



### Pastor's Corner



Remembering my Birthday this year is special because I experienced new life after an unplanned surgery on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of January 2020 that found me on the operation table at New Hope Medical Centre, Chennai. I'm not writing this so much as to



describe my surgery of a cyst in the ureta or my swift post operative healing, as much as my experience with the Team of Doctors who head New Hope Medical Centre, especially its MD, Dr. Simon Hercules, MS, MCh, Phd (Spine), FRCS (Edinburgh), MBA (HM), a Brain & Spine Surgeon. His mantra - 'We Treat God Heals'. This Doctor is amazing especially in his concern for patients. One day I saw him walk out of the OT after a 6-hour brain surgery. As he was about to leave for his home he notices in front of his chamber a number of patients needing help. He retraces his steps, goes to his consulting chamber and is there for the next 3 hours! Why do you this Doctor? How can you manage? I ask. His simple answer, "We must do what we can. I must treat." A week's stay in the Hospital for post operative cure offered me a chance to know better this unassuming Surgeon along with his highly qualified colleagues, who are the best in their own disciplines of cardiology, orthopedics, urology and endocrinology. The spirit of service and utmost care of patients trickles down to every employee. The anesthetist, Dr. Prabhu, a middle aged doctor with a Degree from the UK, was another person who made a deep impression on me. As I was lying on the 'table' looking up into the lights and hearing only the sounds of gadgets monitoring my vitals, his smiling face and soothing voice was the last I heard before I went into 'sleep mode'. "Father" he said, "We are going to give you a small injection that will make you drowsy. You just sleep, we will do our work and return you back all healed." They were words of great comfort for me as three hours later I was 'back to normal'. The famous cardiologist Dr. Shetty says, "In no other

### Doctor Treats... God Heals!

sphere of life does an individual ever surrender oneself so completely to the hands of another as one does when consenting to surgery. The whole contract is based on the faith that the doctor will return one to normal life." And that is exactly how I felt that day. Thank you Doctors, as I say THANK YOU God for another year of life! **+Lumen, CSC**

### Editorial

#### Of Ecstasies, Agonies, Hopes and Fears



We in the Diocese of Agartala have always stepped into the month of February on a happy note, its first day being the birthday of our Bishop. The readers of 'Link' join the great throng of well-wishers in wishing our Pastor happy birthday and many returns of the same. At a time when the Bishop is recuperating from medical interventions he recently underwent, we pray the Lord to grant him good health and all other blessings.



It is quite impossible to write about anything at the moment without reference to the tense situation prevailing in the country. The images we see in the media, especially social media, are deeply disturbing, to say the least. At a time when the country is passing through unprecedented turmoil and millions fear for future, we join our voices to that of millions of others to ensure that the values enshrined in our constitution are not compromised. Some days later, along with the universal Church we shall step into the special liturgical season of Lent. The season we begin by smearing ash on our foreheads takes us on a six week-long tour de force into the heart of ourselves and into everything our destiny is tied up with. Everything in it is so designed that they are help to renew ourselves in the most profound way possible for us human beings. As we

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LINK wishes Bishop Lumen a very HAPPY BIRTHDAY.



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wish our readers a fruitful time of Lent, we as a Diocese are also aware of the ground work required at our parishes if this powerful season is to yield desirable fruits in the faith life of the parishioners.

We just have one year left for the celebration of the Silver Jubilee of the Diocese. It is time to up the ante by making our preparations more focused. Often it is the run up to such events that prove to be more important than the celebration itself. Hence the need to get into the groove with no further delay and challenge ourselves with whatever we desire to make of it.

We earnestly utter a prayer that the leap year we are into, proves to be one in which we make a leap into things that best define what we as a Diocese are all about.

**J. Pulinthanath, SDB**

### Priestly Ordination of Fr. Praveen Kumar Yedannapally

On the 16th of January, 2020, Bishop Lumen ordained Fr. Praveen in his home Parish Thimaraphauda, St. Peter's Chair Church, Warrangal Diocese. Many priests, religious and lay faithful

attended the Ordination Mass which began at 5:30pm. Fr. Lawrence Darlong, Fr. Prasad and Fr. Allwin represented the Diocese. The Bishop expressed his gratitude to the parents of Fr. Praveen for their generosity in offering him for the Diocese of

Agartala which is located miles away from his hometown. Fr. Inna Reddy the Parish Priest also thanked Bishop Lumen for ordaining Fr. Praveen and accepting him in Agartala Diocese. The Priests, Religious, and Lay faithful along with Bishop Lumen rejoice in receiving God's gift of a Priest for the Diocese in the person of Fr. Praveen. *Fr. Lawrence*



### KAMARANGA PARISH

#### Called to be the Light of Christ

St. Raphael Kamaranga held its parish level Youth Convention on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> January at the Parish campus. The theme was *Called to be the light of Christ*. The reason for



the theme was to make the Catholic youth of our parish to be a shining star for Christ like St. Paul, in this year of the Word of God. The Chief Guest was Fr. Bhuvan Sarkar. The inauguration took place by lighting 12 candles representing 12 Disciples of Jesus, for the Youth to reach out to every nook and corner of our Parish and beyond. Many Youth participated actively in this event. The Guests were welcomed with traditional *rishas*, welcome dance and song by the local Youth. We began with an hour of Adoration for the Youth conducted by the local youth and Fr. Sushil. After dinner, there was Bible preaching Competition, Bible Quiz, group dance, and group song Competitions. On the following day different Sessions were arranged for the Youth. Fr. Babu Paul SJ, the North Zone Coordinator gave a very impressive Session on Christian leadership and Youth. Sr. Mary Ranglong CSC shared her vocation story and challenged the Youth to come forward to respond to the call of God to be a priest or religious. Fr. Ivan SVD addressed the Youth on the negative effects of advertisement and media especially upon the young women. The Parish Priest Fr. Jomon SVD gave away the Prizes to the winners of various Competitions. With a grand lunch the Convention came to a grand finale. *Kamranga News Desk*

### KHUMULWNG PARISH

#### SVD Mission Day

The feast of St. Arnold Janssen the founder of SVD, SSpS and SSAP, was solemnly celebrated as SVD Mission Day at St. Alphonsa Parish Khumulwng on 15<sup>th</sup> of January. Many faithful and SVD lay partners from Ambassa and



Kamaranga Parishes gathered in large numbers at Khumulwng Parish to celebrate the great event. On this day the main focus was set on the Word of God. Fr. Joseph Pullinthanath SDB and Br. Jacob SVD were the main Speakers, who enlightened and motivated all the faithful and encouraged them to focus more on the Divine Word of God.

The solemn Eucharistic celebration was presided over by Fr. Anthony SVD. 8 Priests concelebrated. Fr. Ivan D'silva SVD, the Parish Priest of Ambassa introduced and explained about our Founder St. Arnold Janssen. Fr. Jeevan SVD, the Director of JUST, in his homily, evoked the importance of the Word of God in our life. The praise and worship, melodious singing and colorful decorations by Khumulwng parishioners under the guidance of Fr. Valentine Dungdung SVD, the Parish Priest, were highly appreciated. The day ended with the community meal. *Fr. Stany Pereira SVD*

### MANDWI PARISH

#### Christmas and New Year with Baptisms

"Christmas celebration without the Holy Eucharist is meaningless", the Parish Priest and Asst. Priest of

Mandwi used to instruct the people. Christmas 2019 was a memorable day for Mary Help of Christians Parish, Mandwi. The faithful from different *mothas* joyfully came together as one family to celebrate Christmas in the Parish.

The solemnity of Christmas in the Parish centre became very special due to the presence of our very own beloved Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC. At 9:30a.m. Adoration was held during which time



two priests were available for Confession. This was followed by the Holy Eucharist presided by Bishop Lumen Monteiro along with Fr. Hubert the Parish Priest and Fr. Juel the Assistant Priest. Fifteen Children and four Adults were baptized on that day. After the Holy Eucharist the Christmas cake was cut in the presence of the faithful surrounded by a large number of children. The faithful felicitated the Bishop and a sumptuous meal was served for all. 2019 Christmas remained the remarkable day.

*Fr. Hubert Thyrianiang, SDB*

## Diocese News Tidbits

### South Zone Youth Convention 2019

Christ the King Parish Depacherra hosted the 2nd South Zone Youth Convention from 28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> December, with 250+ participants from Amarpur, Depacherra, Sindukpathar, Tuikarmaw and Gandacherra Parishes. The theme of the Convention was 'Put on the Lord Jesus Christ'. The Convention was declared open by Fr Bhuban Sarkar, the Chief Guest, along with the Guest of Honor Mr. Bosco Debbarma, NERYC President. The 3 days of Convention comprised of faith formation classes, youth to youth talks and a better understanding of the Holy Eucharist from our Resource Persons. Apart from the Sessions the Youth also took part in various Competitions, which also included a preaching competition.



A Zonal Committee for the South Zone Youth was also formed. Miss Tushi Uchoi was elected as the first ever female President and Mr. Raju Reang as the General Secretary. On the final day, the Convention flag was lowered by the guest of honor and handed over to the new Zonal Executives. The newly elected South Zone Executive Committee Members are:

President- Tushi Uchoi, Depacherra; General Secretary- Raju Reang, Tuikarmaw; Vice President- Biswajit Jamatia, Amarpur; Joint Secretary- Pritam Uchoi, Depacherra; Treasurer- Bhagyasum Molsom, Gandacherra. *Reported by Vice President- Biswajit Jamatia*

## India News Tidbits

### CCBI Secretariat Extension

Shanti Sadan (House of Peace), the CCBI Secretariat Extension in Benaulim, was dedicated to the Service of the Church in India by Cardinal Oswald Gracias in the presence of 12 Bishops, priests, religious and lay faithful. Most Rev. Filipe Neri Ferrão, the President of the CCBI and the Archbishop of Goa, unveiled the plaque and blessed the ground floor. Most Rev. George Antonysamy, the Vice President of the CCBI and the Archbishop of Madras Mylapore blessed the first floor and preached the homily. Most Rev. Anil Couto, the Secretary General of the CCBI and the Archbishop of Delhi, blessed the second floor. The Episcopal Conference will organize small animation and training programs from Shanti Sadan. The Headquarters of the CCBI is the CCBI Centre, Bangalore, from where the Deputy Secretary General and four other Commission Secretaries operate. There are 16 Commissions and 3 Departments under the CCBI where 23

personnel are working as Executive Secretaries or Directors. The Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI) is canonically the National Episcopal Conference for the Latin Church. It is the largest Bishops Conference in Asia and the fourth largest in the world. It consists of 132 Dioceses with 190 Bishops. <http://ccbi.in/church-urged-to-promote-solidarity-and-secularism-in-our-country-cardinal-oswald-gracias/>

### CAA should be Non Discriminatory says Abp Peter Machado

Submitting a memorandum on the issue of Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) to the Governor of Karnataka, at Raj Bhavan in Bengaluru on 9<sup>th</sup> January, the Metropolitan Archbishop of Bangalore, Most Rev Dr Peter Machado said, "Religion should never be the criteria for citizenship of a country, nor violence a solution when there is a difference of opinion." The Archbishop is also the President of All Karnataka United Christian Forum for Human Rights. Prominent religious heads of other Christian denominations were also present during the Press Conference. While appealing

to the citizens to maintain peace and harmony, and that they should not recourse to violent methods to fight for their cause, Dr Machado urged the Central Government to grant citizenship to illegal migrants not on the basis of their religion, but on the merit of each individual case. The prelate urged the Government to dialogue with those opposing the Act, and come to an agreement about the way forward with

justice, equity and fairness. "There is no harm in backtracking: changing course if this is necessary for the good of the country and our people." "By doing so, it can meet out justice to all illegal migrants and thus promote equality among them. More so, it can also convince the citizens of the country that it upholds the sacredness of the Constitution and respects the rights of all the linguistic and religious minorities without any discrimination," he added. <https://indiancatholicmatters.org/>

## JUST News Nuggets

### Persons with Disabilities Day 2019

JUST celebrated International Day of Persons with Disabilities with the State Social Welfare Department on 2nd and 3rd December 2019 at Vivekananda Stadium, Agartala, and Rabintra Satabarshiki Bhavan, Agartala.



There were 25 PwDs/CwDs and Parents who participated in the program. On 2nd December Sports competitions were conducted for the PwDs/CwDs where the children participated in the sports. On 3rd December the day was celebrated with cultural program. Honourable Chief Minister, Mr. Biplab Kumar Deb was the Chief Guest and the Guest of Honour was Miss Santana Chakma, honourable Minister for Social Welfare and Social Education.

### SHG Day Celebrations

On 7th December of 2019 Luku Hamkrai Resource Centre celebrated SHG Day. The Director of Caritas India Fr. Poly Varghese was the Chief Guest. Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro the Bishop of Agartala and



Chairman of Caritas India was the Guest of Honour. Fr. Jolly, the Assistant Director of Caritas India, Fr. Sushil Modi the Administrator of Caritas India, were the special Guests. There were 73 Women who attended the SHG day celebration. The objective of the celebration was to come together once annually and share their experiences and success stories as well as their Federation Report. The programme also acknowledged SHG works and awarded prizes to best performing SHGs of the year 2019 and prizes were given to all the SHG Leaders for rendering their service and performing duties for the Federation. It was a unique privilege to have the presence of the top bosses of Caritas India in our little village. The programme ended with a festive meal. *Mr. Cyril Darlong*

## Our Readers Write

I enjoy reading every "Link". But this Jan 2020 I enjoyed more... it is another outstanding one.  
*Bro. Subal, CSC, Bangladesh*

I am just amazed at your faithfulness in keeping us updated on the first of every month, especially as you are experiencing some difficulties with medical issues so far away from your Diocese.  
*Tony Krisak, USA*

Thanks for being a faithful communicator through LINK. *Cardinal Patrick D'Rozario, CSC, Dhaka*  
Thank you for the LINK. It is good to be connected

to the Diocese through LINK. I congratulate you for posting it on the first of every month for the last 24 years. *Emma, CSC, Montreal, Canada*

I wish to thank you for the mail and the "Link" that is very inspiring. *Fr. Sunny, Rector GSS Dimapur*  
Thanks a lot dear Bishop for your Link and the Message of Christmas & New Year. I appreciate the inspiring message and the regularity of Link. *Mariaraj, CSC, Agartala*  
Thank you very much for the Link which is ahead of time! Congratulations! *Fr. Roque, CSC, Bangalore*

## Bishop's Program for February 2020

- 01: Jubilee & Birthday by CRI Agartala Unit at JUST
- 01-02: Parish Sabah, Kathalcherra
- 07: Montfort School Program, Champaknagar
- 08-09: Golden Jubilee celebrations, Kumarghat Parish
- 12-19: CBCI Plenary Assembly, St. John's Bangalore
- 22: Couples Retreat, Kanchancherra
- 23: Parish Sabah, Moharpara
- 26: Ash Wednesday, Agartala

## Our Distinguished Visitors

- Sr. Berchmans, SRA Provincial from Mumbai
- Fr. Agnal Amalan, CRS, nephew of Fr. Mariaraj CSC from Patna
- Fr. Gyan Prakash, cousin of Fr. Mariaraj