



### Forming close Relationships

Someone once said 'Birthdays are filled with yesterday's memories, today's joys, and tomorrow's dreams. Yes, Birthdays are moments to be grateful and I recall the many blessings I received from the Lord and from so many people. Today I am reminded of the people who have been with me through thick and thin and those in new relationships. Speaking of relationships Ezekiel Isaac Maleker says, "Merging, that is, forming close relationships with others and God should cause us to enhance our personalities and not to destroy them... When personalities "merge", they must respect each other's independence and at the same time, feel one with each other. It is difficult to be close and distant at the same time, but that is what a good relationship is all about. It is also very difficult to maintain a good relationship when

*feelings of resentment and hatred start to creep in and are allowed to take over. That is why we find that even in families, there are instances when siblings do not talk to each other or former good friends will not even shake hands because of a trivial incident that happened in the past. In order to be successful in any relationship, each individual's views must be allowed to be expressed... Since all relationships are dynamic, we must constantly work towards keeping them positive."*

As I celebrate yet another year of God's gift of life to me I remember the moments when I was discouraged in the face of recurrent trials, challenges and what appear to be insurmountable difficulties. In such moments we tend to throw up



our hands and say: "I give up! I can't manage! I can't take it anymore." But if we remember that God and others are with us, things are bound to change; and I have seen that happen. Today I realize how blessed I have been. In fact I am overwhelmed with all the blessings that I received from God who has called me to live in the light, to believe the surprising, amazing, and staggeringly puzzling truth that I wasn't made for darkness but for light. For His countless blessings I say 'THANK YOU' God. I also say 'THANK YOU' to one and all who have been a part of my life.

+Lumen, CSC



### Ultimate Reckonings

The extent to which the Church ought to be involved or not involved in matters explicitly political in nature has been a question debated from time immemorial. In times such as these, when the country finds itself on the threshold of a General Elections, the import of which can by no means be underrated, the question assumes added urgency and significance. In a place like Tripura where Politics seems to have a way of making everything else subservient to it, the Church, at pre-election times, gets to see with some degree of amusement and astonishment, the sheer vigor and passion of some its members who are otherwise considered 'sluggish' and 'ordinary' at best. The Church in Tripura has hitherto been, by and large, a mere onlooker on the political rigmarole that keeps thickening day by day in the State that comprises our Diocese. That few of its adherents occupy political centre-stage is perhaps no reason for the

Church to change its stand. But perhaps, the near-absolute manner in which politics impact



all aspects of daily life is reason enough to make a pause and take at least a cursory look at what ails political progress of its faithful and their fellow-practitioners. Soon enough, it would become clear that 'inability to unite' is one reason that curtails progress especially among regional parties here in Tripura. Despite having similar objectives and needs, they are easily prone to fragment and become ineffectual.

There seems to be an acute shortfall in the ability to sacrifice short term gains for long

### Editorial

term benefits, to give up a little, to give in a little, to forge alliances with those who differ only in inessentials, and in the ability to give and take keeping common good in mind.

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LINK wishes our dear Bishop Lumen a very Happy Birthday, Good Health and God's Blessing.

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Lack of these traits, which undoubtedly are eminently 'Christian' in nature are showing in the procedures of Tripura's regional parties. The social scenario of Tripura makes it imperative for leadership to take its strength from the kind of faith in the risen Lord that we find in Acts of the Apostles, where despite differences, we are told, believers were 'in one heart and mind'(Acts 4:32). Formation of its men and women in these Christian virtues is certainly the *forte* of the Church more than anyone else's.

The Church does not engage in Party Politics. Perhaps that's precisely why the Church in Tripura needs to take more seriously the formation of select lay leaders from its fold to a leadership that can effectively withstand their propensity to short-sightedness and fragmentation.

*J. Pulinthanath, SDB*

**AMBASSA PARISH****New Way of celebrating Christmas**

Ambassa; December 25, 2018: Catholic Church, Ambassa



celebrated Christmas a new way. Parishioners collected cloths and blankets and distributed to poor families in 4 different villages. Prior to this, Parish council members decided much ahead of time to collect the cloths and distribute them to the poor. We received more than 50 families' names for the cloth distribution. Members of mothers association came forward to bundle them according to family wise. On 16<sup>th</sup> December cloths were distributed in Masurai para and Hadukolok Para. And in Raipasa clothes and blankets were distributed on 24<sup>th</sup> December and on Christmas day clothes and blankets were distributed to Kolasori village families. Clothes were distributed irrespective of religion and

denomination to the poorest families. Many appreciated the remarkable social work by the Catholic Church in this winter season. *News bureau, Ambassa*

**KATHALCHERRA PARISH****Youth Sabha**

Dexco Team headed by Fr Lawrence Darlong, Sumanta Debbarma, Biswajit and Sarah animated the Youth Sabha 2018 at Nutunbari



Village on 27<sup>th</sup>& 28<sup>th</sup> of December on the theme Lead us to the light... They expounded and enlightened our youth on Word of God, new way of understanding of 10 Commandments, purpose of our life here on earth. They made the group lively through praising God, singing, dancing and games. Fr Lancy CSC, the Parish priest through a interactive session tried to explore the need and involvement of today's youth in the church activities and explained what is church and who is the church. There were competitions on Bible Quiz and theme presentation. Youth were delighted and were filled with joy of receiving Jesus into their lives and making Bible as their companion. *Sr. Prema, BS*

**TUIKARMAW PARISH****Installation of new Parish Priest and Farewell to Outgoing Priests**

The faithful St. Mary's Parish Tuikarmaw gathered together on 13<sup>th</sup>

January 2019 to receive and welcome the new Parish Priest Fr. Sojan CSC and bid farewell to Frs. Abraham CSC and Alfred CSC. The day began with the Holy Eucharist presided over by Fr. Abraham C, CSC. The new Parish Priest was Installed on this day by Fr. Hormis John CSC, the Judicial Vicar of the Diocese of Agartala. In his Homily Fr. Hormis invited the people to experience the real love of Jesus and remain close to his love. He invited the people to strengthen the family living and called upon them to form families in faith. After the Holy Eucharistic celebration a short felicitation program was organized for the outgoing Parish Fathers and a warm welcome was given to Fr. Sojan. Fr. Alfred the Assistant Parish Priest welcomed the gathering. Mr. Supran Marak a parishioner thanked both the outgoing Fathers and expressed deep sentiments of gratitude. Fr. Kanikaki CSC the representative of Fr. Simon CSC the Provincial Superior of Holy Cross expressed the words of gratitude to both the outgoing Fathers and welcomed new Parish Priest. Fr. Sojan addressed the gathering and thanked everyone for their cooperation for the day's event. The day ended with a community meal. *Fr. Alfred, CSC*

**Diocese News Nuggets****'Home Mission' at Agartala Diocese**

Bethany Sisters from different parts of the North East Province gathered for *Home Mission* to give Jesus to the people in the remote Villages of Kathalcherra and Depacherra Parish. It was an effort to go back to the original roots of spreading the Gospel by being with the people. 15 Sisters at Kathalcherra and 12 in Depacherra were able to give a spark of the light of Jesus to the 11 Villages (5 at Kathalcherra and 6 at Depacherra). 263

families were visited by the Sisters in both the places. They spend the



days in visiting the families, praying with them, listening to them, and praying over the sick. They gathered the people for instruction and prayer. At Kathalcherra Sisters joined the Bible Camp which was arranged for the children of the Parish. They animated the Sessions, made them more lively and energetic through their action songs, singing and dancing besides teaching and catechizing them. People were very happy with the presence of Sisters in their Villages. The people are simple, receptive and were generous to share their time and resources. We are thankful for Fr Lancy CSC, Fr Prasad, the Parish Priests of Kathalcherra and Depacherra Parishes for their generous support and encouragement. Sr. Sandhya BS, the Provincial Counselor coordinated the event. *Sr. Judith, BS*

### Priestly Ordination of Fr. Amalraj



The Diocese of Agartala is blessed with a new Priest, Rev. Fr. Amalraj, who was ordained by our Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January, 2019 during the

Ordination Mass celebrated by Bishop Susaimanickam, Bishop of Sivagangai Diocese, and concelebrated by several priests. The Ordination took place at V. Muthu Chella Puram, of Paramakudi Parish, Diocese of Sivagangai (Tamil Nadu), the native place of Fr. Amalraj. Besides his family members there was a large presence of the local faithful who joyfully witnessed the Ordination ceremony. Felicitating the new Priest at the Reception which was very colorful, our Bishop Lumen thanked his family and welcomed Fr. Amalraj to the Diocese of Agartala to perform his ministry with holiness, dedication and love. The following day the new Priest offered his first holy Mass.

### Personality Development Youth Retreat by ADYC

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of January, 2019, at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral Church, Personality Development Youth Retreat was animated by Rev. Fr.



Jomon, SVD, for the 'College going Youth' residing at Agartala. As many as 60 Youth attended the Retreat. The Retreat began with a Rosary and Praise and worship by the Youth themselves. Throughout the Sessions the Youth listened to the Animator's insightful teachings, which were very relevant and revealing. The Youth listened to him with rapt attention throughout the Sessions, and noted down many points of great importance. Fr. Jomon enlightened the Youth with the different kinds of personality development traits. He filled his sessions with many related incidents and examples making his teaching easily understandable. The Retreat concluded with the celebration of Holy Eucharist, followed by a fellowship meal. *Sandhya Hrangkhawl, Secretary, ADYC*

### Sacred Heart Study House Lembucherra

Our Diocese is blessed with one more Religious Formation House called Sacred Heart Study House at Lembucherra. This is the 2nd Formation House of the Holy Cross Fathers in the Diocese of Agartala. Foundation laid on 28th September 2016 and Inaugurated on 19th May 2018, this Formation House became functional from 2nd December 2018. Earlier on 19th May 2018 our Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC had blessed the House in the presence of many Holy Cross Confreres and other Religious. The House accommodates 27 collegians and 3 Staffme the undersigned as Director, Fr. Tarun Hrangkhawl CSC as Administrator and Fr. Hormis John CSC as Spiritual Father. All our candidates study at Holy Cross College, Jubadhara. Sacred Heart welcomes any human-heart. *Fr. Mariaraj CSC*

### JUST News Nuggets

#### Success Story



Mrs. Khombirung Reang a 35 year old women W/o- Mr. Gorathang Reang was a house wife and lives in Bata Para under Ganganagar R.D. Block in Dhalai District. Her husband is a daily labourer but due to scarcity of work he could not find work regularly and they were finding difficult to manage the family

and supporting their children's education. It was in the year 2015 that Mrs. Segunti was motivated by JUST staff to join SHG and she joined Siphai group and started saving Rs. 50 every month. Then in the year 2017 she approached the group for loan and got Rs. 7,000/-. With the amount she started a poultry farm in the village and now she is earning Rs. 5,000/- to 6,000/- every month and repaying the loan. She is also managing the family with her income and also funding her children's education. She said that joining SHG has changed her fortune. She thanked JUST for all the opportunities and said that she will continue her business as long as possible.

**Gathering and Christmas**

On 18<sup>th</sup> December 2018, JUST organized Annual gathering and Advance Christmas at JUST premises. The celebration had two parts of Which Capacity building of the staff on "Peace Building" in the morning and Advance Christmas in the evening. Fr. Jeevan Kennady, SVD and the Peace Project staff took the morning sessions on "Peace Building". The

evening celebration started at 6:00 pm with a prayer and carols by JUST team. The



Chief Guest of the celebration was Most Rev. Bishop Lumen Monteiro DD, Bishop of Agartala and the Guest of Honour was Rev. Fr. Simon Farnades CSC,

Holy Cross Northeast Provincial. There were many other guests present for the celebration. The Director of JUST welcomed the Chief Guest, Guest of Honour and all the other guests after the prayer. It was followed by other cultural items of the evening. The Chief Guest delivered Christmas message during the program. The meaningful celebration ended at about 8:00pm with a festive meal.

*Mr. Cyril Darlong*

**Catholic World News Nuggets**

**Pope at WYD Vigil Addresses 600,000 young people at Panama City's Metro**

**By Seàn-Patrick Lovett:** Three lives. Three stories. Three testimonies to faith, hope and love. These were the inspirations behind Pope Francis' reflections to the 600,000 young people gathered for the World Youth Day Vigil in Metro Park. Life stories, and love stories. "The Lord is the first to say 'yes'", said the Pope. "And He wants us to say 'yes' along with Him", as He invites us "to be part of a love story". Pope Francis presented Mary as the supreme example of how to say 'yes' and to "trust in the love and promises of God". It is this, he said, that makes Mary, "the 'influencer' of God".

**"Yes" to embracing life. "Yes" to building**



**community. "Yes" to being guardians. Willingness to say "Yes"**

"Are you willing to say 'yes'?", challenged the Pope. "Are you willing to be an 'influencer' like Mary?" he asked. "Only love makes us more human and fulfilled", he concluded. So do not be afraid to tell Jesus you want to be "part of His love story in this world".

*Courtesy vatican.va*

**Our Distinguished Visitors**

- Fr. Dolphy Pais, OFM Cap Provincial Minister from Bengaluru
- Fr. Stany, OFM Cap Delegate from Mizoram

**Bishop's Program for February 2019**

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 01: Tuikrakma Chapel Blessing under Depacherra Parish                                         | 09: Darlong Centenary, Puranbari                 |
| 02-03: Parish Sabah, Kathalcherra                                                             | 10-11: World Day of the Sick, Kolkata            |
| 05: Clergy Meet, Agartala<br>Holy Mass with all Priests and Religious Felicitation and Dinner | 12: Meet Missio Munich Team, Guwahati            |
| 06-08: 5 <sup>th</sup> Centenary Jubilee at Chittagong                                        | 17: Gamaku Silver Jubilee under Moharpara Parish |
|                                                                                               | 22: Confirmation, Bodhjnungnar Parish            |
|                                                                                               | 24: Episcopal Ordination, Dibrugarh              |