th September 2019. Mr. Biswajit Debbarma, the animal expert was the Resource Person. There

were 60 Farmers who attended the day long Training Program. The Resource Person shared different ways of treating different animals. He also told them some important medicines for different sickness of different animals like Botone syrup for worms, piles, liver problem for pigs; and Ibermactin for pigs and also other cattle's skin disease, etc. The program was very interactive and the program ended with a meal.

International Peace Day celebrations

The Peace Staff of JUST organized Seminars, Debates Competitions, Cleanliness Drives, Plantation Drive, Essay Competition on Peace, and



a Peace Rally with the target Schools during International Peace Day Celebration in September 2019. During the International Peace Day the Peace Club Members made a pledged promote peace in their respective places and to accept the different communities of the State who are from various Culture, Religion, and Community, to live in peace and harmony.

Mr. Cyril Darlong

Tripura News Nuggets

Conversion allegations: Catholic laity refutes charges

Agartala, Oct19: The catholic Laity refuted the allegations that Christian Educational Institutions that under the guise of education we are converting people. We are shocked by the baseless accusation that some organizations' have leveled such allegation ` said a statement by the Laity. The allegations were being heard from some sections following the unfortunate and tragic death of a student Happy Debbarma at a catholic run school. "For decades Christian Institutions have been imparting quality education to all sections of people in the state of Tripura without discrimination of any sorts and

without any attempt to change their religion" the press communiqué said and then added; We take strong exception and condemn such malicious attempts to destroy the image of the Christian Educational Institution and hamper education and progress of the state".

"Our Educational institutions, in fact have always accorded top priority to promotion of peace, unity and brotherhood of all and continue to the development of all, especially the weaker sections of people". The catholic Laity maintained that such allegations would saw the seeds of division and falsehood and could ' destroy the peace and religious harmony of the state.

Tripura Times Agartala



Bishop's Program for November 2019

- 01: Meet FMA General Councilor
- 02: All Souls Day, Mariamnagar
- 03: Parish Day, Baijalbari
- 06: SSps Convent Blessing, Belonia
- 08-09: Jubilee Symposium, JUST Agartala
2.30pm: Clergy Meet, Agartala
- 10: Eucharistic Procession, Auxilium Agartala
- 11-13: Episcopal Jubilee of Bp. John Thomas, Itanagar
- 15: Meet FS Superior General
- 16-17: Confirmations, Gandacherra Parish
- 18: Blessing of Harina School, under Sindukpathar Parish
- 23: Blessing of Presbytery, Bagbasa
- 23-24: Golden Jubilee, Kumarghat Parish
- 28-30: Centenary of Archdiocese, Patna

Our Readers Write

Today I took time to read the Link in detail. I am inspired and motivated to do better in my mission on reading the Pastor's message and reading the entire Link. Thank you for keeping me in touch with the mission of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Agartala. **Sr. Marina BS, Siliguri, WB**

Thank you very much for the LINK and the information on the updated website of your Diocese. I do appreciate your kind gesture to keep us informed of your good works. It is an inspiration. **Fr Sunny Joseph, Rector of Good Shepherd Seminary, Dimapur**

Reading Link is an home coming and refreshing experience! **Fr. Cyprian, SVD, Chittagong, BDesh**

The Link is indeed a "Link" with my past. When I read the news about Tripura, there is a special sensation that is unique. Your dedication to your calling is making a major difference. May the good Lord continue to bless you and give the necessary grace to continue His work on earth. **Marilyne and Chacko, Canada**

Thank you very much for the LINK. You are amazing with your punctuality and regularity. I think an award is due for you. Congratulations.

Fr. Emmanuel CSC, Agartala