



DIOCESE OF AGARTALA



Link

Lead Us Onward

Agartala Diocesan Newsletter

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Pastor's Corner Happy Independence Day



In 1947 India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had announced India's independence with his speech *Tryst with Destiny*: "Long years ago, we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom."

As we celebrate another anniversary of our country's Independence we are painfully aware that we are far from

that reality which Mr. Nehru had envisioned! One reason could be the wrong notion of freedom that we have—doing what we like. But as St. John Paul II would say, "Freedom consists not in doing what we like, but in having the right to do what we ought."

Another reason is that we tend to ask what are others doing for the country—our leaders, our neighbors, our soldiers—that is, what are they doing. Rather, than what am I doing. Flor McCarthy tells a story of one winter's day when a man came upon a small boy sitting begging on a wind-swept city bridge. The boy was shivering from the cold and obviously in need of a good meal. On seeing him the man got very angry and said to God: "God why don't you do something about this boy?" And God replied, "I have already done something about him." This surprised the man so he said, "I hope you don't mind me saying this, but whatever you

did, it doesn't seem to be working." "I agree with you there," replied God. "By the way, what did you do?" the man asked. "I made you" came the reply from God!

Each of us must realize that a lot of wrong we see in our country today is partly because of me. We must find out how it needs me to do my part in realizing this dream of making my country great. I wish you a Happy Independence Day and Happy Feast of the Assumption of Mother Mary. +Lumen, CSC



Link congratulates Fr. Paul Budi Kleden, SVD, the new Superior General and General Team.



Editorial CELEBRANTS OF SQUALOR



These days we are seeing the emergence of a group who seem to think their God-given mission in life is to gather dirt of all sorts, spread it and celebrate it with unparalleled glee and vigor. They take to social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp with astonishing fervor quite unmindful of the possible ramifications of their doings. Often it amounts to a sort of moral policing, which, no doubt, in itself, is a pleasurable activity, and also produces the illusion of setting oneself up on a moral pedestal for the world to see. The public domain in which such policing takes place also provides opportunities for like-minded legislators to pat each other on the backs and feel themselves 'not like the rest of humanity'.

At times it is more than mere moral

policing. It is mob lynching, the virtual version. Armed only with smart phone and net pack in place of iron rods and knives, it allows one to participate in a no-holds barred, free-for-all orgy that comes with the additional advantage of seeming anonymity and absolute 'freedom'.

Are these Whatsapp warriors and Facebook predators forgetting that besides helping to spread the stench of dirt to wider circles, such intolerance of fragility and vulnerability also encourages a compassion-deficit in society? Have we all forgotten the legacy given us by someone, who, we are told "does not break the crushed reed or snuff the faltering wick?" (Is 42:3)

The maturity and depth of a society's moral moorings can be gauged by the extent of its compassion and by its capacity to distinguish between weakness and malice. It doesn't really take a great deal of investigation to realize that weaknesses and failures have been part of human nature from time immemorial. By gleefully celebrating instances of other's failures and faltering aren't we perhaps giving away more of ourselves than we realize? The venomous remarks and rejoinders we publicly pass about other's foibles and frailties seldom



succeed in concealing deep-rooted hurts and helplessness we seem to be wrestling with somewhere deep inside us.

If instead of trying to address our inadequacies, we, vulture-like, keep swooping down on carcasses wherever they may be found, then, we too perhaps stand in need of an equal measure of understanding and pity. All such 'expose', however veracious, calls for sympathy not only for the one being exposed, but also for those who choose to fritter away their opportunities to be dignified and benevolent, on sleaze and squalor.

It's the month of August we have just stepped into, and it reminds us of 'freedom'. Have we mistaken true freedom for the rush of adrenaline we feel when armed with gigabytes we ain't sure how to spend? Saint John Paul II it was who said, "Freedom consists not in doing what we like, but in having the right to do what we ought."

J. Pulinthanath, SDB

KUMARGHAT PARISH

Parish Feast Day



This year the Parish feast Day was celebrated on the 1st July 2018. The parishioners were prepared for the Feast spiritually by having nine days Novena to St. Paul in their own villages. On the Parish Feast day we felt the presence of the Lord because all the other days there used to be rain and very hot. But on the Feast Day we had wonderful pleasant weather. The Feast day program began by hoisting of the Parish flag by our dear Bishop Lumen. He then presided over the Holy Eucharist which was concelebrated by many Priests from the nearby Parishes. After the Eucharistic celebration the faithful devotionally joined in the Eucharistic procession. Fr. Davis Konuran CSC led the Adoration with a inspiring homily followed by the cultural program. Fr. Aneesh Mathew CSC warmly welcomed every one. Bishop Lumen in his message appreciated the unity among the parishioners and he inaugurated the year long celebrations of the Golden Jubilee of Kumarghat Parish. The Feast day ended with a fellowship meal. *Fr. Arul J CSC*

NANDANAGAR PARISH

Confirmation & 1st Communion



Our annual celebration of the Confirmation and First Communion was once again marked by great joy and enthusiasm. A few months of preparation made the reception of the Sacraments more memorable for everyone. Bishop Lumen administered the sacraments to the children on 8th July 2018 in a simple but meaningful celebration. All the parents were also present and they had prepared themselves with confession along with their children.

Mothers' Day

The Maria Sangha (Women's group) is a



very active group in the Parish. Animation of the liturgy every Sunday, organizing prayer services, visiting the families, taking the utmost care that the Parish Church is always kept clean and tidy--one could continue to recount the numerous activities that they undertake! A significant day in the Parish calendar was 13th May, when Mothers' day was celebrated in a grand way. Fr. Lawrence Darlong celebrated the Holy Mass and had another hour of animation with them. The session and the discussion that followed energized the group to continue the parish activities tirelessly. The Bible quiz and the singing added vivacity and joy. Eagerness to learn and proclaim the Word makes the group enthusiastic and the Parish is much richer for that! *Fr. Sunny, SDB*

MOHARPARA PARISH

Youth Seminar



Immaculate Conception Parish moharpara organized a seminar for the youth of Twithampui zone on 15th July, 2018 with the theme Srwngdi, Rwnghi Pirdi. Fr. Laurence Darlong DYD and DEXCO members namely, Mr. Biswajit Tripura, Mr David Debbarma and Mr. David Debbarma were the resource persons for the seminar. The youth were touched and inspired by the different sessions like giving importance to the word of God and life experience shared by the DEXCO. Creative games and funs make the seminar interesting and a learning experience. *Fr. Arbok, CSC*

BODHJUNGNAGAR PARISH

Reminiscences from St. Andre Parish

St. Thomas Feast Day celebration: On 3rd July, St. Thomas Feast day was celebrated solemnly in one of the substations namely, Yacharai Village where St. Thomas is the patron of the church. The Holy Eucharist was presided by Fr. Binoy John CSC, the Parish Priest. He spoke about being rooted in faith like St. Thomas and

on the ways by which we attain faith. Parents' Day celebration for the school children was held after the holy Eucharist which ended with sumptuous meal.

Youth Adoration A Day with the Lord:

Youths from various villages of St. Andre Parish came together on 11th July for spending a day with the Eucharistic Lord in prayer and worship. Rev. Fr. Binoy CSC the Parish Priest along with Mr. Anando the Catechist lead the Youth into the realm of prayers,



praise and worship and Confession followed by Holy Eucharist. It began 9a.m. and ended at 4:30p.m. 40 Youths participated and gained spiritual strength through prayer and sacraments. The Youth were indeed happy and acknowledged the marvelous things that God has done in their lives.

Investiture Ceremony cum Fresher's Day:

St. Andre Higher Secondary School celebrated the Investiture



Ceremony cum Fresher's Day on 23rd July, 2018. Rev. Fr. Simon CSC, the Provincial Superior of Holy Cross N.E. Province was the Chief Guest of the day. Rev. Fr. Kanikai CSC was the Guest of Honor. The Chief Guest's speech was on enlightening the world through education which was enriching and thought provoking for all especially to the students and teachers. The Class XI Fresher's were cordially welcomed by Fr. Michael CSC, the Principal of the School. There was a cultural program in which the SPLs and all the committee Leaders had taken the Oath. The students, Dominic Thangianmuana and Ringumari Debbarma were elected as Mr. and Miss Andre 2018 in an Andre Contest and were crowned on this day.

Dn. Amalraj

Youth Camp and Fresher's Day 2018



On 14 July, 2018, Catholic Youth Camp and Freshers' Day was organized by ADYC at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral Hall for the Catholic Youth residing in Agartala. As many as 130 Youth mostly the college going students attended the program. The Theme for the Youth Camp was #Selfless #Selfie with the other sub theme that reflects the motive of the gathering, that is "Enrich life in an atmosphere of Friendship, Community, Prayer and Fun." During the Inauguration Program Rev. Fr. Michael CSC and Rev. Fr. Robert Mathias motivated and inspired the Youth with their thought provoking, relevant and insightful messages. Being the Fresher's Day all were welcomed and there was a selection of 'Mr. and Miss Fresher' based on the answer to the question: "How will you share your faith to others as a Catholic Youth?" Mr. Beiseia Darlong and Miss Jacinta Dkhar were selected. The day was filled with many other activities such as Animation, Group activities, games, competitions, and Praise and Worship. The Youth enjoyed the program while the DEXCO Members had their time fully occupied to facilitate the whole day program.

Sandhya Hranghawl, ADYC Secretary

HONOURING MR. SWAPAN DEBBARMA



Ambassa, 15 July 2018: Catholic Church, Ambassa honoured Mr. Swapan Debbarma (45) and his daughter Sumati Debbarma who had averted a

train accident saving hundreds of lives. The Parish Priest Fr. Ivan D' Silva along with parish leaders felicitated him in front of the congregation. On June 15, Swapan and Sumati were walking along the rail line at Ambassa in northern Tripura under Dhalai District when they saw that landslides following heavy rains had affected around a kilometre of the rail track. Debbarma immediately removed his wife's risa (shawl) which he was tying on his waist and waved them to stop the train. He was on the track and the engine driver had spotted him waving some reddish cloth. "The train stopped 10 meters short of the erosion spot" said Swapan. He was felicitated by number of government departments and NGO's for his remarkable work. The Parish honoured him with money and a risa.

Agartala airport renamed



The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, on 4th July gave its approval to rename the Agartala Airport in Tripura as 'Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya Kishore Airport, Agartala. The decision comes in the wake of the long

pending demand of people of Tripura as well as the Tripura Government for paying tribute to Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya Kishore. Agartala Airport was constructed in 1942 on the land donated by the Maharaja. As a visionary ruler, who had traveled extensively across the globe, he took several steps for the all-round development of Tripura. Due to his initiative, an aerodrome at Agartala was constructed and is today the second busiest airport in the North East and provides crucial air connectivity to Tripura. (timesnews)

JUST News Nuggets

Emergency Relief Work



Tripura faced nature's fury since May 2018. With the help of Caritas India, JUST extended its helping hand to support the affected families in the right time. Nearly 800 families have been supported by JUST in Khowai, West Tripura, Dhalai, Gomati and Unakoti Districts. As per the situation reports and spot assessment, people were in need of cash, cloth and utensils. According to their need, JUST distributed cash worth Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 2,000 per family to partially damaged and fully damaged respectively in Khowai and West Tripura Districts. Besides the cash, cloth items, mosquito nets, blankets, cooking and other utensils were distributed in Dhalai, Unakoti and Gomati Districts.

World Environment Day

On 5th June 2018 JUST celebrated World Environment day at Radhanagar English Medium School under Hezamara R.D Block, West Tripura. The theme was "Beat Plastic Pollution". Miss Larisa Debbarma was the Resource Person. There were 36 Farmers who participated in

the program. Awareness was given by the Resource Person on the theme Plastic Pollution. The Resource Person explained about the ill effects of using plastics, how it affects the environment, solution to plastic pollution and how to organize and hold a successful end pollution campaign in our society. She gave different examples to motivate and also to make the people to understand on plastic pollution.



Some of the points given for the solution to plastic pollution were shop friendly, get rid of bottled water, forget to go containers, educate business, get involved with the government on any level and recycle everything. To mark the celebration 20 saplings of Agar, 20 saplings of Chandan, 20 saplings of Magnum and 180 Herbal plants were planted in the School campus as well as at Mr. Sukuram Debbarma and Mrs. Anima Debbarma's land.

Mr. Cyril Darlong

Delhi launches 'happiness curriculum' to curb suicides

The Dalai Lama, Tibet's spiritual leader, helped to launch a new "happiness curriculum" at Schools in the Indian capital on July 2 as a mental health crisis looms along with a recent spike in student suicides. The state government in Delhi has made the curriculum mandatory at all of its schools, with meditation, lessons on moral values and other mental exercises now firmly entrenched. Education experts hailed the move as a crucial intervention to improve pupils' mental health. Data shows 25 students commit suicide every day in India. The number hit 8,934 in 2015, according to statistics from the National Crimes Records Bureau, and climbed to 9,474 the following year or more than one self-inflicted student death an hour... An official from the Catholic

Church, which manages the largest network of private schools in the country, welcomed the move. "Joyful learning is the key. We can overcome all of the issues with that," said Father Joseph Manipadam, Secretary of the Indian Bishops' Office. He coordinates a network of 50,000 Catholic educational institutions, including 400 colleges, six universities and six medical schools. "In India, students are overburdened with academic and examination-related pressure," he said, adding church-run schools have already made efforts to make education a more joyful experience. (CNUA)

Mother's milk bank benefits 20,000 infants

Aanchal, the mother's milk bank established in 18 District Government Hospitals of Rajasthan, has benefited about 20,000 infants and helped improve their nutrition levels. The

bank collects excess breast milk from lactating mothers and provides it to infants deprived of it. Rajasthan is the first State in the country to establish a government-run community milk banking system, following Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje's budgetary announcement for it in 2015-16. Infants with mothers who are unable to feed them due to clinical reasons, or those who are orphaned or abandoned, can receive mother's milk from the bank. Dr. Mamta Gupta, one of two private doctors from the State to bag the Prime Minister's Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan awards for rendering efficient services to pregnant women, said at a review meeting at the Swasthya Bhavan here that the milk bank system would be strengthened.

Mohammed Iqbal (The Hindu via CNUA)

Our Readers Write

Link of July 2018 successfully launched on the 1st day of July. My Inbox is blessed with the LINK.

Mariaraj, CSC, Meghalaya

Vow ...On time as usual...*Terrie, MSFS, Mumbai*

Thank you for the LINK. I appreciate sending it to my Inbox regularly on the first of the month without fail. *Fr. Emmanuel, CSC, Agartala*

Thank you for magazine Link.

+*Victor Lyngdoh, Jowai, Meghalaya*

I do read with much please and appreciation your monthly journal LINK. It is always on time!

Alan CSC, USA

LINK, the monthly event with all the interesting news from every nook and corner of the Agartala Diocese «moving forward» so regularly and reminding us that a new month has come in... For us old people, it is a treasure!

Conrad, CSC, Canada

Thank you Bishop for the Link. I think the Government was aware that 1st of the month is for the Link to go online, and therefore they ended the censure! *Sr. Clara, BS*

Enjoy reading Link as always. *Steve, Australia*

Thanks for the Link which really takes me back to Tripura every time I read it. Small booklet, volumes of wisdom. Miss everything in Tripura!

Fr. K. M. Allwin, Pulicat, TN

Bishop's Program for August 2018

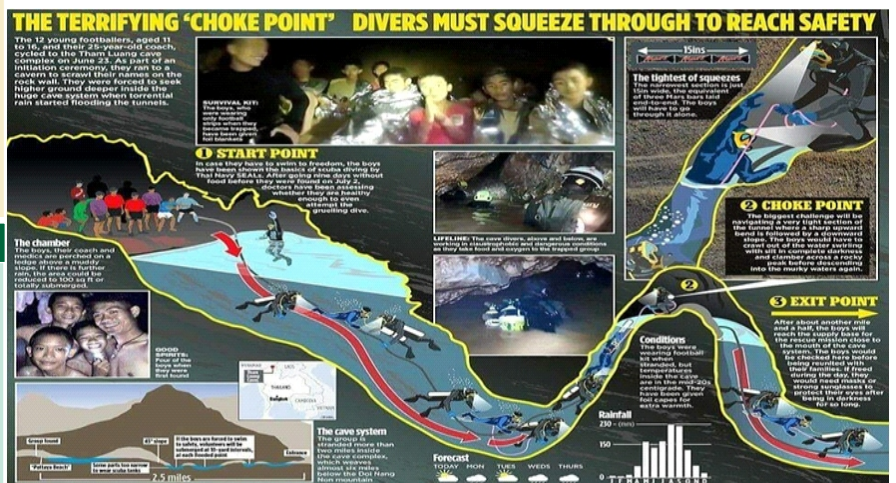
- 01-03: Episcopal Ordination, Borduria, Arunachal
- 04-06: Archbishop Installation, Ranchi
- 07: Clergy Meet, Agartala
- 08-11: DDC Conclusion, Puri, Odisha
- 11: Holy Cross College Graduation
- 12: Youth Sunday, Nandannagar
- 15: Independence Day, Gokulnagar
- 16: Meet with Fatima Regional Superior
- 18: Nurses AGBM, Agartala
- 19: Pastoral Program, Sindukpathar
- 21: Caritas India PSC Meet, Delhi
- 22-25: Caritas Field Visit, UP Region
- 26: Mariamnagar Parish Feast Day

World News Nuggets

Thailand Cave Rescue

The Moo Pa (Wild Boars) academy Team, whose ages range from 11 to 16, became trapped with their 25-year-old coach, Ekaphol Chantawong, inside the six-mile Tham Luang cave in the Doi Nang Non mountain range on 23 June. Nine days later rescue divers located the Team sheltering on a ledge surrounded by water. About two miles of narrow, flooded passageways separated their refuge from the main entrance. Efforts to pump water out began immediately as authorities tried to take advantage of a break in monsoon rains.

How did the rescue work? (See diagram below) Round-the-clock pumping paid off with conditions said to be walkable in some parts of the cave. But the rescue operation still hinged on the boys using scuba equipment despite having no previous diving experience. Each boy was to be accompanied by two divers with the rescuers facing an 11-hour round trip. After 18 days the final four boys and their coach were rescued from the cave to complete the three-day rescue operation. The last of the Wild Boars then followed their team-mates to hospital where they will be kept in isolation for up to seven days to avoid the risk of infection.



Our Distinguished Visitors

- Fr. Hector D'Souza, SJ, Socius from Guwahati
- Fr. Richie Vaz, SVD, from Bhubaneswar, Odisha
- Sr. Lynette, SJA Provincial from Bhubaneswar, Odisha
- Fr. Walter Fernandes, SJ, from Guwahati