



Pastor's Corner

Thoughts as I step into a new decade!

Today as I step into the 70th year of my life I like to reflect on age. It is said there are three ages: chronological, biological, and psychological. The first

"Failing is as much a part of life as succeeding. We fail through human weakness, but we rise through the mercy of God. Believing that the sun will shine again is choosing faith over understanding. Life brings situations we cannot understand. However, we are more in need of God's mercy, than in need of understanding our life's situations. God loves us in spite of ourselves. The fogbound phases of life make it difficult to know what to do, or where to go. Yet, it is of little use to brood about foggy times because negative thinking gets us nowhere. If negative thoughts assail us, we need to change the endlessly running theories our mind keeps replaying, and think about the gifts and talents God has given us. By using them in new ways, they may lead to new growth, and new service to others."



is calculated based on our date of birth; the second is determined by the health conditions; the third is how old we feel we are. While we don't have control over the first, we can take care of our health with good diet, exercise and a cheerful attitude. A positive attitude and optimistic thinking can reverse the third age. Dr. P. Aloysius is of the opinion that many people feel unhappy, health-wise and security-wise, after the age of 60, owing to the diminishing importance given to them. But, it need not be so, if only we understand the basic principles of life and follow them scrupulously. He adds, "Like a dark fog, a sense of failure can be a common occurrence on the spiritual journey. No one is spared suffering, sickness, or failure. Failure and letdowns can be our teachers. When it seems like we are walking through a dense fog, God remains by our side. We keep walking in trust, and eventually find that our heavy-with-fog path may be life-changing." Fogbound times can confront us with truths about ourselves that we would rather not know, and see things about ourselves that we would rather not see. The mystery of God's actions breaks down our denials and defenses while opening us up to new and frightening challenges. The fog eventually lifts, and the warmth and the light of the sun will once again be ours."

During the hazy times of living, we can be encouraged by the prayer of Thomas Merton who wrote: "My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact, please you. I hope I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do, you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it." As I celebrate yet another year of God's gift of life to me I remember God's countless blessings on me and I say 'THANK YOU' God. I also say 'THANK YOU' to each of you who have been a part of my life. Please pray for me. **+Lumen, CSC**

EDITORIAL

"Let me have men about me that are..."



We step into the month of February wishing our dear Bishop happy birthday and many happy returns of the same.



We are going through lean times. There isn't much money anywhere. Even what used to be considered booming businesses and thriving enterprises got badly hit by the corona pandemic and its numerous ramifications. In times such as these the gap between the rich and the poor becomes unnervingly glaring.

being financially secure, but also about status, about self-confidence, and about elitist attitudes. There is even a market in Agartala called 'market of the *chakri* wallahs'! And it doesn't matter vegetables are costlier out there, some '*chakried*' insist on marketing only from there. Money is a small thing when compared to status after all! **contd.on pag2**



LINK wishes our beloved Bishop Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC a very HAPPY BIRTHDAY on 1st February, and pray God's abundant blessings on him.

The gap between the rich and the poor is seen also in the settings we minister. Most of the people we rub shoulders with belong to the economically weak category; but there are also some who do not belong to that category - the 'service-holders'. The nature of our ministries might require that we collaborate closely with the so-called service-holders, who are also undoubtedly better off, educationally and economically. It is true that for no fault of their own, they are also better equipped and positioned to influence policies and practices and parameters. That would be an asset for the institution, as long as they are sensitive to the lot of the poor and do not use their privileged position to push own agendas and ideas with ulterior intentions.

Such scenario is bad because the poor are not part of our inner circle; and far worse if those we surround ourselves with, lack sensitivity to those who are less fortunate. Are our parishes, institutions, and organizations being subject to back-seat driving by an unfeeling coterie of privileged few?

Ever since the infamous lockdown it has been tough going for all, especially the unemployed. Theirs is a pain that the employed, those who have been uninterruptedly drawing salaries even during lockdown period, need not necessarily understand.

We would be guilty of oppressing the poor if carried away by efficiency, class and speed, we forget to weigh our choices from the vantage point of the unemployed and the poor.

J. Pulinthanath, SDB

Parish News Briefs

KAMARANGA PARISH

Old Christo-Mela in new Wineskins

Kamranga Christo Mela (Christmas Fair) had been celebrated before Christmas every year since last



20 years. But the 21st Christo Mela was celebrated after Christmas in 2021. Many were skeptical about the decision of celebrating the Mela after the Christmas and were unable to detach themselves of the feeling of so called "good custom of celebrating it as pre-Christmas Celebrations!" The Parish Council meticulously evaluated and found that Pre-Christmas Celebrations has more disadvantage than advantage. People forget the advent preparations and whole community cannot participate in pre-Christmas celebrations. Parents are busy at home, children have exams and the Youth too are not present in the family. So the Parish Council decided to celebrate Christo Mela after Christmas and the result was that children, youth, students, parents and people participated and celebrated the Christo Mela well. Think out of the box...! *Fr. Arun Minj SVD*

GANDACHERRA PARISH

Parish Feast and Confirmations

St. Arnold Parish celebrated its parish feast day on 2nd January. People from all 14 *mothas* gathered



in large numbers to participate in the celebration. The program began with a ceremonial welcome accorded to our beloved Bishop Lumen who was honored with *risha* and taken to the parish church in procession. During the holy Eucharist our Bishop conferred the Sacrament of Confirmation to a large number of faithful. He expressed his happiness over the growth of the parish in terms of faith and numbers. The Bishop stressed on the need to be faithful to the church and attend services regularly. After Mass there was a short felicitation program during which our parish priest Fr. Prasad Rao expressed gratitude to the Bishop for his gracious presence. There was a short Parish Council Meeting after the fellowship meal to discuss the synodal plan of the Diocese.

Fr. Praveen Yeddapanalli

BODHJUNGNAGAR PARISH

Children's Day

On January 2nd at Tamakari one of the villages under Budhjungnagar Parish children's day was celebrated. "Let the little children come to me" was the theme for the celebration. Around 180 children were present for the



celebration which began with a Marian procession. The holy Mass was offered by Fr. Jayaseelen CSC the parish priest. Catechist Anando gave a short reflection about the love of Jesus for children. Later children moved to the ground to experience the togetherness and to exhibit their talents through dancing, singing, and games. All parents and youth gave their best in organizing this event. The day ended with the distribution of prizes.

Parish Feast Day

On 6th January our Parish celebrated the patronal Feast of Saint Andre. Due to the present scenario amidst covid-19 guidelines, the Parish Priest invited only the

Presidents and Secretaries of all the villages, few local faithful, the Sisters of Holy Cross, Adoration Sisters and the Fathers of Holy Cross. The celebration began with the Holy Eucharist presided by Fr. Joe Paul CSC. Three other Fathers joined him. In his homily he spoke about the life of Saint Andre as the miracle man of Montreal and his immense love for the Blessed Sacrament and devotion to Saint Joseph. He also invited us to imitate the simplicity and humility of Saint André. The day ended with a festive meal. *Fr. Jayaseelan, CSC*

PITRA PARISH

New Village Chapels Blessed

The month of December brought numerous blessings to Pitra Parish. Advent and the Christmas Novena were celebrated in a meaningful way as all had the opportunity for the sacrament of reconciliation and Holy Mass during Christmas; thanks to Frs. PJ, Blasius and Jonas who joined Fr. Sunny in the villages.

On 23rd December, Fr. Sunny blessed the new chapel of Kuar village. On 25th December, the new chapel of Makhuk village was blessed by Fr. PJ Joseph. On the same day Fr. Sunny blessed the new chapel of Puskini village. The parish community had helped in building these chapels.

On Christmas day, the MSMHC Sisters of Pitra and Udaipur along with the youth and elders joined Fr. Sunny for the celebration at Puskini village for the entire Zone. Clothes collected by the students of Don Bosco School Udaipur and Don Bosco Agartala were distributed.

The feast of the Holy Family was celebrated on 26th December at Twirupa village where members from the other villages of the Zone were present. Bishop Lumen blessed us with his gracious presence on the day. It was a joyful and meaningful celebration



which ended with dances, songs and a common meal for all. The Bishop also made a visit to Sukmohanpara village.

Once again on 28th December, Fr. Sunny together with the MSMHC Sisters from Pitra and Udaipur and many youth and some elders made a pilgrimage to Thum village where people believe that Mother Mary through her intervention is bringing many people to the faith. The 50 member strong group braved the walk through the steep and narrow paths up the hill and the youth were unstoppable. We had a very enjoyable Christmas celebration. After the Mass, our youth distributed blankets (which they themselves had sponsored) and clothes to all the people of the village. Br. Sagar Bandu Molsom spoke to the people and exhorted them to grow in faith.

Don Bosco Parish Nandannagar reached out to Bangphai and Nokoli, two of our needy villages, with blankets, *rignai* and clothes on 30th December. The Parish Priest, Fr Christopher, MSMHC Sisters, Parish Council Members and Women's groups spent the whole day in these villages to share Christmas joy.

On 5th January, the St Paul Zone youth committee organized a Bible Seminar at Makhuk where we had 35 youths. Fr. Sunny celebrated the Holy Eucharist and the MSMHC Sisters from Udaipur and Mr. David Debbarma from Pathaliaghat animated the youths. *Fr. Sunny with Sr. Theresa Sangma*

Diocese News Briefs

Twin Silver Jubilees celebrated

Holy Cross Unit, Panisagar, had a festive look on January 7, 2022 for it celebrated the twin Silver Jubilees of Holy Cross High School Panisagar and the Episcopal Ordination of Bp. Lumen Monteiro on that day. The two days celebration commenced with the blessing and



inauguration of the Jubilee Gate. Bishop Lumen blessed and unveiled the plaque while Fr. Simon Fernandis, C.S.C., Provincial Superior of Holy Cross NE Province inaugurated the Jubilee Gate. Thousands of parents, guardians, along with Fathers and Sisters accompanied the Bishop to the tastefully decorated stage for the cultural nite. The campus wore a colorful look with flags and festoons. Students of the school enthralled the audience with their creative and innovative presentations in the form of dance, drama and



mime. Three hours of scintillating music and spellbinding performance came to an end with the School Band singing the National Anthem.

The 2nd phase of the celebration began with a Thanksgiving Holy Eucharist with thirteen priests and hundreds of villages, hostel students and teachers raised their hearts in thanksgiving to God for the gift of Bp. Lumen to Tripura and Holy Cross School at Panisagar. After the Holy



Eucharist, Bp. Lumen blessed the memorial grotto and dedicated it to the people of the locality. Both days were days of joy and gratitude. A feeling of contentment and appreciation were reflected in all who took part in the entire celebrations.

Fr. Davis Konuran, C.S.C.

All Tripura Catholic Garo Assembly

January 9, 2022: Tripura Catholic Garo tribal assembly was organized in Kachuchara, Ambassa. The main theme of the congress was "Come to me all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest". The 3-days long gathering began on 7th with the inauguration by Fr. Ivan D'Silva, SVD the parish priest. Garos from different Parishes of the Diocese were gathered for the event. A lay brother from Tura was invited for the praise and worship and to speak in Garo language. Fathers Remol Marak SDB, Uthom Molsom SDB and Garo Sisters from different congregations working in the Diocese were present



for the program. On January 8th Fr. Ivan addressed the congregation on the main theme. On January 9th the assembly concluded with the Holy Mass by Bishop Lumen Monteiro the Local Ordinary. He was received with the traditional attire and taken to the venue in a procession. He praised the organizers for such a stunning and systematic event. The culmination of the event fell on the feast of the Baptism of our Lord and Bishop Lumen took time to instruct all on our own Baptism. After a felicitation program the annual assembly concluded with the grand lunch.

Fr. Ivan D'Silva, SVD

JUST News Briefs

SFOORTI Livelihood support

Livelihood support was organized by JUST for the SHGs in the month of December 2021. Total about 750 members benefited from the support. The support rendered by JUST was piglets, goat, chicks, rice mill, threads, vegetable seeds, etc. The livelihood was supported as to enhance their income generation activity and increase their income level. Through these livelihood process many SHGs member had started taking up small scale business activity such as, mushroom cultivation, seasonal vegetable cultivation and grocery shop etc. As the SHG women are trained by JUST in different ways, they are now capable of handling the small scale business activity and sell the product in the local market, through which they are able to meet their basic economic needs. *Mr. Cyril Darlong*



World News Briefs

Archbishop Tutu 'a beacon of truth and freedom' for the world



Despite his death at the age of 90, the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu remains a beacon of freedom and truth for South Africans and people across the globe. Among his many achievements, the Archbishop led the Truth and Reconciliation Commission set up to seek restorative—not retributive—justice for crimes committed during the apartheid era. The Catholic Bishop of Bethlehem in South Africa, Jan de Groef, was among those who recalled Archbishop Tutu as a "beacon" who "reminds us of our calling as shepherds." Speaking to Vatican News' Claire Riobe, Bishop de Groef said he hoped all Church leaders might be faithful as the late Archbishop was. "Archbishop Tutu was very

engaged for the truth and for freedom, recognizing each and every person's dignity," said the Bishop. The late Archbishop was also active in ecumenical efforts and maintained good relations with other denominations, including the Catholic Church. On the same day as his death, Pope Francis sent his condolences for the death of the "servant of the Gospel" and paid tribute to his "promotion of racial equality and reconciliation in his native South Africa." (*Source: Devin Watkins in Vatican News*)

Our Distinguished Guests

- Sr. Pavitra, CMC Provincial Superior from Bhopal
- Sr. Noel, CMC Vicar Provincial from Bhopal
- CMC Srs. Rosy CMC & Lissy, Provincial Team from Bhopal
- Sr. Biolinda, VSDB Superior General from Shillong
- Sr. Iaineh, VSDB Economer General from Shillong