



## Pastor's Corner

### Priests should become Digital Missionaries



The month of April this year opens with the Holy Week. On Holy Thursday, the day of the institution of the priesthood, we will remember and pray and felicitate our priests. I was reflecting on my priesthood and the pastoral challenges faced by priests today, especially with the rapid rise of digital media and gadgets. While these tools offer new opportunities for evangelization, they also create complex spiritual, moral, and relational difficulties.

Constant exposure to smartphones, social media, and entertainment can weaken people's attention spans and reduce time for prayer, silence, and reflection. Priests often struggle to guide the faithful toward interior life in a culture addicted to stimulation. Traditional parish life is built on personal relationships, but digital culture promotes virtual connections. Many people feel "connected" online yet remain spiritually isolated. Priests must find ways to rebuild an authentic, face-to-face, Christian community.

Fr (Dr) Victor Ferrao of Jnana Deepa Pune says, "One of the foremost hurdles is fostering spiritual growth amid constant interruption. Pastoral care traditionally involves guiding parishioners towards introspection, prayer, and communal worship. Yet, in a world where attention spans have shrunk to eight seconds, priests struggle to hold focus. Youngsters, "chained by the poison of pleasure," arrive at youth meetings or catechism classes with minds fragmented by notifications." A priest might preach on the virtues of silence and contemplation, only to see teens surreptitiously checking their phones during Mass.

Today, the "attention industry"--fueled by social media giants like Instagram, TikTok, and X--has turned entertainment into a velvet prison says Fr Ferrao. "Young people, in particular, find themselves chained

to screens, scrolling endlessly for dopamine hits of likes, shares, and viral validation. In this context, Parish Priests face profound challenges in providing pastoral care, ministering to souls ensnared not by chains of iron, but by the invisible threads of digital delight."

In the digital age, everyone has a voice. Priests are no longer seen as primary sources of truth. People turn to influencers, YouTube, or online forums. This challenges clergy to present the Gospel in a more engaging, credible, and intellectually grounded way. Media gadgets are not only a problem—they are also a mission field! Priests are called to use social media responsibly, share homilies, teachings, and encouragement online, and engage especially with youth where they are present. But many priests lack training or feel overwhelmed by technology. Priests must learn healthy digital boundaries while remaining pastorally present.

Despite these challenges, hope endures. Priests must learn to innovate says Fr Ferrao. "Digital detox Retreats, tech-savvy homilies, and apps for prayer harness technology for good. Emphasizing community over isolation can counteract screen-induced apathy. Education on media literacy, rooted in Catholic social teaching, empowers parishioners to discern truth amid noise."

The age of media gadgets is not simply a crisis—it is also an invitation. Priests are called to become digital missionaries, guiding people to encounter God amid noise and distraction. The challenge is to use technology without being used by it, and to bring timeless truths into a rapidly changing world. Happy Priesthood Day.

Holy Week will lead us to Easter Sunday. Just as Christ rose to new life, we too are called to live with renewed faith, courage, and hope. Alleluia! Happy Easter.

+ *Lumen, CSC*

## Editorial

### ‘Whereof One Cannot Speak’



As we step into the month of April, we find ourselves amidst the Holy Week celebrations. The things we remember and celebrate during Holy Week are very deep and meaningful. They are the centre of our faith and remind us of the sacrifice, redemption and new life that

Jesus gave us through his suffering, death and resurrection.

One of the challenges that liturgical ministers who use Kokborok, which is one of the languages used for liturgy in the Diocese, is finding the words to explain profound and theologically rich spiritual realities to the faithful. This is because the impoverished lexicon that Kokborok has is simply inadequate to take on the kind of theologically deep and liturgically expressive concepts we come across in Holy Week liturgy. The challenge is, how does one find the right word, when it does not exist at all? To complete the distressing scenario, add to it, our mere surface-level knowledge of the language too!

We are tempted to turn philosophical and wonder if not having the right words make it harder for people to experience the meaning of our faith? Do words that are not quite right help or do they hurt our faith and its celebration on occasions like the Holy Week?

The truth is complicated. On the one hand it seems not having the right words can make it harder for one to

grasp the significance of the mystery. On the other hand, we know that our faith is a gift from God and not something we can get just by using the right words or being smart. We have probably come across people who are not good at talking or writing but they have a strong and real faith in the Lord. Their faith is not weak even if they do not have words to say. Our own personal experiences have shown us that sometimes not saying anything - crying or making gestures can say more than words.

This does not mean that words are not important because they can help us understand better what we believe. While God can work in inexplicable ways, we are still supposed to do our part by trying to find ways to talk about, teach and celebrate our faith in the Lord. As ministers of the Word, we use words to talk about our faith but we also know that no matter how hard we try we can never fully explain the mystery of God. We also know that when we do not understand everything and even when we do not have the right words God is still with us. The Holy Spirit keeps working in our hearts helping our faith grow in ways that we cannot explain.

May the celebration of the Paschal Mystery this Holy Week help us, ministers of the mystery and our faithful, to encounter Him most profoundly in the quiet spaces beyond words. Happy Easter.

***J. Pulinthanath, SDB***

**CATHEDRAL PARISH****BEC Training Program for Leaders at SFX Cathedral Parish**

A half-day training program for the Small



Christian Community (SCC) Presidents, Secretaries, and Sisters-in-charge of St. Francis Xavier Cathedral Parish,

Durjoynagar, was held on 3rd March 2026 at St. Joseph Hall. The program began with welcome address by Parish Priest Fr. George. S who welcomed the resource person and the Presidents, Secretaries, and Sisters-in-charge of SCC. The objective of the training was to strengthen the SCC and equip leaders to animate SCC activities in their respective zones. The resource person, Fr. Amalraj, conducted practical sessions on the vision, structure, and functioning of SCCs in parish life. He highlighted the

importance of SCCs in promoting faith-sharing, family prayer, community bonding, and active participation in the Church's mission. He also guided participants on organizing SCC meetings and leading Gospel sharing. The session was interactive, with participants sharing experiences from their zones. The program concluded with a vote of thanks by the Parish Secretary Mrs. Jaba Debbarma.

**Mrs. Jaba Debbarma**

**KAMARANGA PARISH****Outreach brings Light to Prisoners Lives**

**Kamaranga (Tripura):** Fifteen Catholic leaders from Kamaranga, Ambassa, and Khumulwng Parishes visited Kamalpur Sub-jail, where they handed out sweets to the inmates. Earlier, Mr. Milan Halam from Kamaranga Parish had coordinated with the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) and Jailor Mr. Amar Krishna Debbarma to

secure permission for the visit, and they approved today's date.

The group gathered at Kamaranga Parish for Sunday Mass before heading to the sub-jail. The Jailor greeted them warmly, gave an overview of the facility and its amenities. "This isn't a place of punishment," he emphasized, "but a home for rehabilitation."

The prison officer introduced the Catholic leaders to the inmates and invited Fr. Ivan D'Silva, SVD—the Parish Priest of Kamaranga—to share a few words. Fr. Ivan said, "You've heard 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,' but today's laws aim to help us reform ourselves—which is why prisons exist as places of correction, like friends' homes." He went on to discuss managing anger through yoga, particularly pranayama, which aids in regulating

emotions. Next, Dr. Asok Debbarma, another active catholic leader, delivered a detailed session on health and substance abuse. He covered various intoxicating substances, with special emphasis on drugs, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and HIV. The inmates included people from Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and a few women from Bangladesh. Dr. Asok emphasized, "Our body is a temple that we must keep pure, for life is sacred and we should honor others' lives too." Finally, Jailor Mr. Debbarma expressed gratitude to the Catholic leaders for their valuable talks and the sweets they provided. The group hoped to take a photo with the inmates, but security protocols prevented it.

**Fr. Ivan D'Silva, SVD**

**Empowering Leaders: Faith-Driven Training**

Kamaranga (Tripura): St. Raphael Parish in Kamaranga held a one-day leadership training session for lay leaders. The focus was on equipping men leaders to guide

Small Christian Community (SCC) groups, various associations, and to serve as responsible stewards overall.

Over 50 men leaders from the parish's sub-stations attended. Fr. Ivan D'Silva, SVD, the parish priest and resource person, kicked off with a role-play illustrating how to confront daily challenges. He posed the question, "Is there anyone here without problems?"—noting that rich or poor, literate or illiterate, everyone faces them. He emphasized, "The key difference is that true leaders don't flee from problems; they face them head-on and grow stronger."

He then asked participants to rate the parish's overall functioning out of 100.

After lively debate, they settled on 25. The group split into five teams for a workshop, tasked with discussing: "How can we raise this low rating?" Their reports offered practical ideas, like greater active involvement in parish activities. Mr. Angod Halam called it "an eye-opening exercise," urging men to cut back on alcohol and other intoxicants. Mr. Simon Halam stressed, "We men must join SCC Bible sharing—I'm convinced our Church will deepen in faith as we exchange experiences." The session closed with a proposal to collect an annual delegate fee and establish a dedicated fund.

**Fr. Ivan D'Silva, SVD**

**BODHJUNGNAGAR PARISH****Annual Lenten Retreat 1**

As planned much earlier, and unlike the previous years, this year our Parish Council had decided to have a three, 2-day Lenten Retreats, in different *Mothas* of our Parish, area-wise. This was done to benefit most of our parishioners. Subsequently, the first 2-day Retreat was held in Mokham village, on 7th & 8th March. An average of 150 faithful participated in the Retreat. Fr. Amalraj from our Diocese, was the preacher. Apart

from the preaching, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Praise & Worship, and Healing Service, marked the Retreat. The Catechists, in collaboration with the village Leaders of the area, animated the 2-day Annual Lenten Retreat. Needless to say, that the presence of the parish Fathers and Sisters, added reverential atmosphere to the 2-day spiritual activity. Of course, it was indeed a preparation for the ensuing Easter Celebration. God bless our Parishioners.

**Fr. Mariaraj I CSC**

**Annual Retreat 2**

The second, 2-day Retreat was held in Yacharai Motha, on 14th & 15th March 2026. An average of 200 faithful participated in the Retreat. Fr. Amalraj, from our Diocese, preached the Retreat. Preaching on the Word of God, Praise and Worship, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Healing Service, Blessing of Salt, Water & Oil, and common meals, filled the Retreat-Days. The Catechists, in collaboration with the village Leaders of the area, animated the 2-day Lenten activity. Of course, the presence of the Parish Fathers and Sisters, added to the divine-atmosphere of the place. The Retreat was indeed a preparation for the ensuing Easter Celebration. God bless our Parishioners.

**Fr. Mariaraj I CSC**

**BAIJALBARI PARISH****Deanery level Evangelization Program**

On the 15th of March a Deanery level



evangelization programme for Mohorpara Deanery was

conducted at Baijalbari parish. Twenty-three church leaders of the Mahorpara Deanery participated in the program. The program was animated by Fr. Paul Panachikkal, Digen Debbarma, Simon Munda and Samir Debbarma. The topics dealt were: New ways of proclamation and re-evangelization of those who do not attend the church, those who have left the church or are indifferent to faith. Reflection on why some people leave the faith was also highlighted. After animation, the

assembly was divided into 4 groups for the purpose of group discussions and sharing. It was a very enlightening and thought-provoking program and the participants manifested great enthusiasm. They loved the concept of coming together and sharing experiences in the field of proclamation. Thanks be to God the gathering generated great joy and enthusiasm.

**Fr. Paul Panachikal, SDB**

**CATHEDRAL PARISH****One-day Lenten Retreat**

St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, Durjoynagar, organized a grace-filled one-day Lenten Retreat for its parishioners on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2026. Centered on the spirit of prayer and fasting, the Retreat offered the faithful a meaningful opportunity to

deepen their relationship with God during the holy season of Lent. The Retreat was animated by Rev. Fr. Leenus, V.C., Director of the Divine Retreat Centre, Mariamnagar. Through his inspiring and thought-provoking spiritual talks, he emphasized the importance of repentance, inner conversion, and a renewed commitment to Christian life. He encouraged the faithful to approach God with sincere hearts and to make use of this Lenten season as a time of grace and transformation.

The Retreat commenced at 9:00a.m. and concluded at 2:30p.m., with a large number of parishioners actively

participating throughout the day. The Retreat included spiritual talks, Eucharistic Adoration, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, providing a sacred atmosphere for prayer, reflection, and spiritual renewal.

The Retreat concluded with the celebration of the Holy Mass, which served as the spiritual high point of the day. The faithful expressed their gratitude for the enriching experience and the opportunity to prepare themselves more worthily for Easter.

**Mr. Rahul Debbarma,  
Parish Joint Secretary**

## DIOCESAN CONVENTION EMPOWERS WOMEN TO LEAD CHANGE

### Give to Gain



MARCH 22, 2026 – Under the evocative theme "Give to Gain," Moharpara Parish in Teliamura hosted the Diocese-level Women's Meet, marking the conclusion of a landmark two-day Diocesan Women's Convention. The event called upon Women to contribute their faith, voices, and leadership to build a stronger society and a more resilient "Domestic Church."

The convention opened on March 21 with a grand flag-hoisting ceremony led by Fr. Arbok, followed by a vibrant procession representing parishes from across the diocese. Most Rev. Bishop Lumen Monteiro welcomed the assembly,

setting a spiritual tone that was deepened by Fr. Joe Paul's discourse on total reliance on God. "To gain true peace, we must give our entire will to Him," Fr. Joe Paul noted, citing *Philippians 4:13*. The first day blended this spiritual focus with creative testimony, featuring a Bible-themed Skit competition, Deanery level Quiz competition on the Gospel of John and a movie screening of the film on Blessed Rani Maria.

Day two shifted the focus toward the "Domestic Church." Sr. Sushila encouraged mothers to gain spiritual stability at home by giving time to the Rosary and hymns, using Mother Mary as their guide. During the Holy Mass, Bishop Monteiro emphasized that by giving women more administrative and social responsibilities, the entire community gains a vital perspective. He urged every attendee to "prepare a concrete action plan" for their local parishes.

In a powerful address, Smt. Jharna Debbarma, Chairperson of the Women Commission of Tripura, applied the "Give to Gain" philosophy to social reform. She challenged the women to give their courage to fight the "odds" currently plaguing Tripura. Ending Child Marriage: Noting Tripura's 3rd-place national ranking, she called for immediate intervention. Curbing Substance Abuse: A plea for mothers to protect the youth from drug addiction and thereby curbing the menace of HIV infection. Support Systems: Advocacy for early pregnancy awareness and care for handicapped children. Becoming the Change: The Convention reached its crescendo with a Talk by Fr. Jilson, Principal of HCS Agartala, who highlighted the stories of Mary, Mother of Jesus, Ruth, Esther, Samaritan women. He reminded the participants that by giving of themselves as these biblical women did, they gain the power to be the change for others.

The event concluded with a social awareness fashion show and a prize distribution ceremony, honoring the "mothers of the diocese" for their talent and commitment. As the flags were lowered, the message remained clear: in giving their service and faith, the women of the diocese gain a future of dignity and hope.

*Mrs. Jabba Debbarma*

## ADVANCED BUSINESS TRAINING EMPOWERS SHG WOMEN IN DHALAI



An Advanced Business Training programme for Self-Help Group (SHG) women was successfully conducted by JUST on March 19, 2026, at Ganganagar R.D Block under Dhalai district of Tripura to strengthen their entrepreneurial skills, financial literacy, and capacity for sustainable livelihoods. The training adopted a participatory approach with interactive sessions, practical exercises, and group discussions covering key areas such as business planning, book-keeping, costing and pricing, marketing and value addition, the training also touched upon leadership, and digital awareness.

Participants were also oriented on identifying local business opportunities including food processing, livestock rearing, and small-scale enterprises suited to the local context. The programme saw active participation, with SHG women demonstrating improved confidence, a better understanding of financial management, and increased motivation to start or expand income-generating activities. Despite ongoing challenges such as limited market access and financial constraints, the initiative has laid a strong foundation for economic empowerment. With continued mentoring, credit linkage, and market support, these SHGs hold strong potential to grow into successful micro-enterprises, contributing to household income and overall community development in the region.

## JUST DISTRIBUTES SPORTS EQUIPMENT TO SUPPORT HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN IN KARBOOK



On March 16, JUST distributed sports equipment to 10 learning centres under Karbook RD Block in Gomati District, benefiting around 360 children. The initiative aimed to promote physical health and mental well-being among children, most of whom come from economically disadvantaged families with limited access to sports facilities at home. The distributed items

included footballs, volleyballs, skipping ropes, and cricket kits, encouraging children to actively participate in sports and games as part of their learning centre activities. The programme seeks to foster teamwork, discipline, and healthy lifestyles while ensuring children experience a well-rounded educational environment. Emphasizing the importance of sports as a key component of overall development, the initiative highlights how physical activities improve blood circulation, strengthen the body, and support brain development. It also builds on ongoing efforts to enhance school enrollment and retention by making learning more engaging and enjoyable. The introduction of sports kits is expected to nurture sportsmanship, cooperation, and active habits among children attending non-formal coaching centres. The children expressed their heartfelt gratitude to JUST for providing the equipment free of cost and enthusiastically promised to use them regularly during weekend activities, making sports an integral part of their growth and development.

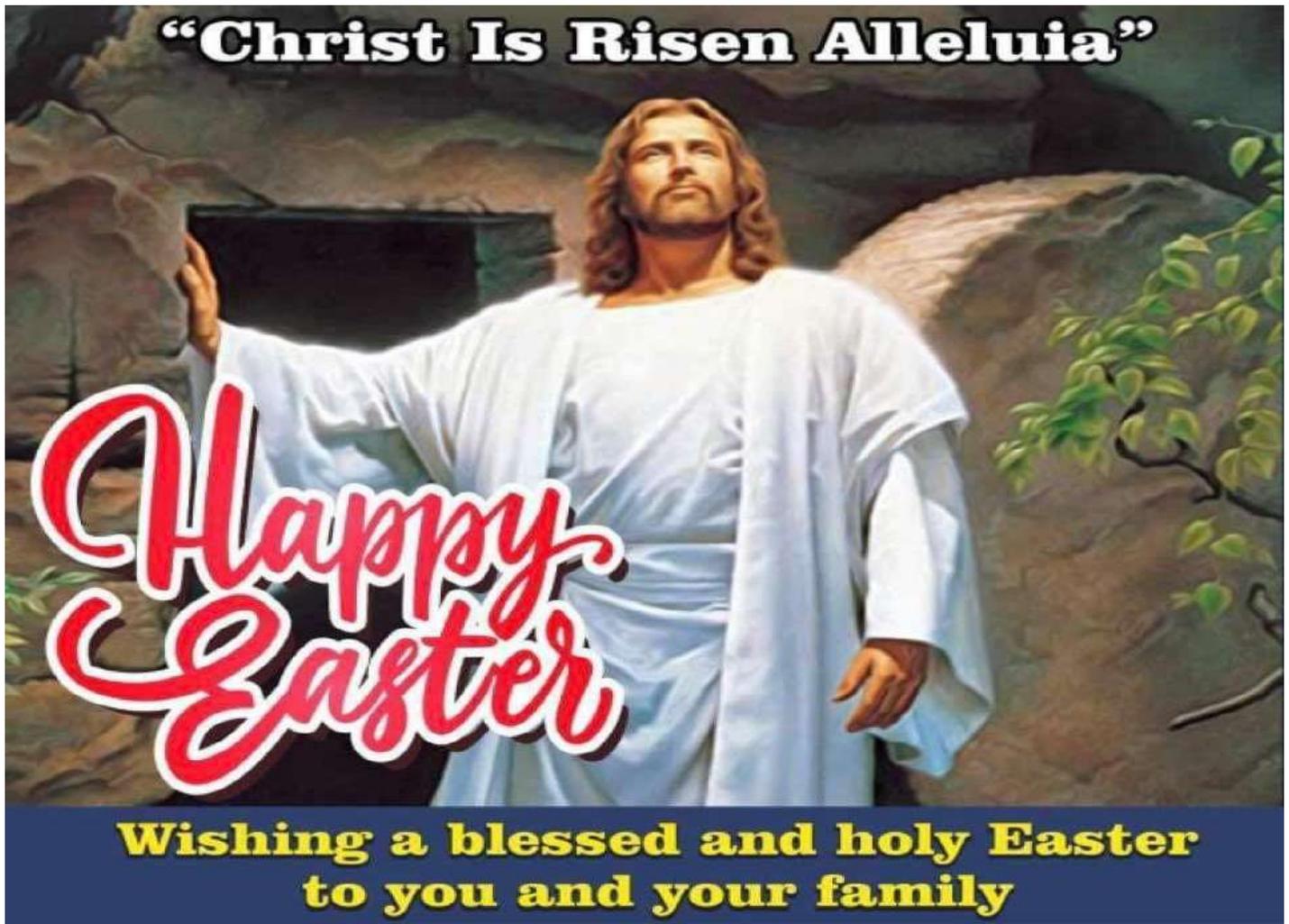
*Robert Lushai*

## Our Distinguished Guests

- Fr. Robin D'Souza OFM Cap Provincial from Bangalore
- Fr. Joswin OFM Cap Secretary to the Provincial
- Fr. Vincent Monis, Capuchin Delegate from Mizoram
- Fr. Godwin George, OFM Cap Superior from Mizoram
- Sr. Sunita SSsS Provincial from Guwahati
- Mrs. Violet Andrade (Fr. Lancy's sister) from Dubai
- Fr. Joy Pulicakal, CMF, Vice Provincial from Shillong
- Fr. Janardhan, CMF, Mission Procurator
- Bro. Ripon Gomes, CSC, Provincial from Bangladesh
- Bro. Placid Ribeiro, CSC, Principal of Lokkibazar, Bangladesh
- Sr. Maria Goretti, MSMHC, from Shillong

## Bishop's Program for April 2026

- 02-04: Easter Triduum in the Parishes
- 05: Easter Sunday
- 11: Benjamin's Day @ Gokulnagar  
Parents Day @ Holy Cross Agartala
- 12: TTAADC Elections
- 18-19: Parish Sabha, Tuikarmaw Parish
- 25: Ordination of Dn. Tarsish Marak, CSC, @ Kumarghat
- 26: Parish Feast, Kathalcherra
- 27-29: CHAI Meeting & Send Off, Secunderabad
- 30-11 May: Health Follow up @ St. John's Bangalore



Published at: Jeeva Jyothi Diocesan Centre, Bishop's House, VIP Road, Durjoynagar P.O.  
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