



Pastor's Corner

Overwhelmed, grateful, shaken, hopeful – all of it at once!



A few days ago I wrote a letter 'from my heart' to my people on the occasion of the Pearl Jubilee. Today, ten days later, days before my birthday, it would be appropriate if I said a letter 'from my blocked heart'. I had to undergo a heart procedure right before my birthday... that is like a second chance in the most literal sense. It makes total sense to feel overwhelmed, grateful, shaken, hopeful—all of it at once.

Just days ago, my heart was found to be in danger—something unseen, serious, and mercifully discovered in time. What felt like an ordinary appointment turned out to be providential. A blockage I didn't know I was carrying was opened, and with it, a future that could have closed quietly was given room to continue. I celebrate this year with deeper gratitude—for life, for timing, for the hands and decisions that helped protect a heart still meant to beat.

Ten days before my birthday, I learned how fragile and how protected life can be at the same time. A visit I almost didn't think much of led to a discovery that likely saved my life. A 90% blockage, an angioplasty, a stent; and suddenly my birthday feels less like a marker of age and more like a marker of grace. I step into this new year aware, humbled, and grateful—for providence that intervened, and for a heart that has been given more time to live and love.

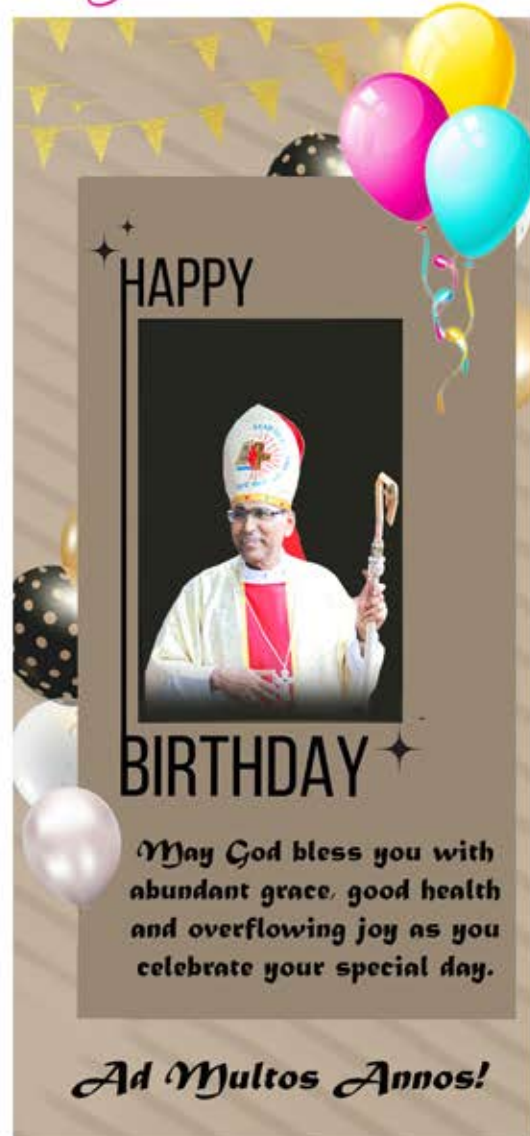
O Lord, You have been my refuge and my strength. In Your hand You have preserved my heart and opened a way when danger was near. I lift my voice in thanksgiving for this day of life, for the mercy that meets me at every turn. I thank you Jesus, the Great Physician, for guiding the hands and decisions that protected my heart. I enter another year of my life not by my own strength, but by grace, entrusting my life more fully to Him who gives and sustains it.

I have always been a grateful person. Today again I give thanks to God for the gift of my life and vocation; but this time it is extra special because God saw the peril hidden in my heart and made a way for healing. I recall the happy memories and thank God for my precious life, the many blessings, and the numerous wonderful people who have entered my life and enriched me. The Lord has been my shepherd through another year, and I am thankful."

+ Lumen, CSC

1st February

LINK Wishes Our
Bp. Lumen Monteiro, CSC



Wishes for
Good Health and Prayers
for Our Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC



Editorial



J. Pulinthanath, SDB

On the occasion of the Pearl Jubilee, Bishop Lumen's message invites the Diocese to look ahead with hope and responsibility. By emphasizing faith formation, promotion of vocations, and care for our common home as key priorities, he calls the People of God to transform shared dreams into concrete action for the future of the Diocese.

Of 'Collective Dreams' and 'Unfinished Projects'!

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of our Diocese, Bishop Lumen has shared a reflective and forward-looking message with the faithful through a pastoral communiqué entitled "On the 30th Anniversary of the Diocese: Bishop Speaks to his People." In this message, the Bishop looks back with gratitude on the journey of the Diocese, acknowledges the challenges and blessings encountered along the way, and invites the People of God to renew their commitment to the mission entrusted to us. His words serve both as a moment of thanksgiving and as a call to move ahead with hope, unity, and deeper faith as we step into the future together.

Of particular significance in the Bishop's message is the section devoted to the Diocese's "collective dreams" and "unfinished projects." He identifies three priority areas that demand our common attention and commitment: faith formation, the promotion of vocations to the priesthood and religious life, and responsible care for our common home.

The Bishop's emphasis on faith formation as the foremost priority for the future is both timely and perceptive. Over the past thirty years, the Diocese has grown from modest beginnings to a stage of encouraging maturity. This very growth now calls for a more systematic, well-planned, and sustained approach to faith formation, especially for children and young people. While the challenges in this field are many and complex, they cannot be allowed to discourage us, for faith formation lies at the heart of our vocation to be true and credible witnesses of the Good News.

The promotion of vocations to the priesthood and religious life presents another set of challenges, particularly in the context of shrinking family sizes and the pervasive influence of a secular, consumerist, and materialistic culture, even in the remotest corners of our state. Yet, this area is not without signs of hope. The recent ordination of three young men from our State is a heartening reminder that the Lord continues to call and that generous responses are still possible. At the same time, this hopeful sign urges us towards a more focused and collaborative effort to nurture and promote local vocations.

The third priority, care for our common home, places the Diocese firmly within a global movement of concern for the planet and for the consequences of human insensitivity towards creation. With its various pro-environment and "go green" initiatives, the Diocese has already taken commendable steps in this direction. The urgency of ecological responsibility lends special relevance to this priority and challenges us to remain vigilant, creative, and committed in safeguarding the gift of creation.

As the Diocese celebrates its Pearl Jubilee, it is indeed commendable that our shepherd has clearly identified these focus areas for the road ahead. The insights drawn from thirty years of pastoral leadership merit our serious reflection and wholehearted response. This Jubilee year invites every member of the Diocese to join hands with Bishop Lumen, so that these "collective dreams" and "unfinished projects" may be transformed into living and lasting realities for the future of our local Church.

LENTEN GUIDELINES



Weekdays of Lent take precedence over Memorials of Saints.



Votive Masses for the Dead are not permitted.



Ash Wednesday: Day of Fast & Abstinence.



Ashes: "Repent, and believe in the Gospel."

• Te Deum & Gloria only on Solemnities and Feasts



Alleluia is always omitted during Lent.



No flowers on the altar. Music only to support singing.



Marriages should reflect the penitential spirit of the season.



No Gloria, No Creed.

• Masses for Needs & Occasions only if truly necessary.

Baijalbari Parish**Blessing of St. John Paul II Parish Church**

The St. John Paul II Parish Baijalbari witnessed a historic and grace-filled moment on the 14th January 2026 with the solemn blessing of the parish church by Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC, DD. The sacred ceremony was conducted in an atmosphere of deep faith, joy, and thanksgiving, marking an important milestone in the spiritual journey of the parish community. The blessing ceremony was graced by the esteemed presence of Fr. John Zosiama SDB, Provincial of the Shillong Province, Fr. K. J. Abraham CSC, Holy Cross Provincial of the North East Region, and Fr. Paul Panachikkal SDB, the Parish Priest. A large number of priests, religious sisters, and lay faithful from Baijalbari parish as well as from nearby parishes gathered to take part in the auspicious occasion, reflecting the unity and vibrant faith of the local Church. In his homily, Bishop Lumen highlighted on the significance of a parish church as a living house of God, emphasizing that while the structure is made of stone, the true Church is built on the faith, unity, and love of the people. He encouraged the faithful to draw inspiration from St. John Paul II, whose life of courage, compassion, and unwavering faith continues to guide the universal Church today. The bishop also thanked and congratulated Fr. Paul and the parish community for the magnificent work in building a beautiful sanctuary of worship.

After the Holy Eucharist and blessing, a short felicitation program was held at Don Bosco School Auditorium. The event was marked with a meaningful and colorful cultural performance. As a sign of respect and welcome, the dignitaries were honored with traditional Risas, presented by Fr. Paul. As a sign of love, gratitude, and appreciation, mementos were also presented to the dignitaries, as well as to the Novitiate companions of Fr. Paul and his family members from Kerala.

Cl. Bankitlang Lyngkholi, SDB

Amarpur Parish**Triple celebration at Amarpur Parish**

Amarpur Parish witnessed a joyous and historic triple celebration on 4 January 2026, marking the Feast of St Francis de Sales, the Feast of St Joseph Vaz, and the Silver Jubilee of Catholic presence at Tingoria village. Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, presided over the Holy Eucharist, adding spiritual depth to the celebration. Over 300 faithful from various substations participated with devotion and gratitude. In his homily, the Bishop highlighted the lives of the two saints, calling the faithful to humility, service, and missionary zeal. Cultural programs and thanksgiving mementos followed, strengthening unity and joy among the parish community.

— Fr. Lijeesh Mathew, MSFS

Gachirampara Parish**Family gathering to conclude the Jubilee Year 2025**

St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Gachirampara, joyfully celebrated the closing of the Jubilee Year 2025 with a Parish Family Gathering on 28 December 2025 at St. Thomas Catholic Church, Monacherra. The celebration began with the Holy Eucharist presided over by the Parish Priest, who delivered an inspiring homily on the Holy Family, emphasizing faith, love, and unity. Singing and dance competitions followed, bringing parishioners together in fellowship. The gathering concluded with gratitude to God and renewed commitment to faith and service.

— Fr. Arun, OFM Cap.

Bodhjunnagar Parish**Children's Day Celebration**

The Parish Centre at Bodhjunnagar hosted the Annual Children's Gathering on 1 January 2026, bringing together around 550 children along with their parents. The celebration began with a Prayer Service, combined with the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. Fr. Robert Mathias, CSC, the resource person, highlighted the importance of healthy parent-child relationships. The well-organized program included the Eucharist, Bible quiz, stage performances, and prize distribution. Members of the co-pastoral team and religious from five congregations participated in a spirit of collaboration. The day-long event fostered joy, faith, and togetherness among children, youth, and parents alike.

— St. Andre Mission

Kamaranga Parish**Deanery-level Seminar at Kamaranga**

Kamaranga (Tripura), 11 January 2026: Mrs. Kimi Halam, the Deanery-level Secretary for Ambassa, organized a meaningful gathering of Women from four parishes at St. Raphael Catholic Church on 10 and 11 January 2026. The program saw maximum participation on the second day. At 9:30 a.m. on 11 January, Fr. Ivan D'Silva, SVD, Parish Priest and Dean of Ambassa Deanery, celebrated a special Holy Mass for the intentions of all the Women of the Deanery. Sixty-eight Women from different parishes took part in the gathering, along with Sr. Veronica, Diocesan Secretary of the Women Commission.

After the Eucharistic celebration, Fr. Ivan addressed the participants on the deeper meaning of the Sacrament of Baptism. He explained that Baptism not only cleanses original sin but also calls every Christian to live the threefold mission of King, Prophet, and Priest. He encouraged the Women to exercise leadership in family and Church life, boldly witness to God's truth, and live the Word of God in daily life. The workshop concluded with the election of a new Deanery-level Women's committee.

— Fr. Ivan D'Silva, SVD

Kumarghat Parish

Annual Parish Sabha at Masli Garo I



St. Paul's Parish, Kumarghat, held its Annual Parish Sabha at Masli Garo I from 16th to 18th January on the theme "Family Renewal: Connect, Engage and Grow." About 180 delegates participated in the three-day program, while nearly 300 parishioners from across the parish joined the gathering on Sunday. Fr. Leenus VC served as the main resource person, accompanied by Sr. Shalini CMC, offering valuable inputs on strengthening family life. The Sacrament of Reconciliation was made available with the help of Frs. Clement CSC, C. V. Jose CSC, and James SJ. The Sunday Eucharist was celebrated by the Parish Priest, Fr. Lancy D'souza CSC, who highlighted the importance of family prayer and mutual understanding. The Sabha concluded as a spiritually enriching experience, renewing the parish's commitment to strong and faith-filled families.

Fr. Francis Xavier CSC

Inauguration & Blessing Garo III Village Chapel



A moment of great joy and blessing was witnessed at Garo III Village with the inauguration of the new chapel, St. Francis Xavier's Church on the New Year Day. The chapel was solemnly inaugurated and blessed by Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC, the Bishop of Agartala, marking a significant milestone in the faith journey of the local Christian community. The faithful gathered in large numbers to participate in this historic occasion, expressing their gratitude to God for the gift of a new place of worship. The presence of the Bishop added special significance to the event, as he encouraged the community to make the new chapel a center of prayer, fellowship, and Christian witness.

Fr. Francis Xavier CSC

Ambassa Parish

Christmas brings joy to the needy at Ambassa



Christmas celebration was creative and unique at Ambassa parish. Parishioners of all sub-stations gathered in the parish on 21st December to celebrate Christmas. The celebration began with holy Eucharist in the Church at 10am, followed by Christmas carol competition where young and old danced together. Prizes were given away for the best carol and cribs. At least 45 poor and needy people were given blankets. Blankets and statues were distributed to the people of Ganganagar mission as well. At least 6 silver jubilarian couples were blessed and honored on the holy family feast Holy Eucharist. Home-made bread brought by the parishioners was shared among the people.

Fr. Arun Minj SVD

Ganda Twisa Parish

Parish level BEC Training of Trainers for mondali Leaders



Parish level BEC (Training of Trainers) for the mondali leaders was held under the leadership of Fr. Sebin Kunnappallil, the Asst. BEC Commission Coordinator of the Diocese of Agartala on 18th January 2026, at St. Arnold Parish, Gonda Twisa. Mr. Ashim Uchoi from Depacherra parish served as the resource person for the parish level TOT 2026. There were 42 participants who attended the Basic Ecclesial Communities parish level training seminar. The BEC parish level training seminar for the mondali leaders, with its emphasis on a pastoral approach, proved to be the optimal way of embodying the Church in the contemporary context. The key aspect of the Seminar was BECs as the Church in the neighborhood. The Seminar also touched upon the significance of the Seven Steps Gospel Sharing. Alongside that, participants were introduced to other methods like Bible enthronement and Bible procession. The Seminar provided valuable insights into the functioning and importance of BECs in the modern world. The training program helped the mondali leaders to become BEC animators in their own respective mondalas to help the faithful to grow in love for the Word of God and for BECs, the new way of being Church. The seminar ended with a community meal.

Fr. Sebin K

Jubilee Year of St. Francis of Assisi (1226 - 2026)



Prayer for Lent



Lord Jesus, during
this season of Lent, help us to:

- turn back to you with all our hearts,
- grow closer to you through prayer,
- fast from whatever separates us from you, and to reach out to others in acts of charity.

May our journey be one of
conversion and renewal.
Amen.



PRAY

"For me prayer is a guide of
the heart.
It is a simple look turned
toward heaven. It is a cry of
recognition and of love
embracing both trial and joy".
St. Thérèse of Lisieux

FAST

"When the stomach is full it is
easy to talk of fasting".
St. Jerome

GIVE

"I know that true charity
consists in bearing all our
neighbours' defects-not being
surprised at their weakness,
but edified at their smallest
virtues".
St. Thérèse of Lisieux

Priestly Ordinations: A moment of Grace, Faith, and Thanksgiving



The Diocese of Agartala, Tripura, joyfully commemorated the priestly ordination of three Deacons on January 3, 2026. This sacred celebration marks a significant milestone in the life of the Diocese and stands as a powerful sign of God's abundant grace and blessings upon the local Church. The Ordination ceremony was held at Christ the King Parish, Depacherra, bringing together clergy, religious, faithful, and youth from across the Diocese as well as North-East region in a spirit of thanksgiving and prayer. The new priests are:

Fr. James Kaipeng from Moharpara Parish - first priest from the Kaipeng tribe, ordained for the Diocese of Agartala. Fr. Khakchang Uchoi from Depacherra Parish - first priest from the Uchoi tribe, ordained for the Diocese of Agartala. Fr. Sagar Bandhu Molsom, S.D.B. from Pitra Parish, second Priest from Molsom tribe. Bishop Lumen Monteiro, C.S.C., D.D., Bishop of Agartala, ordained the three Deacons to the priesthood marking a profound blessing for the Church in Tripura. The people expressed gratitude to God for the gift of these dedicated ministers. The faithful continue to pray that the Lord may inspire and raise many more priestly vocations in their State for the service of God's people.

Fr. Derrick Augustin

Teachers' Training Workshop held at Holy Agartala



A three-day Teachers' Training Workshop was held from January 15 to 17, 2026, at Holy Cross School, Agartala, organized by the Holy Cross Educational Foundation (HCEF) in collaboration with ASHA Foundation, Bangalore. The programme brought together 123 teachers from 44 Schools across Tripura. The Workshop focused on helping teachers better understand adolescent growth and development, strengthen classroom management skills, and support students in facing real-life challenges with confidence and resilience.

The inaugural function was graced by Rev. Fr. K. J. Abraham, who emphasized that education should aim at the formation of the whole person and highlighted the vital role of Teachers in shaping responsible young people. Fr. George Jacob, CSC, Secretary of HCEF, underlined the importance of such training programmes for empowering educators and expressed gratitude to ASHA Foundation for their collaboration. The interactive sessions, led by experienced resource persons from ASHA Foundation, made the Workshop enriching and meaningful. The programme concluded with a renewed commitment to continuous teacher formation and holistic education.

George Jacob, CSC

Holy Cross Hr. Sec School Karbook at the GRAND FINALE Competition in New Delhi



The Students of Holy Cross School Karbook, located in an interior region of Tripura, came forward with great enthusiasm and determination by expressing their keen desire and interest to be part of the *Girls Brass Band Team*. Despite limited exposure and resources, these students, within a short span of one year, learned the art of brass band performance and displayed remarkable excellence. Through constant practice and dedication, they mastered their instruments and presented performances marked by great discipline, harmony, and melodious coordination, complemented by impressive and well-synchronized formations.

Their inspiring journey began at the State Level where they secured first place in the entire State of Tripura and progressed to the Eastern Zonal Level, where they also secured First Place, and culminated at the National School Band Competition Grand Finale held at National Bal Bhavan, New Delhi.

Out of 800+ teams from across India, only 80 teams qualified for the Zonal Level, and from these, 16 top teams reached the Grand Finale. The Holy Cross School Karbook Girls Brass Band, proudly emerged as one among them. At the national stage, the Team achieved an admirable 4th place and received the Consolation Prize, presented by the Honourable Minister of Defense. This achievement stands as a powerful testimony to the students' passion, perseverance, and unity, as well as the committed guidance of their mentors and the steadfast support of the institution.

Fr. Antony Balan



Pope Leo's Prayer to St. Francis of Assisi

Saint Francis, our brother,
you who eight hundred years ago went to
meet Sister Death as a man at peace,
intercede for us before the Lord.

You recognized true peace in the Crucifix of
San Damiano,
teach us to seek in Him the source of all
reconciliation that breaks down every wall.

You who, unarmed, crossed the lines of
war and misunderstanding,
give us the courage to build bridges
where the world raises up boundaries.

In this time afflicted by conflict and
division, intercede for us so that we may
become peacemakers:
unarmed and disarming witnesses of the
peace that comes from Christ.
Amen.

Awareness campaign builds Climate Resilience among Farmers in Gomati District



An awareness campaign was organized to help Farmers living in disaster-prone areas cope with floods and droughts caused by unpredictable climate conditions. The programme focused on building resilience and supporting farmers to protect their livelihoods while improving farm income in a sustainable way. The awareness session was organized by Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura and was attended by 60 progressive farmers from Poangmogbari and Shibuhari of Gomati District. During the session, Farmers received basic awareness on climate change and how it is affecting agriculture through irregular rainfall, floods, droughts, and soil damage. The Resource Persons explained simple and practical steps Farmers can take to reduce risks, such as better water management, crop planning, soil care, and the use of climate-resilient farming practices. The training also highlighted how sustainable farming methods can help farmers increase productivity and profit while protecting natural resources. Farmers actively participated in discussions and shared their own experiences of climate challenges. The campaign helped Farmers understand the importance of preparedness and adaptation. It encouraged them to adopt climate-friendly practices to secure their farms, incomes, and future livelihoods despite changing climate conditions.

Value Addition Training Empowers Women towards Financial Independence



A three-day training program on value addition was organized at the Fishery College as an initiative to promote financial independence among women, especially single women. The program was organized by JUST with the aim of strengthening skills and creating income opportunities for Women. 15 Women participants from various SHGs across Tripura attended the training, making it a diverse and enriching learning experience. During the three days, the Women received hands-on training on the preparation of different food items, basic food processing techniques, value addition methods, and safe packaging practices. They also learned about maintaining quality, hygiene, and shelf life of products. The sessions helped participants understand how raw agricultural and local products can be converted into market-ready items with higher value. Trainers explained simple methods that can be easily adopted at home or through small group enterprises. Such trainings benefit Women by increasing their confidence, improving technical knowledge, and opening doors to self-employment. They also encourage entrepreneurship, promote local resources, and support sustainable livelihoods. By gaining practical skills, Women can start small businesses, contribute to household income, and move towards long-term financial stability and independence.

Robert Lushai

Our Distinguished Guests

- Fr. Shijo Kanjirathamkunel CM, from Mysore
- Bishop Denis Auxiliary of Miao Diocese
- Fr. Paul Pudussery CSC from Guwahati
- Fr. Thomas Pereira CSC, from Mizoram
- Dr. Ruban, Dean of St. Aloysius Mangalore
- Fr. Cyprian Pinto SVD, from Tezpur
- Fr. Charlie McCoy CSC, V. President of HCFM, USA
- Ms. Lisa Gulino, Director Peyton Institute, USA
- Fr. Pinto Paul CSC, International Director HCFM, USA
- Fr. Sebastian Thundathikunnel, VC Provincial from Kottayam
- Fr. Stanislaus Chinliankhup, Rector of Oriens, from Shillong

Bishop's Program for February 2026

- 02-11: CCBI & CBCI Meetings @St. John's Bangalore
- 12-14: SDFI Meet, Bhubaneswar
- 15: Parish Program Agartala
- 17: Clergy Meet
- Consultors Meet
- 18: Ash Wednesday
- 21: Blessing of School Annexe @ Depacherra
- 22: Happaia Chapel Blessing, under Depacherra Parish
- 24-26: CHAI Board Meeting, Secunderabad
- 27-10 March: Medical Break @ St. John's Bangalore