



PASTOR'S CORNER

5th September: Feast of St. Mother Teresa and Teachers' Day

We celebrate **St. Mother Teresa on 5th September**. Celebrating Mother's Feast Day is celebrating love and compassion. In the Book, No Greater Love, Mother Teresa recalls going to the house of a family of nine that had not eaten in days. She wrote, "I saw the faces of those little children disfigured by hunger.... I gave rice to the mother. She divided the rice in two, and went out, carrying half the rice. When she came back, I asked her, 'Where did you go?' She gave me this simple answer, 'To my neighbors; they are hungry also!' I was not surprised that she gave poor people are really very generous. I was surprised that she knew they were hungry. As a rule, when we are suffering, we are so focused on ourselves; we have no time for others." Another time, Mother Teresa was about to travel to Ethiopia, which was suffering from a terrible drought. As she was preparing to leave Calcutta, she was surrounded by many children. "Each one of them gave something. 'Take this to the children! Take this to the children!' they would say.... A small child, who for the first time had a piece of chocolate, came up to me and said, 'I do not want to eat it. You take it and give it to the children.' This little one gave a great deal; he gave something that was very precious to him." On another occasion, she found a famished little child on the street who had not eaten for days. "So I gave her a piece of bread," she wrote, "and the little one took the bread and, crumb by crumb, started eating it. I said to her, 'Eat, eat the bread.



You are hungry.' And the little one looked at me and said, 'I am afraid. When the bread will be finished, I will be hungry again.'" Along with hunger for food, Mother Teresa was keenly aware of another hunger. She wrote, "A few nights ago we picked up four people. One was in the most terrible condition, covered with wounds, full of maggots.... I really did all that my love could do for her. I put her in bed and then she took hold of my hand. She had such a beautiful smile on her face and she said only, 'Thank you.' Then she died.... She was hungry for love, and she received that love before she died."

We also celebrate **Teachers Day on 5th September**. This is the birthday of India's former President, politician, scholar, philosopher and Bharat Ratna recipient, Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, who was born on this day in 1888. The main idea of celebrating this day is to honor the Teacher and focus on the teaching profession. No other profession, either medical or legal, has a day set apart to celebrate and honor the best among them. It is a unique honor awarded to the teaching profession in our country. A good teacher not only imparts knowledge to their students but they inspire, encourage and instill curiosity in them. Nicholas Sparks says about Teachers: "*They inspire you, they entertain you, and you end up learning a ton even when you don't know it.*" Teachers' Day is celebrated annually, a day when we acknowledge the professionalism, dedication and expertise of those responsible for educating our students. On this special day, I would like to thank all our Teachers for all your efforts to make our children better persons in life. Wishing all our Teachers a Happy Teachers' Day! **+Lumen, CSC**



EDITORIAL

Returning to School

Lockdown measures have considerably eased and most activities have resumed. Returning to school after what has been called the 'first extended closure of schools in recent history' is understandably a nervy affair for everyone concerned school authorities, the students and their parents. The anxiety about returning to school may not all be only SOP-connected: how to effectively ensure safety measures like sanitizing, physical distancing and mask-wearing, etc., all of which anyway the

schools will insist on and parents will worry about.



Our children and young people might need other kinds of support too to resume 'normal' life. It is possible that despite online classes and many laudable initiatives, such an extended closure of schools has 'interrupted' both their education and also their mental health and

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LINK wishes all our Teachers a Happy Teachers Day on 5th September. May the spirit of Christ the Teacher fill your hearts with the shalom of God.

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wellbeing. The deficit in curriculum coverage one can catch up with perhaps, but the other needs greater care to mend. On this front, no doubt return to school is the right direction as it is there that young people can and do seek support for their mental wellbeing.

We do well to recognize the increased levels of anxiety in households today, most of them related to the pandemic one way or other - financial worries, loss of job, career hiccups, general uncertainties about future, etc. The school going child or teenager who generally is oblivious about these adult anxieties has in these extended locked down homestays perhaps seen how worries affect the morale of the parents; they have perhaps seen, been involved even, in domestic violence, abuse, depression, loneliness, bereavements. Perhaps, these things have even rubbed off on the kids and made them more fragile and vulnerable, more scarred and hurt than before. There are other things to consider too like excess use of social media and mobile phone during the lockdown, being away from places of worship and religious services, etc. It is hard to think of these not adversely affecting the young, either.

Every young person that will once again enliven our campus will also make a silent plea for greater understanding and better hand-holding. There's no doubt it is an opportunity to add yet more value to the excellent service we are already rendering in our schools. An opportunity, so timely and felicitous, that it would be unwise to disregard it! *J. Pulinthanath, SDB*

DEPACHERRA PARISH

First World Day for Grandparents and Elderly

On 25th July, we celebrated the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly in Depacherra parish. Pope Francis has chosen the theme "I am with you always" for the first World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly. It was the

presence of our beloved Bishop Lumen Monteiro made the event more solemn with his presence at the Holy Eucharist, praying for the Elderly and thanking them for their life. 17 Grandparents and Elders were given special seating in the church. At the end of Mass, the Grandparents and Elders were honored with flower bouquet and a small gift from the Parish sponsored by the Youth. There were tears of joy in some of the grandparents to celebrate this event along with the Bishop solemnly. One of the grandparents spoke on behalf of the elderly in which he thanked the missionaries for their selflesswork in the Parish and School. *Bro. Chinnaiah*



National Youth Sunday Celebrations

8th August was a great day for the Youth of Depacherra.



Our joy was doubled as the Youth from Karbook Parish joined us. The day began with the Holy Eucharist presided by Fr. Michael CSC. Frs. Lawrence, Emanuel CSC and Francis CSC

were the concelebrants. The Youth welcomed the Fathers and the Sisters with bouquet and traditional *risha*. The candidates who cleared the Board Exams were also honored.

The atmosphere was absolutely full of excitement as the Youth organized a spontaneous program after the Mass, showcasing their talents through cultural and religious songs and stellar dance performances. Sisters through their comical skit reiterated the need to respect everyone. Fathers through a group song highlighted the need to love and devote ourselves to Jesus. Bro. Khakchang spoke on the Youth's relationship with the church. Nelson Uchoi a local Youth spoke about our role in society. The involvement of our parishioners through the football competition added additional joy. This National Youth day has instilled the feeling that we, the Youth, are an important part of the church.

Miss Agnes Uchoi (Youth Secretary)

AMBASSA PARISH

Medical Camp in partnership with OBS

Ambassa, 23 July, 2021: Holy Spirit Catholic Church, Ambassa organized a Medical Camp in partnership with Oisho Bani Society (NGO) and St. Joseph Hospital, Agartala. Dr. Gnanaraj Jesudian MS, Mch (Urology), FICS, FIAGES, FARSI (Association of Rural Surgeons of India & International Federation of Rural Surgeries & Project Lead, University of Leeds Project, Former Medical Superintendent, Burrows Memorial from Chennai) was here. consultations, Diagnostic



Christian Hospital, Alipur) During the Camp Urology cystoscopy, urodynamic study, Zoom consultations and appointment for future surgeries was done. Two days earlier a similar Medical Camp was organized at St. Joseph Hospital in Agartala. For specialized treatment patients have to travel outside the State and many cannot afford to journey. So Oisho Bani Society made it possible by bringing the specialized Doctor to Ambassa village. This Camp is made possible through the networking with like minded NGOs, for the poor and deprived sections of the Society.



First Holy Communion at the Parish

15 August, 2021 was the day of celebration for the parishioners who gathered in the Parish Church at Ambassa (Lalchari) at 8:30am. It was the Feast of the Assumption of Mary and the 75th Independence Day of our country. Fifty six children dressed in white came along with their parents to receive Jesus for the first time in Holy Communion. As the entrance hymn was sung the first communicants marched in procession to the church followed by Priests and Bishop Lumen Monteiro. Before the homily the children lit their candles and professed the baptismal promises. In his homily the Bishop called on the children and parents to receive Holy Communion reverentially. He also reflected on the solemnity of the Assumption of Mother Mary and our nation's Independence Day. The fifty six children came in line to receive the precious Body and Blood from the hands of the Bishop.



Ivan D'Silva, SVD

KAILASAHAR PARISH

Jesuits "Arrupe In" Inaugurated

In the Jubilee year (500th year of Conversion of St. Ignatius of Loyola) and on the occasion of the Feast of their Founder, the Jesuits in Tripura have opened their first residential house and christened it as "Arrupe In". ('In' in local Halam tribal language means 'House'.) Arrupe In is located in Jamtalibari Village, about 150 km north of the State capital Agartala. Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC inaugurated and blessed the house in the presence of local parishioners, religious and priests on 31st July.

'Arrupe In' focuses on the universal apostolic preferences of the Society of Jesus. The Jesuits have already a registered it into a Trust, Xavier Institute for Developmental Education (XIDE), and an integrated approach in intervention is being adopted.



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The Jesuits were happy to have had their Shepherd on the previous day who spent time sharing his vision and plans for the mission and the Diocese. The Jesuits assured him of their total and undivided support and cooperation. *IrudayaJothi (CCU)*

PITRA PARISH

New Parish and Parish Priest at Pitra

When St Joseph Parish Pitra was inaugurated on August 8th 2021 by Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC, in the presence of 22 Priests, 50 other religious Sisters and Brothers and hundreds of faithful, it marked the fruit of great apostolic labor and the humble



beginning of the 24th Parish of the Diocese. The first Catholics in the area were baptized nearly thirty years ago by the Holy Cross Priests from Tuikarmaw with the efforts of the MSMHC Sisters. The five villages in the Killa Block were handed over to Bishramganj Parish in 2007 and through the efforts of Fr. Sunny, then PP, the numbers grew there. Several communities, both Jamatia and Molsom, were added and at present there are 17 *mothas*. A small School was started at Pitra in 2013 to cater to the needs of the area and the MSMHC Sisters started staying there from that time onwards. Though the original tin shed remains, a three storied building is added and now there are nearly 500 students up to class X.

The function began with reading of the Decree of erection by Fr. Babu Stephen SDB. Fr. Remol Marak SDB, the Parish Priest of Bishramganj, from which the new Parish is bifurcated, welcomed the Bishop and the people. After the homily we had the Installation of the new Parish Priest, Fr. Joseph Palamthattel (Sunny), who made the profession of faith and received the keys from the Bishop.

The felicitation program consisted of welcome with *risa*, speeches and dances from several village communities. Then all were treated to a delicious meal prepared by the people. The meticulous planning for the program, the coordination of the works, the hard work by the people and the Sisters at Pitra and the generosity of everyone made it a wonderful day.

Fr. KK Joseph and Fr Sunny

COVID-19 Relief Work at St. Joseph School Gokulnagar

St. Joseph School at Gokulnagar arranged distribution of Dry Ration to 110 families in this time of Second Wave of Covid19 on 30th July, 2021. The dry ration consisting of Rice (10kgs), MasoorDal (1kg), Potato (1kg), Onion (1kg), and Mustard Oil (1/2L) were distributed to 110 families. The Parents, Teaching and Non-Teaching



staff and the School Management collectively made this distribution possible. The distribution was done in the presence of Mrs. SupriyaDatta, Sabhadhipati of Sepahijala District; Women O.C Mrs. Shiuli Das, Bishalgarh; Parents representative, Social Service Minister, Teacher and the School Management Member. The food items were distributed to 80 families in Sabarpara and Harishnagar Villages. The remaining 30

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bags were distributed to another 30 families in our School premises. In total 110 families benefitted from the ration distribution.

Vianney Day Celebrations at St. Joseph Home, Gokulnagar

The Diocesan Fraternity of Priests gathered at the newly inaugurated St. Joseph Home, Gokulnagar, on the eve of the Feast Day. It began with a Recollection animated by Fr. Bhuban Sarkar, followed by Holy Hour, Social and Dinner. On 4th August the day began with the Morning Prayer and was followed by the Holy Eucharist presided by Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC. His homily consisted of an inspiring message about the greatness of



Vianney and the holy life that a priest must live. He particularly stressed upon the responsibility of the priest in

shepherding the flock in the parishes, where he also highlighted about the need to listen, care, love, protect, observe and nurture the sheep spiritually. Above all you must be a holy and a happy priest, he said. Shortly after the Holy Mass all the DF including Bishop were facilitated with bouquet of flowers, risha, gift and a greeting card. This was followed by a Meeting on the mission and ministry. The celebration ended with the sumptuous fellowship

meal shared together.

Bro. SubraiJamatia, Regent

110 Families helped by Suknachari Catholic Community

In collaboration with Manos Unidas (Spain) and NavJan (A People's Empowerment Trust run by the Claretian Missionaries in Northeast India), the Catholic community of Suknachari (KarbookParish) distributed



dry ration kits to 110 needy families in Suknachari Panchayat on 29 July under the guidance of Fr. Janardhan Munnelli CMF. The distribution of the dry ration kits took

place in NabachandraPara and AikyamogPara. Each kit contained 15 kgs of rice, oil, daal, sugar, atta, vegetables, N95 masks, sanitizers, etc., and was worth more than a thousand rupees. The MLA of Karbook Constituency Mr. Burba Mohan Tripura was the Chief Guest. In his message he appreciated the work of the Catholic Church and invited everyone to follow the path shown by Jesus in loving and helping the people in need. Fr. Allwin, the PP of Karbook Parish, expressed his solidarity with the needy brethren. Fr. Janardhan CMF assured that such gestures of love to the people in need will continue. The Officer In-charge of Silachari Police Station and the local village heads appreciated the gesture by the Claretian Missionaries.

Fr. JanardhanMunnelli CMF

JUST distributes Oxygen Concentrators supported by Caritas Germany via Caritas India

On 8th July 2021 Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST), a partner Organization of Caritas India received three Oxygen Concentrators. These Oxygen Concentrators are supported by Caritas Germany to avail lifesaving equipment to the poor and marginalized communities who cannot afford these expensive services. In an accelerated effort to expand access to oxygen care, Caritas India with the help of Caritas Germany is ensuring the provision of oxygen concentrators across different parts of the country.



JUST Networking with NGOs in Tripura

On 27th July 2021, Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) organized a Meeting with different reputed NGOs from Tripura at its Office Hall, Agartala. 21 participants from the National Integrated Forum of Artists and Activists (NIFFA), Sadbhavna, Wings of Hope Foundation, ASHA Holy Cross, Bethany Dispensary Kathalcherra, Maharaja BirBikram Club, Khumulwng, TRIBAC, Oisho Bani Society, SubraiVidya Mandir, and Tripura Times also participated in the meeting. The Resource Persons were Mr. JaydipChakrabarti Journalist of



Tripura Times and Mr. Pratap Datta from TRIBAC. Fr. Jeevan Kennedy SVD, the Director of Oisho Bani Society moderated the meeting. At the end of the Meeting Bishop Lumen Monteiro distributed the Oxygen Concentrators to three NGOs namely, NIFFA, SubraiVidyaMandir, and Bethany Dispensary. He said, "apart from the Oxygen Concentrators, Caritas India through JUST and ASHA is in the process to reach 1,450 families with medical kits and 5,000 Hhs with dry ration."

JUST Distributes Dry Ration

On 2nd, 5th and 8th August 2021 Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) in collaboration with Caritas India distributed dry ration to 200 families at Maharaniipur, Tulashikhar, Khumulwng, Jogendranagar and Bhuban Chantai Para under Khowai and West



Districts. During the distribution programs BajjalbariParish and likeminded NGOs like NIFFA, Maharaja Bir Bikram Club, Khumulwng and Wings of Hope Foundation helped in distributing the dry ration. The JUST Staff shared on the importance of getting vaccinated, to wash hands frequently, maintain social distance and always to use masks. *Mr. Cyril Darlong*

- Sr. Annie Varghese, SCC Provincial from Guwahati
- Sr. Deepa, SCC Economer from Guwahati
- Sr. Helen Lourduswamy, SAC Provincial from Bengaluru
- Sr. Berchmans, SRA Provincial from Mumbai

OUR DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

- Sr. Crystal Tuscano, SRA Provincial Economer from Mumbai
- Fr. JomonKaippadakunnel, VC Provincial Counselor from Kottayam
- Sr. Marcella, AC Provincial from Kolkata



As I know him!



As a shepherd, Bishop Lumen is a transformative leader who walks the talk. As a young regent, I witnessed him beginning the Diocese of Agartala, starting from bare bones. At that time, there were just 11,000 Catholics in 9

Parishes. Today, 25 years later, we have 24 Parishes and a Catholic population of over 50,000. Thank you, Bishop Lumen, for your untiring efforts and teamwork.

Now, I am thrilled to see the way the Diocese is moving true to its motto: "Lead Us Onward," by providing Pastoral and Educational ministry, Health and Healing Ministry, Youth Ministry, Women's Empowerment, economic and human development activities, Self-help Groups, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Peace Initiatives, Ecumenical and Dialogue, and so on.

As a mentor, friend, and guru, Bishop Lumen guided me over my formation years. As my spiritual director and mentor during my tough years of discernment in the mission in Bodhjungar, his counsel and wisdom guided my path to priesthood. When I thought the going was getting tough, he advised me: "Pinto, if you grow in the fire, you will not fade in the sun." Those words still ring in my ears.

Bishop Lumen has a tremendous capacity to keep



calm amid turmoil. In 1991, I was traveling with him to Shillong for the first time by night bus during a period of unrest. When our bus stopped for a curfew, and we were left on the side of the road with no safe place to go, Bishop (Father at that time) Lumen remained calm as he tried to work out a ride with a taxi going our way. The next morning when we arrived in Shillong, we saw people on the roadside with long knives while army men making 'flag march' in a few other places. Only then did we learn that there were riots in the city and many people were killed. Father Lumen knew all this but had remained calm so that I would not be frightened. And I had been calm because he was with me, and he was calm!

Personally, and professionally, Bishop Lumen has given me some good goals: to lead better, to get really good at something, to give more than you take, to cherish defeat as much as victory, to lead a life of meaning and purpose, to get rooted in prayer, to give more than you receive, to cherish tears as much as laughter, and to lead a life with and for Jesus.

I offer my best wishes and prayers to you dear Bishop Lumen. Continue to "Lead Us Onward" as you have in the past twenty five years, and be a beacon of hope to the people of Tripura.

Fr. Dr. Pinto Paul, C.S.C.

International Director of Family Ministries, Stonehill, USA

Bishop Lumen: A missionary, guide and fatherly figure.



I feel highly honored for this opportunity to share a few memories of Bishop Lumen Monteiro on the occasion of his Silver Jubilee.

My earliest memories of Bishop Lumen dates back to 2001 when I was

a KG II student at Holy Cross School Depacherra. I still vividly remember how it was an auspicious moment every time he graced us with his presence. On the days of his visit, the whole campus would spring to life with excitement, and the students would enjoy interacting with Bishop.

In 2010, I had my first personal interaction with Bishop when he provided me the opportunity to pursue my education in Noida, along with another student from St. Arnold School Gandacherra. This was a turning point in my life for which I am truly grateful. Never having seen life beyond village and school, my parents were unsure of sending me away to Noida. I still remember how Bishop patiently explained and assured them of my well-being. My fondest memory would always be of the day Bishop dropped us at the airport, explaining the dos and don'ts, just like a father sending away his



children to a new place.

Further, whenever in Delhi, Bishop would always take out time to visit and check on how we were doing. He brought such positive energy and warmth that even other students in the hostel would be keen on interacting with him. On one of his visits, Bishop had treated the students to his euphonious voice and guitar and impressed everyone with his lively performance.

All the instances where I had the privilege of interacting with Bishop were pure joy and filled with immense learning as he would always leave a key message. I am forever grateful to Bishop for the love, support, and guidance he has extended to me.

I would like to once again extend my heartiest congratulations to him for completing 25 years of moulding, shaping, and leading the Diocese of Agartala, transforming it into what it is today with thousands of believers. It must not have been an easy journey but definitely worthwhile. I believe that Bishop with his love for the people and exemplary leadership will take the church to even greater heights.

Biswanath Reang

MBA Student, Faculty of Management Studies, University of Delhi

Ex Student Holy Cross School Depacherra