



Pastor's Corner

15 August: Celebrating India's Independence Day

India gained independence from British rule on 15 August 1947 after a long and determined freedom struggle. The movement was led by great leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru,

Their sacrifices and efforts helped India achieve freedom through courage, unity, and perseverance. Independence marked the beginning of a new era of democracy and self-governance. Every year, we celebrate Independence Day by hoisting the national flag, singing the National Anthem, and paying tribute to our freedom fighters. These traditions are important because they remind us of our history and strengthen our sense of national identity. But the question we must ask ourselves is: How can we celebrate Independence Day meaningfully in 2026?

Seventy-nine years after independence, India has grown into one of the world's largest democracies and has made remarkable progress in science, technology, education, healthcare, agriculture, infrastructure, and economic development. Our achievements in areas such as digital innovation, space exploration, and entrepreneurship reflect the nation's resilience and potential.

However, the journey towards becoming a truly developed and inclusive nation is still ongoing. These challenges are not obstacles to our future but opportunities to work together and build a stronger nation. Today, India stands at an important moment in its journey. As our PM Modi reminds us, we aspire to build Viksit Bharat 2047—a developed India by the centenary of our independence. This vision is not merely about becoming a larger economy or building taller buildings. It is about creating a nation where growth is inclusive, opportunities are accessible, institutions are strong, innovation flourishes, and every citizen can live with dignity. This vision cannot be achieved by governments alone. It requires the energy, creativity, and commitment. As responsible citizens, we all have a role to play by respecting the law, protecting the environment, promoting harmony, and contributing to our communities. The true spirit of independence lies not only in celebrating our freedom but also in fulfilling our responsibilities.

India's greatest strength is its diversity. Our country is home to many languages, cultures, traditions, and faiths. Celebrating Independence Day should remind us that unity does not mean uniformity. It means respecting one another despite our differences and working together for the common good. In today's digital age, meaningful patriotism also means using technology responsibly. We should verify information before sharing it, avoid spreading misinformation, communicate respectfully online, and use digital platforms to promote knowledge, innovation, and positive social change.

As we celebrate 79 years of independence, let us renew our commitment to the ideals that inspired our freedom movement. Let us dream boldly, work diligently, and serve selflessly. If each of us contributes in our own way, we will help build an India that is more inclusive, innovative, sustainable, and compassionate. Happy Independence Day!

15 August: Celebrating Mary's Assumption

On the 15th of August, we celebrate the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a joyful reminder of God's promise of eternal life. The Church teaches that at the end of her earthly life Mary was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory. Her Assumption is not only a privilege given to her as the Mother of Jesus but also a sign of hope for all believers, pointing to the destiny that God desires for His people. Mary's life was marked by faith, humility, courage, and loving service. Her response to God's call—"Let it be done to me according to your word"—became the foundation of her discipleship. She remained faithful through moments of joy and suffering, standing beside her Son even at the foot of the Cross. Celebrating Mary's Assumption invites us to look beyond ourselves and to live with hope. In a world often marked by conflict, uncertainty, and self-interest, Mary's example encourages us to trust in God, care for those in need, seek justice, and remain faithful in our daily responsibilities. Happy Feast of the Assumption of Mary!

+ Lumen, CSC

15 August

HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY

Let us remember the sacrifices of our freedom fighters and pray for the unity, peace and progress of our nation.

Feast of
ASSUMPTION
OF THE
BLESSED
VIRGIN MARY

"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."
— Luke 1:46-47



EDITORIAL

J. Pulinthanath, SDB

Beyond the Barricades!

Our nation has just faced a major youth protest over leaked exam questions. Young people came out on the streets at various places in the country, angry and vocal, showing the world thereby that young people care about fairness and that they are not afraid to stand up when their future is threatened. 'Their future', they also know, is intrinsically connected to knowledge. Take away from them the advantage and integrity of that knowledge, and you have taken away their right to lead tomorrow's India. They know it is worth being angry about.

Even if for academic reasons alone, we could attempt to draw parallels between these interesting facts regarding youth and the youth ministry we carry out in the Church.

If one were to randomly ask a Catholic young person in our diocese or parish preparing for NEET or any competitive exam, something from their syllabus, chances are they will know it thoroughly; more than one would expect, perhaps. Ask him or her what is meant by 'temporal punishment of sin' or 'sanctifying grace' or 'perfect contrition', or 'erroneous conscience' or even 'the structure of the Mass'... Well..., one shouldn't be judgmental, but chances are, that a blank stare or an embarrassed shrug is all that might come by way of a response.

The students who agitated at great cost, were agitating against the possibility of such a gap in their lives, even if, caused not by their doing, but by the negligence of the system. Whatever or whoever the cause, they knew it would spell doom for their career and so they rightly agitated against it.

In our case, the problem is no one is protesting this gap, or losing sleep over it; neither youth themselves nor we who say we are engaged in youth ministry. We make the right noises, though. We call the youth not the future, but 'the present' of the Church, in various ways - through the banners and flexes we print, and homilies we preach. Truth be told, we indulge in wishful thinking when we tell them they are the future of the Church, leaders of faith communities. We ourselves well know that a person who does not know what they stand for, cannot lead anything, let alone a faith community which demands more than mere intellectual or theoretical knowledge of faith. How can one expect a person to defend, pass on or live fully a faith he or she has not known or experienced first-hand?

Youth is precisely the time of their life when young people ask the hardest questions - about life, love, self, relationship and God. What they have gleaned in their school days from the few minutes we half-heartedly squeeze out from a packed curriculum and allot for Catechism on school-days or out of a program-packed Sunday, may not be sufficient to answer their questions. Finally, the loudest voice on the social media could become the one source they turn to for answers and for their religious convictions.

How do we approach this scenario? What do we do? Faith, of course, is never a matter of mere intellectual assent. If it were, mere introducing Bible study groups, youth-led discussions, apologetics sessions and the like as compulsory elements of the parish calendar would have perhaps solved the problem. But along with these or even before these, we need something, something that will make them 'experience' the treasure that Jesus is. Once they truly 'experience' that treasure they will themselves go to any lengths to make faith and knowledge of faith an integral part of their lives.

J. Pulinthanath, SDB

His Holiness Pope Leo XIV has appointed

Rt. Rev. Albert Hemrom,
Bishop of Dibrugarh, as
Coadjutor Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Guwahati.

The announcement was made on **July 16, 2026.**

Congratulations

The Diocese of Agartala congratulates
the archbishop-elect and pray for his
new ministry.



HOLY FAMILY PARISH TWIDU

**Establishment of Twidu Parish
and the Installation of the first Parish Priest**



On Sunday, 5 July 2026, a grace-filled and historic programme was held at Twidu marking the establishment of Holy Family Parish and the installation of its first Parish Priest. The celebration brought together clergy, religious, faithful, and guests for a solemn and prayerful Holy Eucharist, which was presided by Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC, Bishop of Agartala, in the presence of Fr. Abraham Kochupurackal, CSC, Provincial Superior, and nine other priests. A large number of faithful and Sisters participated in the beautiful and well-organized celebration.

Bishop Lumen Monteiro first blessed the church, the altar, and the Tabernacle, and declared that St. Joseph Church would henceforth be known as Holy Family Church, Twidu. On the same occasion, Fr. Arbok Lyngdoh Lyngkhoh, CSC was installed as the first Parish Priest of Twidu Parish. A new parish, the twenty-eighth, has thus been established in the Diocese of Agartala and entrusted to the care of the Holy Cross Fathers. Holy Family Parish with its centre at Twidu, has been bifurcated from Moharpara Parish and comprises the monodis of Dilarampara, Sonkhola, Singling, Twicholong, Twichakma, Baktomohan, Gamaku, Nelsi, Dhanlekha, Dakmura, Palku, Palku Colony, Sontang, Nupangrumva, Gondaek, Twidu, and Debendra.

After the Eucharistic Celebration, a felicitation programme was held, followed by a sumptuous meal for all present. The historic event will remain a cherished milestone for the Diocese, Congregation of Holy Cross and the faithful of Twidu and the surrounding monodis. It stands as a visible sign of the Church's growth and her continuing mission to bring pastoral care, spiritual nourishment, and hope to all.

Fr. Sahaya Lourdu Raj CSC

ST. PADRE PIO PARISH DAMCHERRA

**Establishment of a new Parish
and Installation of the new Parish Priest**



A historic milestone for the Diocese of Agartala was celebrated on 12 July 2026 with the canonical erection of St. Padre Pio Parish, Damcherra, and the installation of Fr. Paul Olwyn D'Almeida, OFM Cap. as its first Parish Priest. The solemn Holy Eucharist was presided over by Bishop Lumen Monteiro.

The celebration began with a welcome by Fr. Arun Fernandes, OFM Cap. Fr. Lancy D'Souza, CSC, Vicar General, officially read the decree erecting the new parish, while Fr. Vincent Monis, OFM Cap., Provincial Delegate, read the appointment letter of the first Parish Priest.

The occasion was graced by 19 priests, women religious, and a large gathering of faithful from across the region. During the felicitation, Fr. Lancy reflected on the Church's growth in Damcherra, Fr. Paul expressed his gratitude and commitment to pastoral service, and Fr. Vincent thanked everyone who contributed to the celebration. The vote of thanks was delivered by Fr. Arun Fernandes.

The cultural program featured traditional performances by the Chorei, Reang, Kaipeng, and Debbarma communities, followed by a fellowship meal. The establishment of St. Padre Pio Parish marks a significant milestone in the history of the Diocese of Agartala during its Pearl Jubilee celebrations. May St. Padre Pio continue to intercede for the new parish.

Fr. Arun Fernandes, OFM Cap.

CHRIST THE KING PARISH DEPACHERRA Deanery level Leadership Training



Christ the King Parish hosted the Depacherra Deanery Leadership Training Program for parish leaders and catechists on 22 July 2026. The one-day formation program brought together 120 participants from various parishes under the theme, "Called to Lead, Formed to Serve, Sent to Evangelize."

The first session, "Effective Catechesis in Today's World," led by Fr. Lawrence Darlong, focused on communicating the faith effectively to children, youth, and families while remaining faithful to the Church's teachings. The second session, "The Vocation of a Church Leader and Catechist," presented by Fr. Antony Balan, reflected on servant leadership modeled on Christ and the qualities of an effective Christian leader.

Participants actively engaged in group discussions, sharing pastoral experiences and practical ways to strengthen parish life and catechetical ministry. A special session on Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs) emphasized establishing new BECs and revitalizing existing ones as centers of prayer, faith formation, participation, and evangelization.

The program concluded with a renewed commitment from all participants to serve the Church with dedication, foster collaboration in their parishes, and become effective witnesses of the Gospel through servant leadership.

Fr. Derrick Augustin

ST. JOSEPH FREINADEMETZ PARISH GANGANAGAR

**Erection of the new Parish,
Installation of a new PP,
and Blessing of Janssen Bhavan Training**



The Ganganagar mission was started in the year 2018 in view of catering to the people of Ganganagar in their faith and educational formation. In the coming years, six substations were established as part of the Ambassa Parish, bordering to Ambassa, Chailengta, Gondatwisa and Twithampui parishes. On 19th July 2026, the Ganganagar mission witnessed the twin historical events of the official erection of Saint Joseph Freinademetz Parish by Bishop Lumen Monteiro, and the Inauguration and blessing of the Priest's residence, Janssen Bhavan. The grace filled historical events were witnessed and attended by Fr. Jeevan Kennady SVD, Regional Superior, India Guwahati Region, SVDs, Priests and religious from different communities and parishes, and the faithful from the neighboring parishes of the Diocese. The events of the day unfolded with the inauguration and blessing of Janssen Bhavan, followed by the declaration of the establishment of Saint Joseph Freinademetz parish and felicitation of priests, religious and invited distinguished guests by giving of the picture of St. Joseph Freinademetz. On this occasion, as well as in memory of Tenth Death Anniversary of the beloved father of Fr. Jaibu Mathew, an Electric Auto Rickshaw was sponsored by the family members and was donated to Mr Rabindra Reang, a parishioner of Ganganagar. This was followed by a solemn and grace filled Holy Mass, where Fr Jaibu Mathew, SVD was installed as the first Parish Priest of St Joseph Freinademetz parish. After the holy Eucharist, there was a short cultural program and the felicitation of invited guests. The day concluded with a sumptuous fellowship meal prepared by the faithful.

Fr. Amit Soreng, SVD

Bishop's Pearl Jubilee at St. Joseph School Gokulnagar



The celebration of the Pearl Jubilee of Most Rev. Bishop Lumen Monteiro, C.S.C., held at St. Joseph School Gokulnagar, was a landmark event honouring his dedicated leadership as the founding Bishop of the Diocese of Agartala. The choice of venue held deep significance, as St. Joseph School itself stands as a direct fruit of Bishop Lumen's vision. In 2012, recognizing the need for quality education in the Gokulnagar region, he personally initiated the acquisition of the land and started a School. What began under his guidance with modest beginnings and classes taught under open trees has now grown into a premier ICSE-affiliated higher secondary institution.

During the program at St Joseph School, teachers and students came together to express gratitude for his 30 years of episcopal ministry. The event featured a thanksgiving ceremony, cultural presentations by students, and tributes highlighting how his shepherding transformed local education, pastoral care, and community development across Tripura. For St. Joseph School, hosting the Pearl Jubilee was both a proud moment and a testament to Bishop Lumen's lasting legacy in shaping the future of young minds in Gokulnagar.

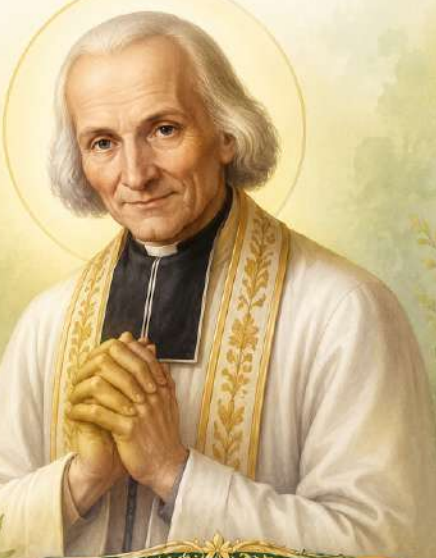
Br. Jubilee James

LINK

wishes its Readers

Happy Feast of
St. John Mary Vianney
(Patron of Priests)

“
The Priesthood
is the love
of the Heart
of Jesus.
— St. John Mary
Vianney



Grateful to our Priests
for their selfless service.
Let us pray for them always.

News from Across India

Some reflections on what the CJP may say about India's future



[The Cockroach Janta Party, CJP], it's an unusual political phenomenon that blends satire with serious civic demands. It emerged in 2026 after controversial remarks about unemployed youth and rapidly gained attention online before evolving into a broader youth-driven movement. Its founders describe it as a vehicle for accountability, electoral reform, media pluralism, and greater political representation for ordinary citizens, though it has also faced government scrutiny and debate over its influence.]

The CJP reflects frustration rather than just humour. The "cockroach" metaphor appears to have resonated because many young Indians feel overlooked despite being highly educated, digitally connected, and ambitious. Whether or not people support CJP's proposals, its popularity suggests that concerns about employment, governance, and political responsiveness are significant.

Digital politics is becoming increasingly influential. CJP demonstrated how social media can rapidly transform satire into organized political engagement. This creates opportunities for civic participation but also raises questions about misinformation, authenticity of online support, and sustainable offline organization.

Its manifesto highlights institutional reforms. Proposals such as stronger electoral accountability, increased women's representation, limits on media concentration, and stricter anti-defection rules focus more on institutions than on traditional ideological divisions. Whether these proposals are practical or desirable is open to debate, but they point toward public interest in governance reforms.

India's future will likely be shaped by its youth. With one of the world's youngest populations, India faces both an opportunity and a challenge. If economic growth creates enough quality jobs, improves education, and strengthens institutions, the country could benefit from a demographic dividend. If those aspirations remain unmet, movements expressing political dissatisfaction—whether established parties, new movements like CJP, or entirely different organizations—may continue to gain traction.

Ultimately, CJP can be viewed less as a prediction of India's political future and more as a signal. It suggests that many citizens, especially younger ones, want greater accountability, better economic opportunities, and institutions they perceive as more responsive. Whether CJP itself becomes a lasting political force or mainly influences the broader political conversation will depend on its ability to translate online attention into sustained civic engagement and concrete policy impact.

Courtesy TOI

Promoting Arts and Crafts in Learning Centres under Karbook



Promoting arts and crafts in learning centres under Karbook plays a vital role in the overall development of children by enhancing creativity, emotional intelligence, and problem-solving skills. Integrating activities such as sculpting, painting, paper crafts, clay modeling, kite making, and paper toys into the learning process encourages children to think creatively and explore new ideas beyond textbooks. These activities stimulate brain development, nurture innovation from an early age, and provide students with meaningful opportunities to express their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Arts and crafts also serve as a therapeutic outlet, helping children reduce stress while enjoying the learning process. Students actively participate in group art projects, promoting teamwork, cooperation, and the sharing of ideas. Working together on creative tasks helps them build communication skills, appreciate different perspectives, and develop a sense of belonging. Using natural materials such as clay and recycled paper also encourages environmental awareness and respect for traditional craftsmanship and sustainable practices. Arts and crafts create a positive and engaging learning environment where children gain confidence, strengthen their self-esteem, and discover their unique talents. By making learning enjoyable, these creative activities inspire curiosity, encourage collaboration, and transform learning centres into vibrant spaces where every child feels valued, motivated, and eager to learn.

Leadership Program Empowers Single-Headed Women in Paharpur



On 19 July 2026, JUST organized a Leadership Development Program at Paharpur village under Amarapur as part of the Socio-Economic Empowerment of Single-Headed Women project. The program brought together 62 single-headed women to strengthen their leadership skills and encourage active participation in community development. The session was facilitated by Mrs. Momita Reang, Faculty Member at NIELIT, who motivated the participants to recognize their abilities as leaders both within their families and in society. She emphasized that women should actively engage in entrepreneurship to become financially independent while making the best use of locally available resources and community funds. Mrs. Reang also encouraged the women to participate in community development initiatives and contribute to local decision-making processes. She urged them to take full advantage of the various training programs, awareness sessions, and livelihood support provided by JUST, applying the knowledge and skills gained to improve their livelihoods. The program inspired participants to become confident leaders, embrace new economic opportunities, and contribute towards building stronger, self-reliant, and inclusive communities.

Robert Lushai

Pope's Intention August 2026



For evangelization in the city.

Let us pray that in large cities often marked by anonymity and loneliness we find new ways to proclaim the Gospel, discovering creative paths to build community.



Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network
INDIA



"Go into all the world
and proclaim the Gospel."
(Mark 16:15)

Our Distinguished Guests

- Fr. Sijo, CSC, from Australia
- Sr. Mary David, FS, from Guwahati
- Fr. Sherin Anthony ISCH Provincial from Alwaye
- Fr. Thejus ISCH Councillor from Bangalore
- Sr. Sheen Maria, SD Provincial from Ghaziabad
- Sr. Pauline, SD Finance Councillor from Ghaziabad
- Fr. Jeevan Kennady, SVD Regional Superior from Guwahati
- Sr. Rose Celine, BS Superior General from Mangalore
- Sr. Mariette, BS General Councillor from Mangalore

Bishop's Program for August 2026

- 19-22: Episcopal Silver Jubilee of Cardinal Cleemis @ TVM
- 24: Return to IXA
- 26: Pearl Jubilee celebrations @ SCV Baijalbari
- 27: JUST GB & AGBM @ Damdamia
- 29: Pearl Jubilee celebrations @ Montfort Dukli
- 30: Dem Dum Chapel Blessing under Kathalcherra Parish