



Pastor's Corner



In our local newspaper column The Spiritual Umbrella I read this story of Buddha who was confronted by a monster called Suciloma, whose name translates as 'Needlehair'. He was a prototype punk with needles for hair! He wanted to find out if the Buddha was really enlightened. So he sat next to the Buddha and leaned towards him to prick him, but the Buddha leaned away. "Aha!" said Needle-hair. "You don't like pain. You're not really enlightened. An enlightened person would maintain equanimity no matter what. He wouldn't have any likes or dislikes." The Buddha said, "Don't be stupid. There are things that are going to cause problems for my body. It's going to hurt it and make it unhealthy."

Often blinded by our experiences and conditioning, though that's exactly what we do, we step on snakes, run into fire and allow needles to poke us. Snakes of attachments, fire of desires, and needles of jealousy and covetousness.



That's the ABC of Life

They bite, burn and hurt. We call it suffering and we think that this is the way of life. We mistake our pain for our suffering. We have little control over the former, but the latter is almost entirely in our hands.

The experience of the Covid19 pandemic in the last six months is a good example. It has shaken the status quo in the way we live, play and work. Several countries are dishing out policies after policies to combat the COVID-19 pandemic even though it may be difficult to put the genie back in the bottle when the world is free from the virus.

Bloomberg says, "Sadly the world has entered a new paralysis, most of all because no one knows when things will return to normal, or what might become normal, or what might remain strange." We can take things in our stride or be tossed into the tide. This choice is in our hands. Pain is inevitable while suffering is optional. Loss is unavoidable but grief isn't. Death is certain. Life's uncertainty, unpredictability, even irrationality, makes it what it is: worthwhile and a blessing. You can see its attributes as appalling, boring and cunning; or as adventurous, beautiful and captivating. It's your choice. That's the ABC of life. **+Lumen, CSC**

Editorial



A Garland for the Pandemic-hit World

The month of October is observed in the Church as the month of the holy Rosary. Like the month of May, it is another opportunity for the Church to raise the consciousness of the faithful on the spiritual benefits of praying the Rosary. In this time of pandemic when church attendance has considerably thinned and reception of Sacraments has become few and far between, Rosary comes across as a genuine time-tested prayer that is easily available to everyone.

In the largely non-Catholic ambience we find ourselves in, it is common to come across people who speak about Rosary as a prayer overtly Marian, hence removed from Christ and Scripture or as an old-fashioned prayer quite unsuitable for the present-day fast-track generation. There is often a half-heartedness in the way we attempt to counter such attitudes, if at all we attempt. We might also be guilty of unenthusiastic insistence with others on praying the rosary: qualifying it with "at least a decade", "time-permitting," and so on. They surely betray our lack of conviction and ignorance of its excellence and its power.

Perhaps there is a need for us to revisit this fount of grace that has sustained the faith of believers for centuries, and assisted them in winning many a battle against the Evil One. According to Fr. Gabriele Amorth, the Catholic priest who is



the Chief Exorcist of the Vatican writes, "One day a colleague of mine heard the devil say during an exorcism: "Every Hail Mary is like a blow on my head. If Christians knew how powerful the Rosary was, it would be my end." Fr. Gabriele continues, "The secret that makes this prayer so effective is that the Rosary is

both prayer and meditation. It is addressed to the Father, to the Blessed Virgin, and to the Holy Trinity, and is a meditation centered on Christ" At a time when the entire world is beset with woes of every kind, and at a time when the Church in many parts of the world including our country is confronted with numerous problems, we need to

reemphasize the effectiveness of this ancient prayer. If Fr. Amorth is to be believed, the residue of goodness in many of us is perhaps the fruit of numerous rosaries that our grandparents and parents, friends and relatives prayed in child-like faith.

There is perhaps no better time than an October in Pandemic to bring back into our homes, our communities and villages mondolis, the practice of devoutly and daily praying the Rosary. All our communities and families do not have behind them the luxury and strength of a long tradition of praying the Rosary. That perhaps lays extra responsibility on the Church to inculcate and instill in the faithful love and devotion to it all the more. Happy October!

J.Pulinthanath, SDB



The Catholic Laity of Tripura welcomed their new Advisor Fr. Sunny, SDB during a small function in his honor held at Don Bosco Nandan Nagar.

AMBASSA PARISH

Sacrament of Confirmation administered



6 September, 2020. Amid the fear of covid-19 pandemic, Holy Spirit Catholic Church, Ambassa celebrated the Confirmation day. Thirty five eligible candidates were

administered the Sacrament by our dear Bishop Lumen Monteiro. The Parish Priest Fr. Ivan D'Silva, SVD, along with the parish leaders organized the day fully well. They monitored each and every minute niceties of the day starting from sanitization to the liturgy. At the entrance of the Church sanitization spray for the hand was provided and masks were provided for those who did not bring along. In the Church the physical distancing was maintained and all the SOPs were strictly observed by everyone. The Liturgy was participative with the good singing by the choir, Bible procession, and a good homily by the Celebrant. Thanks to the congregation who devoutly participated in the liturgy and prayed for the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the 35 Candidates.

Girl Child Day celebrated

September 8, 2020. Catholic Church Ambassa celebrated Girl Child Day in a ceremonious way. Parishioners, Priests and Religious from neighboring Parishes gathered in the evening at 5:30 for the celebration.



The faithful offered prayers and flowers to Bambina Mary on her birthday. It was also the 145th foundation day of the SVD congregation. At the culmination of

Novena prayers people lit candles at the Marian Grotto and prayed for girl children. After the solemn Mass the little girls cut the cake as the congregation sang with one voice: May God Bless you. Snacks were served to all the people keeping in mind the SOPs during this covid-19. *News Bureau, Ambassa*

GANDACHERRA PARISH

Confirmed with the Holy Spirit

It is a tradition that has been practiced for years, when the Bishop of a Diocese visits a parish once in a couple of years he assesses and appreciates its growth. Our beloved Bishop of Agartala Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC



made a pastoral visit to St. Arnold Catholic Church, Gandacherra on 23rd August, 2020. The parishioners assembled at the church and the Eucharistic celebration then began with an entrance hymn sung

by our very own Youth choir. A group of around 20 male, female, boys and girls from Tribagya Para village received the Sacrament of Confirmation. A meaningful homily was preached by our Bishop. At the end of the Mass our dear Bishop was given a warm felicitation by the parishioners. *Fr. George, S. Asst. Priest*

MOHARPARA PARISH

Family Prayer

Fr. Patrick Payton CSC said: "The family that prays together stays together". During the lockdown all the families were encouraged and exhorted to have family prayers. Family Prayer Whatsapp Group was created in which all the *mondoli* Presidents and Secretaries were participants. The families were asked to take photos



while praying and the President or Secretary would forward the photos in the Group to encourage other families to pray likewise. Videos were made out of those photos and circulated to

all the families to strengthen family prayers. Sincere thanks to all the *mondoli* Leaders for their good will to ensure that every family prays together.

Chain Rosary

Moharpara Parish conducted chain Rosary prayer throughout the Parish on 8th of September, in honor of the birthday of our Blessed Virgin Mary. All the families prayed in their own houses at 6:30pm while live streaming Rosary Procession and Holy Mass were held simultaneously in the Parish Centre. The intention for the chain Prayer was to end the Corona pandemic and to foster devotion to Mother Mary. A big thanks to all the families for praying together and we could feel the blessing of Mother Mary.

Youth Sunday

It was a great occasion for the Youth of Moharpara Parish as they celebrated Youth Sunday on 30th August, in the Parish Centre. The celebration commenced with the Holy Eucharist, presided by Fr. Arbok Lyngdoh, CSC, the PYA. Thereafter a small Session was held on the topic, maintaining relationship with God during the lockdown. The Youth were enthused and rejuvenated their faith after the meaningful liturgy and then a get-together after a long time. Thanks to Sr. Rini Jose SSpS and Mr. Kirtkishore Jamatia for making the program successful and memorable one. *Fr. Arbok, CSC*



BAIJALBARI PARISH

Visit of the shepherd

We at Baijalbari were very fortunate to have our Bishop Lumen visiting and staying with us on 29th and 30th August. He joined us for Adoration of the Blessed

Sacrament. The Vincentian Sisters also joined us for Adoration and Dinner. On the following day our dear Bishop had a brief Meeting with the Sisters, after which the priests accompanied the Bishop to Baromaidan for his pastoral visit. The faithful of Baromaidan had already assembled in the Church for the Holy Eucharist. It was very encouraging to see the faithful who had assembled were wearing masks and keeping proper physical distance. During the holy Eucharist Bishop Lumen highlighted the importance of unity among themselves and the Parish church. The faithful appreciated much the reflections of our dear Bishop. After the Eucharist a brief program was held to felicitate our Bishop, the two Priests and three Sisters. After lunch in one of the Catholic families our Bishop met the KristuDasi Sisters who recently started their Convent at Baromaidan. *Fr. Paul Panachikal, SDB*



KATHALCHERRA PARISH

Our Lady of Seven Sorrows

Every year from 13th to 15th September, Good Shepherd Parish Kathalcherra celebrates the Holy Cross Congregational feast Our Lady of Seven Sorrows. This year we had the presence of our dear Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC. Emphasizing the value of forgiveness our dear Bishop celebrated the anticipated Eucharist on Sunday 13th September. On the same day the Parish community also welcomed the two newly arrived Bethany Sisters Gretta and Mariam BS to the Parish. The Feast day was also celebrated in the Holy Cross School, Kathalcherra, as well as in the community level. The parishioners and teachers were felicitated with a fellowship meal. It was joyful celebration.



Fr. IshwarHappa, CSC

News Briefs from the Diocese

Health Commission organizes a Webinar

The Health Commission of Agartala Diocese organized a Webinar on 28th August on the occasion of the Diocesan Silver Jubilee. 40 people participated. The theme for the Webinar was "HEALTH CARE MANAGEMENT OF DIABETIC DURING PANDAMIC". The Resource Person was Dr. Ranjan Bose, who worked for Tripura Health Services for many years and presently deals with cellular medicine which is preventive in nature. He enlightened the group with informative measures to prevent and control Diabetes. He also provided us with the golden rule to keep our health intact. There was an interactive session where interesting questions were discussed. The session concluded with a vote of thanks.

Sr. Prasanthi SJA, Commission Secretary

Twin celebrations at Capitanio Home, Dolubari

In the midst of Covid-19 pandemic, we as a community could not imagine to give up the celebration of Mother Mary's birthday even if not in a grand manner. When we received graces and blessings through her intercession, we could not forgo her birthday without wishing her. In order to make it significant and spiritually rich, the community devoutly prayed novena every day. On 8th September, the Nativity of Mary, our dear Bishop Lumen presided over the holy Eucharist.



The occasion of our dear Bishop's presence in the Silver Jubilee year of his Episcopal Ordination gave us an opportunity to felicitate him. He shared with us his experiences as a shepherd of the Diocese for the past twenty five years. We thank Almighty God for blessing the Diocese of Agartala through the instrumentality of our dear Bishop Lumen Monteiro. During the holy Eucharist we prayed for his wellbeing and effectiveness of his mission. We ended with a fellowship meal with our neighboring Priests and Religious Sisters.

Sr. Annies, SCCG

United Christian Prayer for India (UCPI): Agartala Unit News

The UCPI organized a Webinar with Agartala Diocese. The aim of UCPI is to **envision 4,000 senior church leaders** at national conferences who will then **inspire 300,000 church leaders** to release **50 million (5 crore) church members** to pray and **share the Gospel** with 10 of their friends, neighbours or relatives over 2 years. The aim is to reach one billion (100 crore) people in our lifetime. This plan was introduced in the Diocese of Agartala through a Webinar by Pastor Arun Philip in which 35 Members attended. Rev. Philip shared the plan and progress up to the present. This included: 1,000 senior leaders have taken hold of the vision. 80 state volunteers and 400 church volunteers have been raised up. 42 intra church meetings have taken place nationally. 1,000s of national Days of Prayer have been held. 90 Memorandums of Understanding and Team Agreements have been signed by leaders of different denominations agreeing to incorporate the vision into their priorities. "Thanks to everyone who attended the UCPI meeting this evening" said Fr. Sunny SDB, the link person. "Let us take the message of Christ to everyone".

Distribution of Health Care Materials

JUST distributed Health care materials such as toothbrush, toothpaste, bathing soap and masks in the month of August to more than 350 children maintaining government guidelines as a part of health care to students and to promote health and hygiene among the community. During the distribution the Coordinator explained about the importance of cleanliness and hygiene. He said that cleanliness should be maintained at every place related to our daily life.



Certain habits, like washing hands before meals, bathing, brushing teeth and cutting nails should be practiced from

early age. He advised them to have shower at least twice a day with soap, and brush their teeth always. The students as well as the guardians are very excited to receive such type of materials and assured to make full use of them. The Teachers also made house visit and created awareness on COVID-19 to the children as well as to the guardians.

Training on Peace, Human Rights and Leadership Skills

JUST organized training on peace, human rights and leadership skills at Khumulwng and Ambassa in the month of August 2020. The Resource Persons during the programs were Mr. Anthony Debbarma, Fr. Ivan and Dr. Ashok Debbarma. They shared their knowledge and experience on how they have rescued people who were trafficked by being human rights activists. They also



spoke on basic Human Rights, how to be a peace builder and the importance of leadership skills with the target groups. They also spoke on Indigenous Day and Indigenous Rights during the training. Dr. Ashok Debbarma shared

how to prevent oneself from COVID-19, how to use mask, maintain social distance and stay clean by washing hands and feet frequently.

Mr. Cyril Darlong

News Tidbits from all over

Swami Agnivesh dies after suffering from organ failure



Well-known Arya Samaj leader, Swami Agnivesh, breathed his last at the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences in New Delhi on 11th September. He was suffering from liver cirrhosis and was critically ill. The 80-year-old activist was a former MLA from Haryana and he had also founded a political party, Arya

Sabha, which was based on the principles of the Arya Samaj in 1970. Swami Agnivesh was also an advocate for dialogue between religions. He was involved with several social movements including Anna Hazare's India Against Corruption's campaign in 2011 to implement the Jan Lokpal Bill. The Arya Samaj leader had extensively worked in various areas of social activism including campaigns against female foeticide and the emancipation of women. Condoling his demise, lawyer-activist Prashant Bhushan alleged that his liver got damaged after he was attacked by 'a BJP/RSS lynch mob two years ago in Jharkhand.' *Church Citizens' Voice*

Fr. Richard Timm, CSC, a close friend of Agartala Diocese leaves the world at 97

Holy Cross Father Richard William Timm, a Magsaysay Award winner who contributed greatly to the reconstruction of newly created Bangladesh,



died on September 11 in the United States. He was 97. The "Father of NGOs in Bangladesh" passed away at the Holy Cross House in South Bend, Indiana. "I received the information of Father Timm's demise this morning (September 12). He was suffering from old age complications and was not doing well for the last couple of days" said Akhila, Father Timm's student in 1975 at Notre Dame, when

the missionary taught Zoology. Father Timm was a member of the Sacred Heart Province and served in Bangladesh for about 66 years. He was one of the pioneering figures in Bangladesh's education sector. He was also one of the founders of Notre Dame College and served as the sixth Principal of the College. Notre Dame College Principal Fr. Hemanto Rozario, CSC, expressed grief at the demise of Father Timm and prayed for the departed soul. Father Timm was an educator, zoologist, and active participant in social development work. He came to Dhaka in October 1952 and joined Caritas as a planning officer, taking charge of war-time projects for devastated villages following the Liberation War in Bangladesh. He was honored with the citizenship from three different Governments in Bangladesh in response to his development works in the South Asian nation. In 1974, after starting the Justice and Peace Commission, he served as the Executive Secretary for 23 years. Father Timm was awarded the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 1987 for International Understanding. *Dhaka Tribune*