



Pastor's Corner

Unfinished till Broken

Each 26th of May brings back memories of 1996, the day the Diocese was born. It was Pentecost Sunday and I was ordained Bishop at Holy Cross School Grounds Agartala, by late Archbishop Resto, SDB, on a hot and humid day.

Filled with faith and propelled by hope yet with fear and trepidation, I took on the reins of the Diocese of Agartala as its first Bishop with nothing more than a Papal Decree in my hand.

Steve Goodier's striking story comes to mind when I recall the beginnings of this Diocese. Goodier speaks of an Eastern village that through the centuries was known for its exquisite pottery. Especially striking were its urns. High as tables and wide as chairs, they were admired around the globe for their strong form and delicate beauty. Legend has it that when each urn was apparently finished, there was one final step. The artist broke it and then put it back together with gold filigree. An ordinary urn was then transformed into a priceless work of art. What seemed



finished wasn't, until it was broken.

The comparison is clear. The Diocese had to be broken several times along with its shepherd as it was getting formed. Nothing worthwhile in life comes without struggle. The many challenges I had to face, especially the paucity of personnel and money, were tough moments; yet in some mysterious ways they were transforming moments too. Today, 19 years later, while I recall the anniversary, I remember the many hardships coupled with numerous blessings of each year, and am grateful. I thank the priests, religious, lay faithful and friends for your support. I pray that the Holy Spirit who came down at Pentecost on the Apostles and likewise on me in 1996 continues to inspire, empower, ennoble and guide me. Lead Us Onward continues to be my prayer as I enter the 20th year of my Episcopacy!

+Lumen, CSC

LINK Wishes it's founder Bishop Lumen on his 19th Episcopal Ordination Anniversary.

GUEST EDITORIAL

It was the beginning of the L'Arche movement, now a federation of 147 communities in 35 countries in which the intellectually disabled and volunteers (called assistants) share together a life rich in mutual relationships. Later, Vanier with Marie Helen Vathiercofounded Faith and Light, now a network of 500 communities in 82 countries. The goal of each L'Arche community is an equal number of those with special needs and assistants. As equals, they live and work together. The assistants are often idealistic young people, but they can be of any age or faith. Father Henri Nouwen was an assistant at Daybreak, the L'Arche home in Montreal. Professionals in psychiatry, medicine, and nursing assist but do not live in the homes. Some assistants find the community living too difficult and leave. Others say they come to recognize the gifts of their housemates and often see their own brokenness and find new life.

In March, when he received the Templeton Prize at the British Academy in London, Vanier explained what he had learned in L'Arche and Faith and Light.

People of Heart



“People with intellectual disabilities are essentially people of the heart. When they meet others they do not have a hidden agenda for power or for success. Their cry, their fundamental cry, is for a relationship, a meeting heart to heart. It is this meeting that awakens them, opens them up to life, and calls them forth to love in great simplicity, freedom and openness. “When those ingrained in a culture of winning and of individual success really meet them, and enter into friendship with them, something amazing and wonderful happens. They, too, are opened up to love and even to God. They are changed at a very deep level. They are transformed and become more fundamentally human.”

www.americancatholic.org/e-news

CONGRATULATIONS Bishop-elect Vincent Aind: Pope Francis has appointed Fr. Vincent Aind the new Bishop for the Diocese of Bagdogra. Currently Fr. Vincent Aind was serving as Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy of the Morning Star Regional Seminary where he was a student as a seminarian. He was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Jalpaiguri in April 1984. Bishop-elect Aind was Rector of Frs. Bosco and Prasad of our Diocese.

**St. Andre Parish, Bodhjungnagar
SCC Day Celebrated at St. Andre Parish**

Representatives from 50 SCC units of the Parish came together at Holy Cross Church Borkathal for SCC Day celebration. This was the first time that the



SCC units came together. We spent the day learning from one another and some inputs on the need to build SCCs for the development of the families and Church at large. We also spent some time together in making the action plan for each individual unit. The celebration came to an end with a Thanksgiving Eucharist. We are sure that the SCC will play a major role in building faith communities and peaceful families.

Mr. Subrai Debbarma, Secretary

A meaningful celebration of Lent by St. Andre Parish Youth

I thank the Lord almighty for the opportunity given to us, Parish Youth, to help the faithful pray better during the Lent Season. We, St. Andre Parish Youth, along with Catechists, reached out to all the villages of our Parish with live Way of the Cross. Each day after we completed the Way of the Cross there was a great sense of



satisfaction because we could see that the crowd gathered were moved emotionally and some even shed tears and prayed. I am sure that our efforts helped them to come in touch with their conscience and they felt a sense of relief from their pains. May the risen Lord continue to inspire the Youth of our Parish and Diocese.

Youth President, Mr. Swopan Debbarma

**St. Francis Assisi Parish,
Gachirampara**

Parish Church building inaugurated and blessed

12th of April 2015 was a memorable day for the parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi Parish Gachirampara. The long awaited Church got inaugurated and blessed on this special day by Rev. Bishop Lumen along with Fr. Vincent Monis, OFM Cap., the Provincial Delegate of Holy



Trinity Province Karnataka. Priests and religious from Agartala and various Parishes participated in the event. The Church was beautifully decorated by the parishioners and the hostel students. The celebration was made more colourful

through the melodious voices of the parishioners and the children in the hostel. People from all substations participated in the cultural items after the Holy Mass. On this occasion Bishop prayed and congratulated the parishioners and the donors for their spirit of sacrifice and goodwill. I am grateful to all generous donors from India and abroad.

Fr. Prasanna, Ofm Cap

**Holy Cross Parish, Bagbasa
Bishop's Pastoral Visit and 3rd Parish
Anniversary Celebration**

On April 13th 2015 Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, made a pastoral visit to Bagbasa Holy Cross Parish in its completion of three years as a Parish at Bagbasa North Tripura. A large number of faithful and religious from



Kathalcherra, Kumarghat, Panisagar and Dharmanagar gathered for the solemn

Eucharistic celebration. Bishop in his message to people appreciated their faith in the Risen Lord and encouraged them to grow as one faith community in the Diocese. He thanked them for their cooperation in the parish and asked them to do more in the area of evangelization. He appreciated Fr. Paul CSC, for shouldering the responsibility as the first Parish Priest and congratulated him for the completion of three years. After Holy Mass there was a colorful cultural evening organized by Mr. Joshua Halam. The Parish Day came to an end with agape for the people. The Parish Secretary Mr. Mukamlal Halam proposed the vote of thanks.

Fr. C. R. Paul, CSC

**Christ the King Parish, Depacherra
Maria Sangha Sanmelan at
Depacherra**

Christ the King Parish, Depacherra has organised "Maria Sangha Sabha" on 17-18th of May 2015 at the Parish Centre. About 250 women from 28 Mondolies participated in this well organised Sabha. The Sabha began with Holy Eucharist presided over by Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC, Bishop of Agartala and it was followed by an Inaugural session for which Bishop was the Chief Guest. In his address he appreciated the efforts

of the parish in bringing the women together in the year of Parish Jubilee and



urged them to take an active part in the life of the Parish. Fr. Cyprian Pinto, SVD, Fr. Bhuvan Sirkar, and Mrs. Gita Debbarma were the resources persons. Fr. Prasad our Parish Priest in his welcome address highlighted the main aim of this Sabha and wished that the women of this parish come together and strengthen the bonds between themselves as Catholic women of faith Promoting personal and spiritual growth and devotion to its patroness, Mary, Mother of Good Counsel. Towards the end action plan was drawn and the new Team was elected to carry forward the activities of the Sangha. **Mrs. Lakshmi Uchoi, President**

Easter Triduum in the Diocese

St. Arnold Parish, Gandacherra

We had a meaningful and prayerful celebration of Easter Triduum amidst thunder, lightning, rain and storm. The Mass of the Lord's Supper on Thursday was with candle light. The Friday liturgy was in the rain; but we had a very meaningful celebration. The Easter Vigil was with thunder and rain, and reminded us of Pentecost. On Easter Sunday the Holy Eucharist was at Manurampara. 19 people received the Sacraments of Initiation. The celebration was followed by a fellowship meal. **Fr. Bosco Lathees**

St. Joseph Parish, Agartala

I want to begin by saying that we were very fortunate to have the Diocese's Chrism Mass at our Parish attended by all the Clergy of the whole of Diocese, approximately 60 priests, a host of sisters and laity on 31st March.

In our Parish the Palm Sunday Liturgy which opened Holy Week was well attended. The MAUNDY THURSDAY Liturgy with the washing of feet was presided over by Fr. Simon Fernandes CSC, Administrator of MIIT, Shillong. The Way of the Cross on GOOD FRIDAY started near Ginger Hotel and was conducted by our Parish Youth Group. Fr. Roby CSC, was the main celebrant. We experienced a terrific downpour of hailstorm and rain only after we entered the Church!



On Holy Saturday, we had a Youth Seminar and Sr. Celine, FMA, was the Resource Person. The Easter Vigil services began from the Parish house. Fr. Harry CSC was the main celebrant. The SOLEMN HIGH MASS OF EASTER was presided over by Fr. Emmanuel CSC.

Fr. Harry D'Silva, CSC

Don Bosco Parish, Nandanagar

Our Holy Week celebrations commenced beautifully with the Palm Sunday liturgy where our Bishop Lumen celebrated the Holy Mass. The mystery of the Easter *Triduum* was lived by the community right through from Thursday to Sunday with very vibrant participation. The enthusiastic participation with the catechetical commentaries for the liturgy, adoration, Way of the Cross helped the community to grow in faith. The terrific storm and rain on Saturday night was a dampener but still a sizeable crowd gathered to be part of the most beautiful Easter vigil! Easter day was meaningful and the community celebrated it with the Eucharist and a sumptuous meal with everyone sharing the responsibility.

Fr. Joseph Palamthattel SDB

Immaculate Conception Parish, Moharpara.

During the Holy Week, beginning with Palm Sunday Moharpara parish fathers rendered their services to different *mondolis*. All the priests were active and busy catering to the spiritual needs of the people. The priests went to these *mondolis* -- Singlung, Nelsy, Hodrai, Twichilong, Belaiham, Gamagu, Sirduk, Nunacherra, Dhanlekha, Tuidu, Dudrai, Polko, and Moharpara. The heavy rain and wind on Maundy Thursday and Holy Saturday did not stop people from coming to church. The SSpS Sisters accompanied the priests to most villages. *Fr. Ishwar Happa, CSC*

Good Shepherd Parish, Kathalcherra

The presence of Bishop Lumen for Holy Week and at Easter brought great joy and new life to the people. Celebrating the Mass of the Lord's Supper by washing the feet of 12 men



Bishop Lumen showed by example that he was a servant-shepherd. On Good Friday a very large crowd gathered at Nutanbari to walk the way of the cross. Bishop Lumen carried the cross at the first station and Sister Superior did it for the fourteenth station. Easter Vigil was at Puranbari chapel. Blessing of fire and water brought new life and light to the people gathered. The power of the Resurrection was witnessed as nature responded with heavy storm and rain. Easter morning people gathered along with Bishop at the parish center to sing Alleluia and proclaim the glory of the Resurrection. It was a rejuvenating experience to be with our beloved Shepherd in this Holy week. Fr. Thomas Pereira CSC also assisted us during the Holy week in the Parish. Along with other Parish Fathers he went to several *mondolis* making the Holy Week and Easter at Good Shepherd Parish Kathalcherra a memorable experience.

Sr. Suman BS

News from the Diocese

Annual Gathering and Women's Day Celebration

A three days gathering was organized for our Women from 9th to 11th at JUST, Agartala. 180 women from all over Tripura were present for the program. The program was



inaugurated by Most Rev. Bishop Lumen Monteiro, with a Diya lighting ceremony. Speaking on the theme of International Women's Day he said that the "Equality for Women is Progress for All" and it is our duty to treat women on an equal footing because women also have the capacity and were created equally by God. The Women presented the Annual Report of activities in their respective centers. They were inspired by each other's sharing.

Mrs. Purnima Roy, the Women Commission Chair Person of the State of Tripura was the Chief Guest on the next day. She spoke on Women's Rights and problems faced by Women in the State and the ways of solving them. Other Resource Persons were Fr. Jeevan, Sr. Bastian and Sr. Punitha who spoke on the theme and also on various government schemes available for the development of Women in Tripura. The celebration was

marked with cultural competitions on Women's issues. Fr. Fredrick, the Director of Caritas India from Delhi was the Special Guest for the program. He appreciated the Women for their lively performance and encouraged them to be active and vibrant. At the end of the program prize distribution was done. The celebration ended with a festive meal. *Sr. Punitha, SJA*

2 Days Retreat for Church Leaders

The Catholic Laity of Tripura under the banner of "AICU" (All India Catholic U n i o n) organized a 2 days Retreat on 14-15 April 2015 for the Catholic Laity C h u r c h



Leaders under Diocese of Agartala at St. Joseph's Church, Agartala. About 300 leaders participated in the Retreat with the theme "AMBASSADOR FOR CHRIST". It was indeed a new experience for all the leaders because, never before, such a large gathering of Laity Church Leaders came together as one family. The Resource Persons include Fr. Lawrence Darlong; Mr. Tarun K. Debbarma; Fr. Thomas Pereira

CSC; Mr. Thanda Uchoi; Fr. Jeevan SVD; Mr. Paul S. Darlong; Mr. Muana Darlong; and Fr. Robert CSC. Some of the Catholic Laity senior officials who spoke of their role as a Catholic officer were, Mr. Rabindra Reang, IAS; Dr. Ashis Debbarma, MD, Mr. Lala Darlong, retired Bank Manager and Mrs. Gita Debbarma, Asst. Headmistress.

The 2 days Retreat concluded with the Holy Mass presided over by Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC, who told the leaders to be humble, be ready to bear cross and go forth to spread the Good News to every nook and corner of the State. Fr. Thomas Pereira CSC, AICU Advisor, and the Central AICU Leaders (Rakal, Vinod, Muana, Vanneii and Paul) did not leave any stone unturned for the success of the 2 days Retreat.

Mr. Paul S. Darlong, AICU General Secretary

MC Sisters bless new Shishu Bhavan

Easter joy of the MC Sisters and inmates of Agartala Shishu Bhavan were doubled with the blessing of the newly built Home for the less fortunate children of the State. Bishop Lumen inaugurated and blessed the building on 7th April at a simple ceremony. The occasion was graced by the presence of



our Bishop Lumen Monteiro, Regional Superior of MC Sisters, Fr. Abraham K.J, CSC, the Provincial of Holy Cross North East Province, many Fathers and Sisters and well wishers.

Sr. Blanche local Superior and Sr. Anne Cecil Regional Superior thanked all those who contributed to the successful completion of the building. Resurrection being the celebration of New Life, the decent new home for the less fortunate is a symbol of love. Sr. Blanche spoke of sharing God's Love with the poorest of the poor and bringing Jesus to them and the poor to Jesus, like Pope Francis wants from



us. It should be mentioned that Blessed Mother Teresa herself started this community in 1976 on a plot of land gifted by the Government of Tripura. The Sisters also run another rehabilitation facility at Kumarghat in North Tripura for those with leprosy. The blessing was followed by the solemn Eucharist presided over by our beloved Bishop Lumen and the *agape* thereafter.

MC Sisters, Agartala
Caritas India ED in Agartala
Executive Director Fr. Frederick

D'Souza, made a dash to Tripura on April 10, where he received an overwhelming welcome from Caritas Chairman Bishop Lumen Monteiro, who is also the Bishop of Agartala. Accompanied by Bishop Lumen, he visited a few farm sites in the



interior areas of Tripura where Caritas India is working to sustain traditional farming practices predominantly organic in nature.

"Northeast is culture of great love" Whatsapp'd Fr. Frederick before he left for Delhi. The communications team at New Delhi Office expresses gratitude to Chairman Bishop Lumen Monteiro for providing these defining photographs of the 'Boss's visit' - as he likes to call it. **Amrit Sangma, Delhi**

JUST News Roundup

Rubber distribution to 20 Marginalized Persons

JUST with the help of Rotenberg Diocese distributed two thousand Rubber saplings to 20 SHG members on 23rd and 24th March 2015. The primary aim is to enhance the income of the underdeveloped and marginalized Halam families through rubber plantation in order to develop their lifestyle and well being. This will also ensure sustainable development of these marginalized families.



JUST forms DPOs

During the month of March 2015, JUST with the support of CBR forum Bangalore through Community Based Rehabilitation

(CBR) project formed 6 Disabled People's Organisation (DPO) groups under Teliamura R.D Block, Khowai. The CBR staff of JUST took the major role in the DPO formation. The formation of DPO aims at strengthening and encouraging the people with disability to work as a group in availing various schemes from the government and also to be the helping hand for those in need in times of emergency. It is also a conscious effort from the part of



JUST to include the excluded.
Mr. Deepan Gurung

Glimpses from the Indian sub-Continent

Meet India's only woman undertaker

Esther Anita Brown, 45, lives her life tending to the dead. She is the only woman undertaker in India, having mastered the skills of making coffins, digging up graves, fixing gleaming granite slabs, and engraving epitaphs on tombstones at the Nicholson cemetery in Delhi. With coffins and chisels her tools of choice, she settled on the cemetery as her workplace in her mid-20s. She recalls: "As a child, I would play around the coffins that were kept in the courtyard of the house. My mother would dissuade me, as I would often hide inside the coffins!" Seeing her father working on coffins, Brown began to get interested and one day told her mother that she would follow her father's footsteps. "The first time I made a coffin, I lay inside it to check how it felt to lie inside!" She came out injured, due to some nails left inside the coffin.

mattersindia.com

priesthood in the United States report that they were, on average, about 17 when they first considered a vocation to the priesthood and encouraged to consider a vocation by an average of four people. Seven in 10 (71 percent) say they were encouraged by a parish priest, as well as friends (46 percent), parishioners (45 percent), and mothers (40 percent). The total number of potential ordinands for the class of 2015, 595, is up from from 477 in 2014 and 497 in 2013. The Georgetown University-based Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) gathered the date for "The Class of 2015: Survey of Ordinands to the Priesthood." **zenit.org**

Bishop's Program for May 2015

- 01: Clergy Meet & Recollection, Agartala
- 02: Golden Jubilee, Fr. Isaac SDB
- 03: Confirmations, Mariamnagar
- 04-20: Caritas International General Assembly, Rome, Visit to Donor Agencies
- 20-23: CSC Provincial Chapter
- 24: Pentecost, Ambassa Parish
- 26-02: CSC Program, Yercaud & Trichy

Our Distinguished Visitors

- Fr. Frederick D'Souza, Executive Director of Caritas India from Delhi
- Fr. Benjamin Lobo, Sr. Leticia AC from Mangalore
- Mrs. Mary, Mrs. Monica, Mr. Ronald and Mr. Maxim (Brothers and Sisters of Sr. Casilda, AC, from Mumbai and Mangalore)
- Sr. Desiree, AC, Provincial Councilor from Kolkata
- SDB Frs. Denis and Jose from Dimapur Province
- Fr. Joseph Society of St. Paul from Guwahati
- Sr. Nandita, SRA Superior General from Vienna, Austria; Sr. Vincentia, SRA General Councilor from Vienna, Austria; Sr. Zeena D'Souza, SRA Provincial Superior from Mangalore.

Global News - Tidbits

White House installs gender-neutral bathroom

The White House announced that staff and visitors will be able to use a new gender-neutral restroom right next to the West Wing. The announcement came a day after President Obama's executive order, that he signed on July 21, 2014, came into effect that requires federal contractors not to fire anyone based on their sexual orientation. "This will effectively prevent any company that does business with the government from firing an employee based on who they are or who they love," Jarrett said.

Mattersindia.com

Priestly Ordinations in US increase

The 2015 class of men ordained to the