



PASTOR'S CORNER

Even those who never thought about patience have known it and challenged by it during this pandemic.

Covid19 has taught us this virtue in the most painful way. This topic of patience is painfully relevant today. Covid19 has closed our churches, making the celebration of the Eucharist a very big challenge. Our human sensibilities are wounded by this virus. Our patience is challenged. Our communion as human beings is curtailed through social distancing. We are afraid of each other. We cannot even say a proper farewell to our dear ones when they die or bring them to the church for the last Eucharistic celebration. Our faces are hidden from our dear ones because of wearing of masks. The greatest gift, the gift of smiling, is robbed off by this virus. We are hidden from our dear ones. We are forced to doubt ourselves, washing our hands umpteen times. The mental wound is staggering: so many people are pushed into living alone, in existential anxiety. Most studies reported negative psychological effects including post-traumatic stress symptoms, confusion, and anger. Stressors included longer quarantine duration, infection fears, frustration, boredom, inadequate supplies, inadequate information, financial loss, and stigma. It is also a great challenge to spiritual values of compassion, kindness, sympathy, and caring, that are threatened by the virus. Covid19 has also taught us of the need for prayer.



COVID19 OUR [IRRITATING] TEACHER OF PATIENCE AND PRAYER

Many spiritual leaders spoke of the importance of prayer. Cardinal Tagle said, "When life is not exactly as we want it to be during this pandemic, it can be helpful for people to turn themselves towards 'acceptance'. As long as we don't accept that this is really the situation now, we will not be able to see where the hand of God is." An ecumenical prayer that I found said that during this time of COVID-19 our prayers for healing must begin with a plea for mercy. And mercy, when granted, results in healing and transformation of individuals and communities. The fullness of mercy and healing, though, is translated to wholeness and wellness when we remember to utter not only pleas for mercy and healing but also voice our praise and thanks to God. We pray: "Through life's changing scenes and seasons, we have known you to be the God who heals. Help us to believe once again that at this time, you will grant your children healing." In these times, may our faith lead us to approach Jesus, pleading for mercy coupled with the expectancy of healing for body and mind. The Catholic community observes October as the month of the Rosary. Let us pray to Mother Mary for protection from the deadly Covid-19 pandemic. We also remember in prayer the frontline health care and humanitarian workers around the world. We recall with thanksgiving the many times and ways in which you have come to our aid. We give thanks that in our moments of sickness and weakness we have experienced your healing.

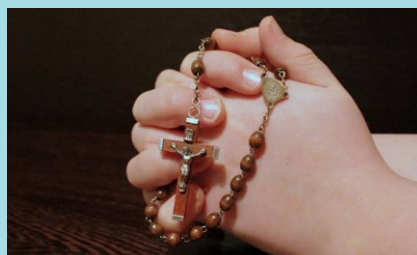
+Lumen, CSC



EDITORIAL

'Family Prayer' as a topic has often figured in our meetings and discussions in the Diocese the need for it, and finding ways and means to make it a daily practice in our families etc. Yet even now many families do not have 'daily family prayer'!

For us Catholics October is the Month of the Rosary. The beauty and simplicity of the Rosary makes it an ideal prayer to say daily as a Family. A Catholic author, Michael Pakaluk, who claims to be "a father who has raised seven children to adulthood", has a list of things he calls 'rules of thumb' about Family Rosary. Based on his personal experience, he says these tips will help families make the recitation of



ROSARY TIME

the rosary a habit. "What are some rules of thumb for saying the Rosary? Here are some ideas I have found helpful.

1) *Fixed time.* It helps immensely to say the Rosary at the same time, either by the clock (for example, 7:45 pm), or by sequence ("immediately after dinner").

2) *Just do it.* Don't wait for everyone to be gathered to start. Those who are around should just sit down and start

saying it, at the fixed time, even if it is only the father. Everyone else will join eventually.

3) *Tailor your expectations.* Our toddler sometimes wanders around and may even try to distract everyone

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with his cuteness, while the middle-schooler who just learned his Latin prayers may ask to say a decade in Latin. Observe Aristotle's principle of "the mean relative to us."

4) *Add some mystery and intimacy.* When it's cold, we make a fire in the fireplace and shut off the lights; or one might light candles, or bring in an image of the Virgin, perhaps adorned with flowers.

5) *Teach some Rosary basics:* especially, what the mysteries are, and that the point is to contemplate the mysteries, with the Hail Marys serving as "background music."

6) *Keep it short.* It's possible to lengthen the Rosary with all kinds of prayers and meditations. These are terrific, but a family Rosary to be successful must be short, about 15 minutes and no more than 20.

(7) In all things, be flexible and pragmatic; have a light touch, because the Rosary is an act of love; retain a sense of humor; and remember Chesterton's wise maxim, that anything worth doing is worth doing badly."

I conclude with yet another quote, this from Pope Francis. "It is traditional in this month to pray the Rosary at home within the family... For this reason, I want to encourage everyone to rediscover the beauty of praying the Rosary at home."

J. Pulinthanath, SDB

KATHALCHERRA PARISH

St. Theresa's Chapel Blessing and Bishop's Silver Jubilee Celebrations

19th September 2021 was a memorable and joyful day for all of us in this Parish. Many people and faithful from different villages flocked to the remote village of Twibaklai for the twin celebrations that is, inauguration of a new Chapel, and our

Bishop's Silver Jubilee celebration. It was a long awaited dream of the parishioners and of the people of Twibaklai. After 20 years of faith a new Chapel named St Theresa of the Child Jesus at Twibaklai *mondoli* under Good Shepherd Parish Kathalcherra was inaugurated and blessed by Most Rev. Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC.

On the same occasion we also celebrated the Silver Jubilee of dear Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC. The parishioners and faithful felicitated him with a token of love and appreciation, cultural dances and songs. The program was meticulously planned and well organized under the leadership our dear Parish Priest Rev. Fr. C. Abraham CSC, and the parishioners. The celebration came to end with a fellowship meal.

Animation and Felicitations

In view of the preparation of the upcoming Parish Sabha-2022 in Garo-III Mondoli faith and women



animation program was organized on 8th August. The Parish Maria Songo and Holy Cross Family ministry members were the resource person to animate the program.

The local Joseph Nagar *mondoli* also expressed their gratitude to the Sisters of Little Flower of Bethany on occasion of their Centenary. The villagers acknowledged the contribution made by the Bethany Sisters in Kathalcherra Parish especially the local faith community. A colorful cultural program was organized by the *mondoli* and all the Sisters were felicitated.

Fr. Ishwar Happa, CSC

AMBASSA PARISH

Girl Child Day celebrated

September 8, 2021: Holy Spirit Catholic Church, Ambassa, observed Girl Child Day. More than 200 parishioners had gathered with flowers in front of the Marian Grotto for the final day of novena at 5:30pm. After the devotion at Grotto people went to the Church with the statue of



Child Mary to partake in the Holy Eucharist. Mass was offered for the intentions of Divine Word Missionaries and Girl children because it was in 1875 that Arnold Janssen founded the SVD congregation on this day. After the Holy Mass, the Fathers, Brothers and Sisters were felicitated by the parish leaders while the girl children cut the cake. People shared sweets supplied by the Marian association. The Parish Priest Fr. Ivan D'Silva thanked Parishioners especially the Choir group, Marian organization and the Youth who arranged everything so orderly.

Neighborhood Church

September 12, 2021: Holy Spirit Catholic Church arranged a one day Seminar for the parishioners on Small Christian Community or neighborhood Church. Nearly hundred people participated in the training programme imparted by Fr. Ivan D'Silva the coordinator of SCC for the Kumarghat Deanery of Tripura.



Along with him Dr. Asok Debbarma, Sopon Sangma and Kamal Debbarma the Parish SCC committee members instructed the faithful. Fr. Ivan educated the people with charts on what is Church, and who is Church. He explained with examples the present poor condition of few village Churches of the parish. He then divided the group into 8 small groups for the Bible sharing through the 7 steps method. Each group selected one person to lead the Bible sharing following the 7 steps method and at the end of it they reported back to the larger group. Parishioners felt it was worthwhile exercise to form new SCC groups in

their own Villages/Communities and strengthen the Church as a whole.

Self-Reliance Review Meeting of Beneficiaries

September 19, 2021: Oisho Bani Society (NGO) in collaboration with Catholic Church Ambassa organized a half day program for the forty nine beneficiaries review meeting. Almost all recipients of money for livestock were present for the input session on Self-Reliance organized by the NGO. Fr. Jeevan Kennedy SVD and Dr. Asok



Debbarma the active members of Oisho Bani Society were the Resource Persons. Fr. Jeevan in his Talk asked the beneficiaries what problems and challenges they faced while rearing the livestock and suggested few remedies. Beneficiaries shared some of the problems they faced, such as; sudden sickness of pigs, fish, costly feed, etc. Fr. Kennedy proposed some solutions of approaching the veterinary doctors and getting vaccination in time for the livestock. Dr. Asok spoke of the habit of saving. Mr. Sunil Debbarma the Secretary of the Revolving Fund thanked the Resource Person and requested the beneficiaries to use the money only for rearing the livestock. *Ivan D'Silva, SVD*

MOHARPARA PARISH

Training for Family Commission Members

One day Training for Family Commission Members was held on 11th of September at Moharpara Parish Center. The Training commenced with a decade of the Rosary followed by highlighting the importance and purpose of the day by Fr. Alfred D'Souza CSC. An Inspirational short film about Venerable Fr. Patrick Peyton CSC and about the importance of



family prayer was shown. Five participants were given opportunity to share their experience regarding family

prayer and its influence in their life. Elaborate discussions and sharing of opinions regarding the success of family prayer fest Fait 2021 was held. At the closure Fr. Arul CSC the Parish Priest exhorted the participants to make a family altar and pray as a family in the respective villages every day. The success of the training was due to the hard work of our Catechists and a big thanks to them for their good will and zeal.

Marriage Preparation Course

Immaculate Conception Parish, Moharpara organized a Marriage Preparation Course on 26th and 27th August. There were ten couples from different sub centers of the Parish who participated. The Resource Persons for the training program were Fr. Amalraj the Diocesan Secretary for Family



Commission and Dr. Asok Debbarma from Ambassa Parish. The participants were enlightened about the sacredness of the sacrament of marriage and the importance of covenantal promise. Dr. Asok taught them about natural family planning and the importance of hygiene. Sharing his family life experience profited the participants on how to handle family problems and worries. The participants expressed their sense of joy and happiness and promised to keep up the sacred living of marriage in their life. *Fr. Arbok CSC*

TUIKARMAW PARISH

Parish Feast Day at St. Mary's Parish Centre

St. Mary's Parish Tuikarmaw celebrated the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin in meaningful way with 9 days of Novena and 3 days of *Triduum* and ending with a meaningful Eucharistic celebration of the Feast Day by Bishop Lumen on 12th September 2021. This permeated a sense of divinity within one and all. The day's celebration began with the Blessing of



the Stations of the Cross and a Cemetery Altar. This was possible only with the generosity and sacrifices of members from different *mondolis* along with abundant blessings from the Almighty. The Holy Eucharist attracted hundreds of faithful from different *mondolis*. A short felicitation of the oldest living catholic members from each *mondoli* was done by Bishop Lumen for their years of dedicated service to the parish, to the diocese, and to the church at large. The day concluded with a fellowship meal. *Fr. Sojan Augustine CSC*

KUMARGHAT PARISH

Feast of St. Teresa of Calcutta

On 5th September, Feast of St. Mother Teresa was celebrated at Kumarghat Parish Church. Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC was the main celebrant for the Feast Day Mass. Though the prevailing pandemic limited the number of participants, about 150 were present for the feast day Mass. During the Holy Eucharist Bishop highlighted St. Mothers Teresa's contribution to the



Church by serving the poorest of the poor. It is our pride to have the service of the MC Sisters in our Parish. The MC Sisters took the lead to organize the liturgy. A festive meal was sponsored and served to all by the MC Sisters and their collaborators.

Zonal SCC Training Masli Zone

Masli Zonal Level SCC training was conducted by Fr. Lancy D'Souza CSC at MasliGar II on 12th September. All the four villages of the Zone participated. After the



Sunday Holy Eucharist the SCC training program began with enthronement of the Bible and followed by a Session by Fr. Lancy on the structure of the Church and the purpose of having SCC in the neighborhood. Fr. Lancy explained that SCC means not only doing seven step of Bible sharing in the unit but it is our whole Catholic life. Sr. Bastian FS taught them about the importance of the SCCs and encouraged them to have regular SCC meetings and Bible sharing in the unit and making the Kingdom of God present in our neighborhood. Mr. Roitua Darlong, the parish secretary, taught them the seven steps of Bible sharing and Catechist Subia assisted him. There were 48 participants. In the evaluation all the participants appreciated the SCC training program.

Marriage Preparation Course and Marriage Rectification

On 17th September, Marriage preparation was conducted at St. Paul's Church, Kumarghat. Fr.

Lancy D'Souza CSC, Sr. Bastian FS, Mr. Sakunga, Mr. Vandinga and Catechist Subia were the Resource Persons. Besides religious and spiritual aspects of marriage, practical elements and health issues that would help the couple in day-to-day aspects of forming



a new family were emphasized. 10 couples attended the two days preparation course. On 18th September, after the due preparation, 10 couples' marriages were rectified during the Holy Eucharist celebrated by Fr. Lancy, the Parish Priest and con-celebrated by Fr. Francis Xavier CSC. It was a great of joy for all the participants to have their marriage solemnized.

Fr. Francis Xavier CSC

Catechists Renewal Program

The Catechetical Commission organized one renewal



program for the catechists of the Diocese of Agartala from 16th to 22nd of August 2021 at Baijalbari Parish. 26 Catechists from sixteen Parishes participated in the program, while the Catechists from eight parishes could not attend due to Covid-19 related issues. There were six Resource Persons of DTP (Disciples Training Program) Team from Kerala who conducted the renewal program. Bishop Lumen Monteiro gave an inspiring Talk to the Catechists and offered Holy Mass on 19th August. He encouraged the Catechists to be the witnesses of Christ's love to the people and to spread love among humanity. Later, the Bishop interacted with the Catechists and listened to them. *Valentine Dung Dung, SVD*

Social Media and Human Rights

September 11, 2021: The Diocesan Secretary for the Commission of Social Communication Fr. Ivan D'Silva,



SVD, organized a Seminar on Social Media & Human rights in Ambassa. The Parish Youth Committee arranged a Colloquium for the college students and dropouts regarding the burning issues of Tripura. 44 Youth participated from different villages of Dhalai District. Mr. Antony Debbarma and Fr. Ivan were the Resource Persons. Mr. Saviour Hrangkhawl, the President of the Parish Youth, welcomed Mr. Antony, the Human Rights activist and Lawyer of Tripura High Court with a 'rishu'. The whole Session was interactive and practical. Mr. Antony lectured elaborately on Human Rights violations in Tripura and how the Youth should participate in the Right to Information. Fr. Ivan gave a talk on Social Media, especially on fake news and online issues. *Ivan D'Silva, SVD*

SCC Kumarghat Deanery level Meet at Kathalcherra Parish

Kumarghat Deanery organized a one day Seminar for the SCC Leaders at Kathalcherra. Eight Parishes participated. Around 100 participants were present for the Conference. Mr. Piangloma Darlong the Deanery SCC Secretary welcomed and briefed everyone about the day's procedure. The Kathalcherra Parish SCC Committee started the Session with the Bible procession, Bible enthronement, and a creative way of Bible sharing. Then all the Parishes shared their Reports with the action plan. Many said that due to pandemic Bible sharing did not take place but will slowly begin. During the general observations many of them made convincing elucidation to make SCC strong.



Fr. Lancy CSC, the Secretary of the Diocese S C C Commission said, "SCC is not only the 7-Steps but it is the neighborhood Catholic Church". Towards the end, Fr. Ivan SVD, the Deanery President of the SCC, thanked everyone and especially the host parish led by Fr. Abraham CSC.

Fr. Ivan D'Silva, SVD

JUST NEWS BRIEFS

Training on Development of Leadership Qualities

JUST organized training on Development of Leadership Qualities for the SHGs on 20th August at JUST training hall, Agartala. 50 women from seven Federations participated in the training. The resource person was Sr. Sushila SSpS. The objective of the training was to develop the behavior of the group leaders and enable to lead the goal, vision and mission of their Federation. The resource person shared the definition of leadership qualities, willingness to listen, perseverance, honesty, selflessness, decisiveness and trust. During the session it has also been taught the difference between Leaders and Managers. She conducted a brain storming session for the SHGs on problem solving skills, so that they may be equipped with ability to identify the problems and analyzed the issue. The SHG Leaders thanked the resource person for motivating, encouraging and building trust between the groups through leadership qualities.

Workshop on Social Issues for Women

Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) organized Empowerment Program for Women on 21st, 22nd and 29th August 2021 at Kamaranga, Kathalcherra and Pitra Parishes respectively. A total of 230 Women took part in the program from all these three Parishes. The resources persons were Sr. Sushila SSpS, Mrs. Babita Jamatia and Sr. Jolly FS. The Parish Priests of the respected Parishes initiated the day's program with Holy Mass. The Parish Priests in their messages encouraged the participants to be fully active in the program. A few children and some men were also present. During their Sessions the resources persons made the women aware of faith formation in family, dealing with women's issues and problems, importance on girl child education, how to avail government schemes and facilities, domestic violence and issue on women trafficking. There was also a brain storming sessions on the faith aspects and Bible in order to make the participants think and come out with answers. The women leaders thanked the resource persons and their Parish Priests for arranging such training programs and they look for more of such programs in future.

Mr. Cyril Darlong



Dear Readers, you will remember in the last LINK I wrote about a Priest on a motorbike who was to travel across India to promote a peaceful, green world? Well, that was Fr. Prashant Palakkapilly, CMI, Principal of Sacred Heart College Thevara, Kerala. The Priest was here in Agartala for a short visit. With a blessing he continued his motorcycle travels to Kashmir and Leh-Ladak. Indeed a daring person traveling all alone across India! **+Lumen, CSC**

Our Distinguished Guests

- Fr. Maxim Rodrigues, SVD Provincial from Guwahati
- Sr. Leena, SJA Provincial from Bhubaneswar
- Fr. Thomas John, CSC, from Mizoram
- Fr. Prashant CMI and his motorbike from Kerala
- Sr. Lucious, BS Provincial from Silchar
- Sr. Surekha, BS Provincial Councilor from Silchar
- Sr. Leena, BS Provincial Procurator from Silchar

BISHOP LUMEN: MY LONG TIME FRIEND AND GUIDE

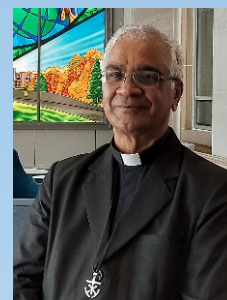
It was the year 1972. I had completed my SSLC and left my home for the first time to come to Bangalore to begin my journey in the family of Holy Cross. Everything was strange for me in the city of Bangalore as I had always lived in the small village where my parents lived with my siblings. Bishop Lumen Monteiro was also a student in Bangalore, Holy Cross Students' Home (HCSH) at that time. Only, I was the junior most just beginning my pre-university course and he was the senior most completing his undergraduate degree in English Literature. I was always treated like a younger brother by Lumen and his peer group, and I always looked up to them for guidance and inspiration.



When he and the seniors joined the novitiate, I used to visit them now and then since we already had a bond established by then. Lumen used to be so caring and hospitable whenever I visited the novitiate. Then he moved on to Yercaud and Pune and returned to Bangalore as a regent, and I was still a student at HCSH. I remember vividly how he used to encourage me to play the guitar even though I was not a great musician or guitarist. In my humble opinion, he was a good formator as he was an encouraging and kindhearted person who understood the struggles young people went through at that stage.

As I progressed in my journey in Holy Cross, I reached Holy Cross Seminary, Pune after my first profession to begin my studies in Philosophy. Lumen was the senior most in the seminary then. We became good friends by then and he used to take me out for entertainments and so on, showing he cared for me. I cherish those days we spent together in Pune, and I was very encouraged by being connected with him and receiving his guidance.

I was again privileged to serve in the diocese of Agartala as the Principal of Holy Cross School (HCS) from 1997-2003, and he was already appointed as the Bishop of Agartala. Those 6+ years at HCS were very fulfilling and memorable years as he supported me wholeheartedly in imparting Catholic education to the youth of Agartala. As was in the case of the Congregation of Holy Cross, Province of Northeast India, it was also his dream to have a Catholic College in the state of Tripura. I was able to receive all the spiritual and moral support from him as I ventured into the challenging task of founding and establishing a Catholic College of excellence in the glorious traditions of Holy Cross. Till today, as far as I can remember, during those 10+ years I was the Principal of HCC, (2008-2019) he never said no to me for any invitations I had extended to him if he could somehow make it to the function even though it meant much sacrifice from him.



I am so happy to celebrate the 25 years of his episcopate and the silver jubilee of the Diocese of Agartala. I am happy to have contributed my mite and be a small part of the educational ministry of the diocese through Catholic primary, secondary, and higher education. I am proud of the 'good shepherd' in Bishop Lumen, who is functioning with the inspiring motto, "Lead us onward". I wish him many more happy, successful and fulfilling years of ministry as the shepherd of the diocese of Agartala as he is 'lead onward' by the Holy Spirit. May God shower upon him numerous blessings in abundance and keep him happy, fulfilled, successful, healthy, and blessed.

Dr. Fr. Emmanuel Kallarackal, CSC
Chaplain, Cathedral High School,
Indianapolis, USA

Portrait of Bishop Lumen Monteiro as a young Seminarian

During the two year stint as a “guest student” at the Pontifical Atheneum in Pune at the very end of the nineteen seventies, the courteous, clear headed, well informed, soft spoken and sagacious seminarian and confrere “Brother” Lumen, true to his name- became my “little guiding light” in matters of faith and religion, Politics and society, Sports and Pastime.

We prayed and played together; we went fishing and bird hunting in the thorny open spaces that surrounded the seminary; we discussed books, and analyzed off beat movies; we played pranks on unsuspecting fellow religious, and whiled away many a happy hour. And Lumen grew in stature and wisdom.



On Sundays we, the members of holy cross community would go out for “Ministry” in the far flung neighborhoods of the Janan deepa Vidhyapeeth Campus. I was a happy member of the group that went to Dapodi- an industrial area situated on the outskirts of the Cultural capital of the Marathas. Was it the weekly opportunity to cycle all the way to Dapodi and back, or the pleasant company of Lumen, or both.... I do not venture now to dissect; suffice it to say this ministry, and the weekly outing brought me closer to Lumen.

One incident stands out in my memory when I think of Dapodi; it also illustrates Bishop Lumen, sagacity even as a young

seminarian. The Sunday mass at Dapodi, was held at the residence of one Mr. Vaz, who had a decent enclosed veranda in front of his house, and an open space facing the building. He had a colour TV- a luxury in those days- which he placed strategically in the enclosed veranda so that the neighbours could watch TV programmes from the courtyard. Much to the irritation of the urchins that flocked to watch TV programmes, the “idiot box” would be closed on Sunday morning on account of Holy Eucharistic celebration.



This temporary “shrine” became the venue of weekly Mass, occasional Baptisms, and rarely a wedding, too! One summer we got an invitation soliciting our solemn presence to grace the occasion of our son's Holy Matrimony which will be divinely solemnized at St. Vazs church, Dapodi. The generous house holder Mr. Vaz had been elevated to the rank of the blessed saints in heaven at the home of a parishioner! We roared with laughter. Lumen joined the mirth, but solved and said, “Come on guys! You know what the invitation means: it merely states that the marriage will be at Mr. Vaz's residence, during the Sunday mass”. We accepted his casual correction.

Now, as the Bishop of Agartala it is Most Reverend Excellency, Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC is leading his flock as on ward. May the “Shepherd of shepherds”, continue to light his way. Congratulations, dear and glorious friend, as you and your diocese celebrate your silver jubilee.

Lumen is light, and Monteiro means “hunter”; “of the mountains”, “from the mountains”. It is fitting that both parts of your name have come true. You are light presiding over the mountains of the North East.

Mr. K.U. Dominic
Educationist
Former Holy Cross Seminarian
Wayanad , Kerala