

### Pastor's Corner



There is a story of the way African hunters trap monkeys. They slice a coconut in two, hollow it out, and in one half of the shell cut a hole just big enough for a monkey's hand

to pass through. Then they place an orange in the other coconut half before fastening back together the two halves of the coconut shell. Finally, they secure the coconut to a tree with a rope, then retreat into the jungle and wait.

Sooner or later, an unsuspecting monkey swings by, smells the delicious orange, and discovers its location inside the coconut. The monkey then slips his hand through the small hole, grasps the orange and tries to pull it through the hole. Of course the orange won't come out; it's too big for the hole. To no avail the persistent monkey continues to pull and pull, never realizing the danger he is in. While the

monkey struggles with the orange, the hunters simply stroll in and capture the monkey. As long as the monkey keeps his fist wrapped around the orange, he is trapped. What the monkey doesn't realize is that it could save its own life if it would only let go of the orange. It rarely occurs to a monkey, however, that it cannot have both the orange and its freedom.

This is exactly what we are reminded of our life, we cannot have both our freedom in Christ and continue to keep our hands and our hearts clutched on things that are not of God. We must be free and retreat, we must let go and surrender totally to Him. Whatever we do, it would involve sacrifice it would cost us a bit, hurt a bit, pinch a bit, and challenge us a lot! Preparations for the upcoming Diocesan

### Share, Inspire, Witness

Mission Congress (DMC) have been going on in full swing, especially the organization and logistics which seem well under control. But the main purpose of the DMC is to re-awaken and re-energize our laity in the work of evangelization. To this end I have some anxieties; yet I am hopeful that a diocesan gathering of this size and for this length of time for the laity and by the laity would be a time for a renewal in the faith and



not just a 'show of numbers'. In the words of Fr. Cyprian "this is a unique opportunity for us priests, religious and the faithful to share, bear witness and inspire one another." Moreover, let us entrust the DMC into the guiding hand of God by praying daily for the success of this 'faith event' in our Diocese.

+Lumen, CSC

### Editorial



The indigenous People of Tripura have, over the years, learned that Pythagoras, after all, had a point. Painfully conscious of the recently restructured demographic contours of their soil, the outnumbered tribal of Tripura now vouch that 'number is everything', even destiny.

The Mission Congress at Ambassa, 6-9 Oct 2011, is expected to bring together large numbers of Catholics from all parts of the diocese. Certainly not an easy exercise, but surely, an opportunity in many ways!

It will be an opportunity to celebrate the communitarian aspect of our faith. Gathered as a diocesan community, we shall worship God, we shall listen to His word. It would let the number-feeble church of Tripura feel the joy and assurance of belonging to a much

larger faith community than that of the village or parish.

All of us have been praying for its success and many have been working hard to ensure its success. There is an impressive array of faith-building programs laid out. Even from the program schedule, it is clear much thought has gone into it. In fact, there is much anticipation in the air.

Large gatherings everywhere, but particularly in Tripura, have an in-built temptation to show off a bit, because numbers, here more than elsewhere, conceal stories and possibilities.

That is why care must be taken, to see that power, position and pomp

don't relegate the essentials of the Ambassa Program to the margins and diminish the Congress to a mere self-arranged and seldom-got platform for self-glorification.

Less important and hardly necessary 'feel-good' programs like 'felicitation of clergy or officers' must not overshadow or even distract us from programs meant to give us an encounter with the Lord as a community of



followers.

If at all a felicitation is called for, it is of the unknown, nameless, faceless Christian whose only wealth is the unshakeable faith he has in his Lord. All roads, therefore, to Ambassa for a celebration of the best that our faith holds!

J. Pulinthanath, sdb

### Unabashedly Ambassa!



## News from the Parishes

### Mission Congress at Ambassa from Oct. 6-9, 2011

(Diocesan gathering to Share, Witness and Inspire)

Preparations for the Diocesan Mission congress at Ambassa are in full swing.



Different departments headed by the laity are busy in doing their best for the success of this program.

The whole Diocese is praying.

It is a unique opportunity for us the priests, clergy and the faithful to share-bear witness and inspire one another and our neighbours. May it be a new Pentecost for the Diocese of Agartala!

It is a celebration of our faith in Jesus who is the truth, life and the way. Believing in him and surrendering ourselves to him we find life. We want to share this Good News with all through our word, deed and life. Our esteemed readers of "Link", please help us through your prayers and sacrifices in all our missionary endeavours.

*Cyprian Pinto, SVD*

**Kumarghat Parish:** The 'Maria Sangha' of Kumarghat Parish celebrated 'Shishu Kanya Dibash' on Sunday, 4 September 2011. The members numbering about 125 arrived at the Parish for a day long Seminar on 'Girl Childhood'.



The day was organized by the office bearers themselves. The seminar commenced with the Rosary led by the president. Some of the Resource Persons for the day were Mrs. Lalpekmoyee Halam, Mr. Bibyshan Rupini, Mr. Lalrina Darlong and Sr. Mary David, FS. The members were conscientised on the need for Gender Equality and Equal Opportunity for the Girl children. 'Whether the gender is male or female life is a precious gift of

God to be accepted and celebrated'. The members present, acknowledged that a distinction is made with regard to giving more importance to boy child in most of the cultures. A spirit of sacrifice was shown by the members as they abstained from satisfying their physical hunger and contributed their mite to the cause. The day long Seminar ended with a meaningful Eucharist.

### Girl Child Day' Celebrations

**Fr. Valerian Castelino, CSC**

**Dharmanagar:** The Girl Child Day was celebrated at Holy Cross Convent School Dharmangar on 8<sup>th</sup> September. The program commenced at 8.15 with a prayer service conducted by the Boys of the School. The Girl representatives from every class were offered flowers as a token of love and gratitude. Sr. Titus, BS, the local superior offered a lighted candle to Girl



representatives from each class and prayed over them. Sr. Anita, BS, spoke on the significance of the Day, blessed all the girls and wished them well. A volley ball match between Girls and Teachers was conducted as part of the celebrations. The bulletin boards were decorated with beautiful pictures and meaningful write-ups. **Sr. Rosia BS**

**Moharpara:** Holy Spirit Convent Girls Hostel celebrated the Girl Child Day with a meaningful Holy Eucharist presided over by Fr. Binoy John, CSC. In the afternoon Sr. Susheela gave a Talk to the girls on the relevance of the theme and enlightened and encouraged the girls to be empowered. Sr. Rosline conducted various games for the girls. The winners were awarded with prizes. It was a memorable day for all the students. **Sr. Susheela Xess SSpS**



**Fr. Hormis John, CSC, new Parish Priest at Immaculate Conception Parish**

On 25<sup>th</sup> September, Fr. Hormis John, CSC was installed as the new Parish Priest of IC Parish, Moharpara, during the concelebrated Eucharist presided over by Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC. Fr. Emmanuel, CSC, Provincial Superior, a large number of Priests, Religious and lay people witnessed the event. A short felicitation program that followed to welcome Fr. Hormis John, saw *mondoli* leaders expressing their joy of having a new pastor, who is very simple and approachable and promising their wholehearted support and cooperation.

*Fr. Binoy, CSC*

### Change of Guard at Bodhjungnagar & Moharpara

**Fr. K.J. Abraham, CSC, new Parish Priest at St. Andre**

4<sup>th</sup> of September witnessed the change of guard at St. Andre Parish, Bodhjungnagar. The faithful gathered from different villages to bid a tearful farewell to their long time Pastor, Fr. Hormis John, CSC and welcomed Fr. K. J. Abraham, CSC as their new Pastor in the presence of Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, Fr. Emmanuel, CSC, Provincial Superior and a large number of Priests and Religious. During the Holy Eucharist presided over by the Bishop, Fr. Abraham, CSC was installed as the Parish Priest. After the Eucharist, there was a short program to thank Fr. Hormis, CSC for his services to the Parish. All the speakers highlighted the numerous ways in which Fr. Hormis was a true pastor to them. They also promised cooperation and unconditional



support to their new pastor. The program came to an end with a community meal.

*Regent Chandrakant, CSC*

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*Fr. Binoy, CSC*



## We've got Mail

It is nice to see a LINKER of a media, who is a Bishop, keeping LINK with the LINK Reader. Very personal indeed. + *Patrick, CSC, Coadjutor Archbishop of Dhaka*

Wow! The WWW of Agartala Website is so colourful and so cute....Congrats!The September Link is all the more captivating and interesting to read with all its picturesque news, views and information. How I wait to get Agartala Link..... *Sr. Ventura, FS*

Thank you for the September LINK with many homely lessons and news items. +*Evarist, Karachi*

Thanks a lot for sending me the Link of September. I enjoy reading it. *Fr. Adam, CSC, Notre Dame, Dhaka*

Thank you for hooking me up with your email and links. I look forward to following your progress. *Fr. Mark Strader, Temple City, USA*

Thanks for the LINK, it was educative and informative as usual with a little lesson to each of us thrown in your INDIVIDUAL BENCHMARK!!!!!!!:))) *Olivers, Pune*

I thank you again very much for this September-LINK. I count every month with this E-mail. Thank you for this good connection between North-East-India and Germany. *Rudolf, sdb*

## Women's Commission

Training on Women and Family cum Conflict Transformation and Peace Building program was organized by NEDSF in collaboration with CBCI Office for Women North East Region from 19th to 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2011. The main Resource Person was Sr. Helen SSpS, Secretary, CBCI Commission for Women. There were 30 participants who attended the Seminar. The Resource Person dealt on various topics like Women and Family, Women Empowerment, Conflict Transformation and Peace Building. The training program was really inspiring and encouraging for all the participants. The Diocese of Agartala was represented by Sr. Susheela Xess, Ms. Gita Debbarma, and Ms. Mohita Sangma. *Sr. Susheela Xess SSpS*

## Commission for SCCs

A Theological Congress on SCC was held on August 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> at Palatine Bhavan,

## HAPPENINGS IN THE DIOCESE

### Parents' Day Celebrations

#### Holy Cross School Tuikarmaw:

"Dear Parents, the sacrifices that you make for each one of us are many. We wish to dedicate this day to you, dear



parents." These were the opening words of Master Bibeek Reang, the compere for the Parents' Day Celebrations at Holy Cross School, Tuikarmaw, on 10<sup>th</sup> September. Fr. Sojan Augustine, CSC, the Principal presented the annual report highlighting the activities and achievements for the year. The three hours program performed by the students was a reflection of this sentiment and done with lots of love for their parents. The cultural fiesta showcased the extra ordinary talents of the students and their confidence. Col. Vineet Menon, the Chief Guest of the day, summarized the feelings of the guests and parents when he said, "What I saw today is a breath taking performance equal to that of any student from any metros of India. Keep it up." Lt. Col. Yashpal Balhara, Commanding Officer, NCC, lauded the school management for the education imparted to the young students of this remote place. *Fr. Sojan, CSC*

#### Holy Cross Agartala:

The Parents' Day of Holy Cross School and College was a huge success, thanks to your prayers. Since UNICEF has declared Sept. 24<sup>th</sup> as the Day of the Girl Child, the theme selected for the cultural program was "Empowerment of the Girl Child". The theme was very well brought out through rhythmic dances, songs, music and a play entitled 'the hand that rocks the cradle, rules the world'. The program began with the arrival of the Chief Guest Dr. Tapati Chakraborty, Chairperson, Commission for Women, Govt. of Tripura. Students numbering about 600 participated in the colorful cultural extravaganza. There were more than 6000 parents who attended the program which was held in their honor. The program was in the open air theater of Holy Cross campus and a clear blue sky was the beautiful canopy for the enthralled audience. The whole program took about 180 minutes and everyone felt blessed by this coming together. The Message by the Chief Guest was inspiring. She challenged the audience to stand up for the rights of the Girl Child and speak up for the voiceless and powerless in the society.

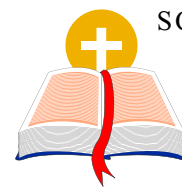


*Fr. Emmanuel CSC*

## News from the Commissions

Nagpur. It was organised by the National Service Team on SCC for selected representatives from all over India and abroad. The North East was represented by 3 Bishops and 2 priests Bishop John Moolachira of Guwahati, Bishop Thomas Pulloppillil of Bongaigaon, Bishop George Pallippambal of Miao, Fr. Benny Varghese from Kohima as one of the resource person and Fr. Lancy D'Souza CSC from Agartala. The focus of the Congress was to prepare a good documentation and a book for the training of the seminarians on SCC. Eminent Speakers presented well-written papers on SCC and responses. Some of the Papers were: Origin and development of SCCs, SCCs as the new way of being Church, SCCs are Christ-centred communities nourished by the Word of God, Eucharist and other Sacraments,

SCCs and its spirituality, SCCs and Sensus Fidelium, SCC and family, SCC and Evangelization, SCC and Laity, SCC and inter-religious dialogue, and SCCs and New structures, New leadership and New ministries. There were 17 Bishops, 38 Priests, (many of them were seminary Rectors) three Women religious, and six Lay people for the SCC Congress. During the SCCs Congress, the house condoled the untimely demise of Bishop Vincent Kympat, Bishop of Jowai. The out come of this Theological Congress on SCC is that all these well written paper on SCCs will be re drafted and published as a Resource Book for the future training of Seminarians and for SCCs units in India.



*Fr. Lancy D'Souza CSC, SCC Cordinator*

### TOT on Human Right Education



Training of the Teachers for Human Right Education in our Schools was conducted by the Regional Human Right Coordinator, NDSSSS Guwahati in collaboration with the JUST on 27<sup>th</sup> August. The one day training program was attended by eight teachers. Sri K.K Roy Principal of Tripura Govt. Law College and Chairman of Institute of Human Right Education in Tripura was the Chief Guest. Other dignitaries present for the program were Fr. Robert Mathias CSC, Director of JUST, Mr. Tapan Modak Coordinator of IHRE Tripura, Ms. Rita Kajur and Ms. Gargee Patwari Coordinators of Human Right in North East. The Chief Guest spoke on what are Human Rights and how Human Rights were violated by citing cases. The trainees mostly focused on Right of children to free and compulsory

Education Act 2009, CRC (Convention on the Right of the Child) 1989.

### AGB Meeting of JUST

Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) organized its 14th Annual General Body Meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2011 at JUST premises. Most Rev. Bishop Lumen Monteiro, Chairman of JUST chaired the AGB Meeting. Fr. Robert Mathias CSC the Director, presented a Report of the different activities and interventions carried out during the year 2010-11. The Statement of Annual Accounts was presented by Fr. George Jacob CSC the Treasurer of JUST. Mr. R. Sundar the General Manager NABARD was elected as the new Governing Body Member.

### Training on Documentation for the JUST Staff

Training on Documentation was organized at JUST from 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup>



September. Sr. Bastian D'silva and Mr. Daniel Debbarma were the Resource Persons of the program. 20 participants attended the training. The aim of the training was to enable the participants to understand the concept of documentation, its need and importance. The inputs of the program were based on event report, case study and progress report. The facilitators taught the purpose and need of documentation, pre-requisites and the qualifying factors of event report and case study.

**Mr. Kollol Datta**

## Happenings in and around the North East

### Visitors at Bishop's House

- Fr. P. A. Augustine, SVD, Regional from Guwahati
- Fr. John Kalapura, SDB from Shillong
- CSC Frs. Joby, Shiju & Lancy from South Province
- Frs. Philip Neri Aranha, Santosh Rodrigues, Ronald D'Souza and Victor Vijay Lobo from Mangalore Diocese
- Mrs. Priya Fernandes from Delhi
- Dr. Betsy and Ms. Rody from Caritas, Delhi

### The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC)



Amid the difficulties, poverty or persecution, the Christians of Asia "are called to renew the proclamation of the Word, mission, evangelization", says Archbishop Thomas Menamparampil SDB, of Guwahati and President of the Office for Evangelization, within the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC). From his privileged point of view, that supervises the challenges of mission in the vast continent, the Archbishop comments on the condition and prospects of the Christian communities in Asia. To all the faithful of the continent, the Archbishop sends a heartfelt message of hope through Fides: "it is precisely when difficulties arise, that people look for answers. It is when problems are intense, that the questions that people pose become deeper. May be this is such an hour for Asia. 'How long more', the psalmist used to ask in agony. During the monsoons, it is when the heat becomes unbearable, that the rains fall in full measure. May the proclaimers of the Word in Asia win a hearing, as the land is thirsty for a message of because the earth is thirsty of the message, justice, peace, uprightness that Christ once preached". [www.fides.org](http://www.fides.org)



Most Rev. James Thoppil was ordained Bishop of Kohima by the Apostolic Nuncio to India, His Excellency Salvatore Pennacchio in the Cathedral Church of Kohima, the capital of Nagaland on September 8. The colourful religious and public function which lasted more than three hours was attended by

thousands of people from within and outside the state. A 140- member choir from members of the Angami Catholic Youth Association (ACYA) selected from the three parishes of Kohima, sang at the ordination service.

Notable members present for the function were Nagaland Chief Minister of Neiphiu Rio, former Chief Minister of Nagaland and Former Governor of Goa and Maharashtra, S.C. Jamir, four archbishops, fifteen bishops and several other civic and church leaders.

In his first address to the congregation, the new bishop touched upon his Episcopal motto and promised to do everything for the Gospel so that our society is permeated with God's values and is transformed into God's kingdom day by day.

Addressing the large public gathering in the lawn of the magnificent Catholic Cathedral, the Chief Minister of Nagaland acknowledged the contribution of Catholic Church to the state in the areas of education, healthcare and social development.

It may be recalled that the Diocese of Kohima came into existence in 1973 with late Bishop Abraham Alangimattathil sdb as its first bishop and Bishop Jose Mukala as its second. Bishop James Thoppil is the third Bishop of Nagaland. The Diocese of Kohima that comprises the state of Nagaland and has some 58,000 Catholic population with hundreds of priests and nuns rendering a variety of services. *(CathNews India)*

### Bishop's Program for October 2011

- 01-02: Parish Feast, Gachirampara
- 03: NESNIM, Agartala
- 06-09: Mission Congress, Ambassa
- 10-14: Health Checkup
- 14: Visit of SG Superior General
- 15: Seminar for women, Bodhjunnagar
- Visit of SJA General Councilor
- 16: Parish Mass, Mariamnagar
- 17-19: Bishops' Seminar, NVSC Pune
- 20-21: Caritas GB Meet, Delhi
- 23: Pastoral Program, Khowai
- 30: Confirmations, Khumlung Parish
- 31: Clergy Meeting & Recollection, JDC