



LINK

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PASTOR'S MESSAGE

With Peter, always



In the Pastor's Corner I have posted Andrea Torielli's poignant writeup 'With Peter, always...' on the 11th anniversary of Pope Francis' election to the papacy and his constant calls for the world to follow the path of mercy and peace. I wish you all a joy - filled EASTER season

+ Lumen, CSC

In the deafening silence of diplomacy, in a landscape marked by the increasingly evident absence of political initiative and leadership capable of betting on peace, while the world has begun a mad race to rearm, allocating sums that would suffice to ensure basic healthcare twice over for all the inhabitants of the earth and significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the lone voice of Pope Francis continues to plead for weapons to be silenced and call for the courage to foster paths of peace. The Pope continues to call for a ceasefire in the Holy Land, where the ruthless massacre of October 7 carried out by Hamas terrorists was followed by the tragic carnage that continues to be perpetrated in Gaza.

He continues to call for weapons to fall silent in the tragic war that erupted in the heart of Christian Europe, in Ukraine destroyed and martyred by the bombings of the aggressor Russian army. He continues to invoke peace in other parts of the world where conflicts are fought with unspeakable violence, the forgotten conflicts that make up increasingly large pieces of a global conflict.

The Bishop of Rome enters the twelfth year of his pontificate in a dark hour, with the fate of humanity at the mercy of rulers incapable of assessing the consequences of their decisions, who seem to surrender to the inevitability of war. With clarity and realism, he says that "he is stronger who sees the situation, who thinks of the people," that is, "who has the courage to negotiate," because "negotiating is a courageous word," of which one should not be ashamed.

Pope Francis, challenging the misunderstandings of those both near and far, continues to place the sanctity of life at the center of attention, expressing closeness to innocent victims and denouncing the dirty economic interests that move the strings of wars cloaked in hypocrisy.

A quick look at these last eleven years of history makes clear the prophetic value of Peter's voice. The alarm, first raised two decades ago, about the third world war fought piecemeal. The social encyclical *Laudato si'* (2015) showed how climate change, migrations, wars, and an economy that kills are interconnected phenomena that can only be addressed through a global perspective. The great encyclical on human fraternity (*Fratelli tutti*, 2020) pointed the way to building a

new world based on fraternity, once again removing any excuse for abusing the name of God to justify terrorism, hatred, and violence.

There is also the constant reference in his magisterium to mercy, which weaves the entire fabric of a missionary pontificate. The testimony of mercy, therefore, represents a fundamental element of this "saving love of God" which is "prior to moral and religious obligation." In other words, those who have not yet come into contact with the Christian reality, as Pope Benedict XVI had already lucidly observed in May 2010, will hardly be struck and fascinated by the affirmation of norms and moral obligations, by the insistence on prohibitions, by the meticulous lists of sins,



by condemnations, or by nostalgic appeals to the values of the past. At the origin of welcome, closeness, tenderness, and accompaniment, at the origin of a Christian community capable of embracing and listening, there is the echo of mercy that has been experienced and

that one seeks - despite a thousand limitations and failures - to return. If we read with these eyes the Pope's gestures, even those that have provoked in some the same scandalized reactions that Jesus' gestures provoked two thousand years ago, one discovers their profound evangelizing and missionary force.

(Courtesy Vatican News, 13th March 2024)



On this day of Our Lord's glorious Resurrection, may the Spirit of the Risen Christ always live within you, and may you always have the gift of Love, the blessing of Hope, and the promise of Peace.

May the peace of the Risen Christ be with you at Easter and always.

Wishing you all a Happy Easter

+ Lumen, CSC



EDITORIAL

Church and Elections

It is normal for the local Church to have in its fold adherents of various political parties. That does not at all affect the identity of the particular Church as a union of believers in the Lord united in heart and soul.

On the other hand, it is a powerful witness to the unifying nature and power of faith when members belonging to different ideologies, even opposed ones, come together to celebrate the faith as brothers and sisters united in the Lord.

In that way, even in times when one is tempted to think of political power and allegiance as the ultimate realities that matter, the Church bears witness to values that transcend political identity and aspirations.

As the months of April and May unleash the dance of democracy throughout our great nation, it is our prayer that democracy and all it entails will hold sway and that this mammoth exercise will bring forth what is best for our country and all its people.



J. Pulinthanath, SDB

With a Lok Sabha election ominously approaching and the intensity of emotions and campaigns soaring to unexpected crescendos, it seems apt to examine what the attitude of the Church to politics is. The Catholic Church teaches that Catholics should participate in the political process, be informed voters, and encourage elected officials to act on behalf of the common good. However, there are limits to official Church political activity. The Church does not endorse, promote, or oppose political parties, their candidates, or their platforms. It also doesn't allow its member lists, buildings, or other resources to be used for political purposes.

The Church also doesn't advise members on how to vote, or direct party leaders or government officials in their duties. Instead, it teaches the gospel of Jesus Christ, with the understanding that living these principles can limit hostilities and contention.

The political scenario in the State of Tripura is no less volatile than it is elsewhere in the country. With an election approaching, various political parties bring to the public domain the aspirations of the people through campaigning and canvassing in the hope of garnering votes.

Unlike politicians who urge people to vote for their party, the Church desists from endorsing or opposing any party. But it does encourage everyone to cast their vote and be informed voters because that is consistent with the gospel values of freedom, dignity, and choice of the individual the Church has always promoted.

LINK offers our CONGRATULATIONS to



Sr. Rosa Pyngrope, FMA, the newly elected Provincial of FMA, Shillong Province



H.E. Filipe Neri Cardinal Ferrao, the newly elected President of FABC



Rev. Sr. Maria Goretti Amaladoss, FS, the newly re-elected Superior General of the Fatima Sisters



Sr. Clara Mendonca, BS, the newly elected Provincial of Bethany Sisters, Silchar Province



Sr. Angela Narzary, SCC, the newly elected Provincial Superior of the Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod, Guwahati Province



Rev. Sr. Angela Devi Reddy, SAC, is elected the Provincial Superior of the Pallotine Missionary Sisters



Rev. Sr. Christine Mynsong, MSMHC, is elected the Superior General of the MSMHC Congregation



Moharpara Parish**Lenten Retreat for Couples**

Immaculate Conception Parish Moharpara organised Lenten Retreat for Couples from 1st - 3rd March, 2024 in St. John's Church Debthang. The Retreat was held for two Zones namely Moharpara and Twithampui. Over two hundred participants from these two Zones took part in the event. The resource persons were a couple from Kolkata Mr. & Mrs. Vicky D'Cruz, who were filled with the Holy Spirit and inspired many people through their preaching and personal faith sharing. The event commenced with the Way of the Cross from Friday and concluded on Sunday with anointing, deliverance, and Holy Mass.

Another Retreat for Couples was conducted from 15th to 17th March for two Zones, Tuidu and Ampu respectively. Fr. Leenus VC, the Parish Priest of Mariamnagar was the resource person. He stressed on the theme of unity in the Church and the importance of sacrament of reconciliation. The people were captured by the Holy Spirit that no one wanted even to have a break, such was their attention to the word of God. On the second day they had an opportunity for the sacrament of reconciliation. On the last day the participants were anointed and delivered from snares and the power of the evil one. The Retreat comes to an end with the Holy Mass and simple common meal.

Fr. Arbok Lyngdoh, CSC

Ambassa Parish**Spiritual Renewal Program**

Holy Spirit Catholic Church organized two days of Spiritual Renewal Program for the parishioners. On March 1st it was organized at Dhanchara Villa. Many people came for the Retreat and it was the opportune time to receive the sacrament of reconciliation. Many were healed during the Retreat. Fr. Leenus V.C and Sr. Soona CMC from Mariam Nagar Parish were the animators for the Retreat. On the request of the parishioners another Retreat was held at the parish center on March 10th Fr. Leenus VC and Sr. Soona CMC came to conduct a spiritual rejuvenation for the faithful. More than 250 people participated in the spiritual animation program. During the Adoration people were in line for the confession. The people thanked God for this time of grace in the Lenten Season. The Parish Council Secretary thanked the resource persons for animating one day Retreat in the parish.

Fr. Ivan D' Silva, SVD

Chailengta Parish**Titbits of the 3rd Annual Parish Sabha**

We began our 3rd Annual Sabha of St. Joseph Parish, Chailengta, on 2nd March, with the words of welcome by the Parish Priest. It was followed by two Talks by Rev. Fr. Amalraj Puranam, the Parish Priest of Depacherra, on the given theme: "BeRooted in the Living Word." In the afternoon, after a grand welcome to our Shepherd Most Rev. Lumen CSC, we had the Village Reports from 10 mondolils and the Parish Report by the Parish Priest. During the Adoration that ensued we had the Sacrament of Reconciliation for which our Shepherd also was one of the confessors. The Parish Council Secretary election was done before the dinner and Mr. Mosiram Reang was re-elected for the post. On 3rd March, our School Principal and Asst. PP Fr. Binoyjohn CSC, prepared the people for Mass followed by a short but clear expose of SCC Gospel sharing by Sr. Veleena Pereira SRA. Later we had the solemn High Mass presided by our Bishop, followed by Prize Distribution and the fellowship meal. Mr. MosiramReang gave the vote of thanks.

Fr. Harry D'Silva CSC

Pitra Parish**Charismatic Retreat at the Parish**

The Charismatic retreat at St. Joseph Parish, Pitra, was a deeply enriching experience for all involved, especially the 200 people gathered, fostering spiritual growth and community bonding. The combination of biblical teachings and spiritual animation led by the World Evangelization Team from Kerala was truly impactful. The culmination of the Retreat with the Palm Sunday celebration added to the sense of reverence and unity among the participants, as all the 'mothas' joyfully participated by setting a strong foundation for the upcoming Holy Week. Such events indeed play a vital role in nurturing the faith and contributing to the growth of the Church in the local community.

Fr. Sunny, SDB

**Hon'ble Governor of Tripura
Shri. Indrasena Reddy Nallu
Attended
Shantir Rani Catholic Church
On the Auspicious Occasion of
Good Friday**



The Hon'ble Governor of Tripura, Shri Indra Sena Nallu, attended the Good Friday service at Mariamnagar Catholic Church. After spending some time in prayer the Hon'ble Governor wished the Christian community saying that Lord Jesus has shown us a way to love everyone. He said we must emulate his life and values.



Our Father in Kokborok at the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem



The Our Father in Kokborok is installed at Pater Noster in Jerusalem Mount of Olives. Thanks to our ADPC Secretary Mr. Rajulal Debbarma for his keen interest and hard work that made this a reality. Along with Fr. Sunny and a group of pilgrims to the Holy Land, Mr. Rajulal placed the Our Father in KB on the wall alongside 195 other languages from around the world. The Our Father in Kokborok language is the 12th language from

India and the 2nd from North East.

Staff Reporter



International Women's Day and Annual Women's Convention



On 9th & 10th March 2024 International Women's Day was celebrated with the theme "Invest in Women, Accelerate Progress." The Diocesan level Annual Women's Convention was also held at the Cathedral Campus, Agartala, in collaboration with JUST. The two days were marked with talks, colorful events and competitions. On 9th March Mrs. Jharna Debbarma the Chairperson for Tripura State Commission for Women was the Chief Guest. Together with Fr. Lathees S the Director of JUST and the Parish Priest of Cathedral Parish and other Fathers, Sisters and the Deanery level Presidents, 4 Stalls for exhibition and sale were inaugurated and blessed. Mrs. Jharna in her message to over 400 Women spoke on the importance of being a woman in the present day and encouraged them to be always in the forefront and be part of the progress in their own society and family. The other Speakers of the day were Mrs. Dolly Reang, EM, TTAADC, Khumulwng, and Sr. Bastian D'Silva FS. Fr. Lancy D'Souza the VG of the Diocese also addressed the women participants.

The Diocesan and Parish level Secretaries presented their Annual Reports and accounts for the year. Fr. Lathees S the



Director of JUST, explained their role in the Church as mothers, and introduced the program for Single Mothers.

Mrs. Babita Jamatia the President of Executive Committee completed her 3-year term of office and Mrs. Rita Uchoi was elected as the new President.

In the afternoon the women from all the 24 Parishes praised Mother Mary and moved in procession singing her praises and reciting the Rosary.

The evening was marked with very prayerful moments of Adoration and Holy Mass.

Later the Women participated in various Competitions on Bible stories, parables, and life of women saints through dance, skit, and song, which also won prizes for them.

On the 10th March our Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC, was the Chief Guest. He encouraged women to be stronger and united in their work.

Sr. Sunanda SND the Regional Secretary for Women Commission (NE Region) also witnessed the two-day event and encouraged the women to be more active and effective in their outreach to the needy.

Another attraction was that Deanery level Bible Quiz competition. The women from all the parishes of the diocese who came to be part of this two days program were enriched and took part in all the activities irrespective of their age, language, or tribe. The Executive Committee, Parish and Deanery level Office Bearers were felicitated with Assam Gamochas and appreciated for their services in the Church.

The high point was the Holy Mass presided by Bishop Lumen and six other priests.

At the Holy Mass the mothers renewed their promise to continue to work unitedly for the upliftment of their society.

Three months of preparation went ahead of this two-day event which brought great success. Our special thanks to everyone.

*Sr. Jolly FS,
Women Commission Secretary*

TRAINING ON RIGHTS-BASED AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS



JUST organized a training program on Rights-Based and Leadership Skills at Swarupa Colony under Karbook Block, on 15th March. 25 community members gathered to engage in insightful discussions and collaborative efforts towards beneficial outcomes. The facilitator was Mr. Pradip Minj, a senior Government Teacher in the program. The facilitator shared some significant societal matters, commencing with a reflection on the vital role of mothers in nurturing families and communities. The facilitator also discussed on environmental stewardship, with discussions centering on the importance of preserving one's natural surroundings. Mr. Pradip also shared the adverse effects of deforestation and the need for collective responsibility to safeguard the environment for future generations. Amidst these discussions, practical solutions were shared for the implementation of sustainable practices such as planting fruit trees, foreconomicempowerment and environmental conservation. Then attention was drawn to the necessity of maintaining consistent academic standards. He emphasized the community's commitment to ensuring equal opportunities for all students to succeed. Sensitive topics such as gambling, addiction, and alcohol abuse, were also addressed, prompting a collective commitment to

supporting one another's well-being and a healthier lifestyle. The participants were encouraged to share their learnings to their community members.

Mr. Robert Lushai

The "Papa Francisco" Hospital Boat



A boat carrying Christ's hope and consolation on the banks of the Amazon River, the "Papa Francisco" Hospital boat tends to some 5,200 people's health and spiritual needs, which Sister Marcia Lopes Assis serves aboard in the Juruti-Pará region of the Amazon Forest in Brazil.

Sister Marcia Lopes Assis belongs to the Congregation of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She carries out her pastoral work at the Nuestra Señora de la Salud Parish in Juruti-Pará in the Amazon. The parish is part of the Diocese of Óbidos, in Brazil. Sister Marcia shares that her "vocation has been a missionary one from the very beginning", and that throughout her journey, God has always surprised her in every missionary experience he has granted her. Crossing the Amazon River, explains Sister Marcia, "is no easy task. When we arrived at the community of Santa Rita, I was greeted by the children, who were very timid and frightened by the arrival of a stranger, but we soon became very close. Some are afraid because they confuse me with a nurse or a dentist; others call me teacher, but most of them are captivated and stay close, saying they too will be religious when they grow up." As a token of their gratitude, the children offered to teach the religious sister to row. "I found the best teachers among the children," she adds. The Sister is part of a group of 35 collaborators who navigate the "Pope Francis Hospital Boat." The Team includes 10 doctors, two dentists, and one priest, Fr. Alfonso Lambert. It is a home of welcoming, of striving, of defending life, and of evangelization, simplicity, and love. A day on the boat starts very early in the morning with Holy Mass. Then the professionals treat the people according to their symptoms.

"I am in charge of welcoming the families, evangelizing the children and accompanying the sick after a surgery or taking them to their medical visits if they cannot get there on their own. I distribute the Eucharist to the sick," says Sister Marcia.

(Courtesy Sister Débora Evangelina Vargas, A.S.C.J.)

Our Distinguished Guests

- **Fr. Jack Ryan, CSC, General Steward from Rome**
- **CSC Frs. Roque, Gaspar, Rui & Ashok Vino from Bangalore**
- **Fr. George Rozario CSC, Provincial of Bangladesh**
- **Fr. Jeevan Kennady, SVD, ING Regional Superior from Guwahati**
- **Mr. Pascal & Mrs. Doreen Almeida from Vasai**
- **Fr. Pius, CMF Provincial of NE India from Shillong**
- **CMF Frs. Jaison, John & Tomy from Shillong**
- **Mr. Tito & Mrs. Debra Goes from Goa**
- **Mr. Patrick & Mrs. Diana D'Cruz from Pune**
- **Archbishop Victor Lyngdoh from Shillong**
- **Bishop Wilbert Marwein from Nongstoin**

Bishop's Program for April 2024

- 01-04: NERBC Meeting at Diphu, Assam
- 06-07: Deanery Youth Convention, Karbook
- 09 :JUST GB Meet, Damdamia Office
- 13-14: Parish Sabha, Tuikarmaw Parish
- 19 :General Elections – Exercising my franchise
- 21 :Belcharra Chapel Blessing, Baijalbari Parish
- 23 :Tribaggyopara Chapel Blessing, Ganda Twisa Parish
- 28 :New Parish & PP Installation, Jampuijala Parish
- 30:Meet with Fr. EP Mathew SJ, Provincial