



## Pastor's Message

### Are We Guilty of Phone Worship?

This blog by Eddy D'Sa with the heading, 'Reframe the way you think about it', appeared recently on social media. He says many people equate spending less time on their phones with denying themselves pleasure--and who likes to do that? Instead of thinking of it as "spending less time on your phone," think of it as "spending more time on your life."

Ask yourself what you want to pay attention to. Our lives are what we pay attention to. The people who design apps desperately want our attention, because that's how they make money. Have you ever wondered why so many social media apps are free? It's because advertisers are the customers--and your attention is what's being sold. There are no free lunches. Remember Mark Zuckerberg: "If you're not paying, you're the product."

Gram for gram, the Smartphone is the densest collection of sensors ever assembled. It's a spy satellite in your pocket aimed at you; all of which falls into the big-data mines of social media companies. What we get in return is simple digital services--messaging, chat, calendaring, microblogging, photo posting, and videos. We have been sold on the "convenience" of behavior collection, because that was the unconscionable price we were charged for a service that would have been equally "convenient" and far less socially destructive to implement in a better way. It is urgent that we learn the lessons now before our eyes before it is too late. Restructuring the working of the internet, decentralizing the way we get our services, and paying the cost of providing them with something other than the monumental collection of our behavior. Otherwise, what we now call "convenience" will to future generations be revealed to have been the antithesis of liberty. (Eddy D'Sa is a Marine and Offshore Engineer who works with the lesser privileged at YMCA Boys Home, Andheri, Mumbai)

One of the events that will happen in July in our Diocese is the celebration of Green Sunday, an initiative that was started seven years ago, to care for the earth as our home. We will plant over 10,000 saplings in all our Parishes across Tripura. Let us all work to preserve our environment.

We also celebrate the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly in July. Pope Francis says that this "is an occasion to say once again, with joy, that the Church wants to celebrate together with those whom the Lord - as the Bible says - has 'satiated with days.' Let us celebrate it together! I invite you to announce this Day in your parishes and communities; to visit the elderly who are most alone at home or in the residences where they are guests. Let us make sure that no one lives this day in loneliness." The World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly is an opportunity to proclaim once more, with joy, that the Church wants to celebrate together with all those whom the Lord has "filled with days".

+Lumen, CSC

## EDITORIAL

### Bible Reading in Families



The recently held ADPC Meeting was unanimous that we as a Diocese must insist on 'Bible reading' in our families. Although it is easier said than done, the practice, if picked up, would surely prove to be an invaluable outcome of the 'Year of the Word of God' the Diocese is currently observing. My submission is that unless stringent follow-up measures are taken, this proposal, which was mentioned in almost all the group reports, is likely to remain merely a pious collective wish.

This is because we are talking about 'reading'. And the habit of reading, at least as it was conventionally known, has been on the decline, in recent years. Publishing houses lament this loss and frantically look for platforms that better suit the short-attention-span temperament of the present-day reader. Add to it the distraction offered by video games, chat services, and the 'endless trap of the internet', and one gets the idea!

Despite all this, our desire and effort to bring out 'in print' the Word of God in the local languages is surely a step in the right direction, although fraught with many challenges.

Reading the Bible in families presupposes first of all, that the family has a copy of the Holy Book. It takes for granted that there is someone at least in the family who can read. One mustn't presuppose that reading comes easy to everyone here, given the near absence of a reading tradition in some of the languages spoken in the State. The past, shrouded in oral tradition, has had a bearing on many aspects of the language - script, semantics, vocabulary, and writing method, each of which makes reading a challenging job.

Even more importantly, the suggestion presupposes that the family gathers together to listen to the reading. A tall order indeed, for families that find it impossible to come together for a few minutes of family prayer. It makes more sense, perhaps, to first insist on making 'family prayer' a regular practice in our families. Once that happens, maybe, it wouldn't be difficult to devote a few minutes of the family prayer to Bible reading.

The ADPC Meet was a useful event because it was well planned. The organizers took much care to explain the meaning of its theme, "Rooted in the Living Word" and put forward relevant questions for discussion.

One cannot but wish that the practice of Bible Reading in families proposed at the ADPC, is followed up in a stringent manner and all issues surrounding it addressed so that it truly becomes a reality in our Diocese.

J. Pulinthanath, SDB



## Jampuijala Parish

25<sup>th</sup> Parish & a New Parish Priest

The twenty-fifth parish in the Diocese of Agartala was erected at Jampuijala on 28 April 2024. The Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, Jampuijala, which was announced in the Pastoral Council Meeting on 25 March 2024, was officially erected at a solemn Eucharist held at St Mary's School, Jampuijala presided over by Bishop Lumen Monteiro of Agartala and concelebrated by many priests. Fr Babu Paul, SJ, was installed as the first Parish Priest during the Eucharist in the presence of Fr P. T. Mathew, SJ, the Mission Coordinator. This is the second parish entrusted to the Jesuit Fathers (the first being Kailashahar). The new parish has eight monodis under it, five were carved out from St Alphonsa Parish, Khumlung, and three from St Joseph Parish, Pitra. Representatives from all the eight monodis were present for the function. Members of the new parish expressed their immense joy during the felicitation. Students of St Mary's Hostel put up cultural programs. The parishioners prepared and served a delicious meal for all those who had come from far and near. The new parish has members from the Jamatia, Kaiping, Kaloi, Molsom and Debbarma tribal communities.

Fr. P. T. Mathew, SJ

## Ambassa Parish

## Pentecost Sunday



Ambassa May 19, 2024: Holy Spirit Catholic Parish, Ambassa, celebrated the feast of Pentecost on May 18 & 19. The Parish Pastoral Council wanted that two days should be set apart for the Parish Feast celebration. On 18th May at 9:30am parishioners gathered from various sub-stations to read the annual activity reports of their village church. The assistant parish council secretary Mr. Sunil Debbarma chaired the report reading session. There are 25 village monodis in Ambassa Parish.

Later, Fr. Ivan DSilva SVD, spoke on 'The Qualities of a Church Leader' and called on the leaders to be more proactive towards Evangelization. This was followed by Fr. Maxim SVD who spoke on 'Sacramental Life', Fr. Nabin Lakra SVD on 'Leadership' and Fr. Cyprian SVD who taught on 'Word of God in the family'. In the evening after the Novena to the Holy Spirit there was a cultural competition. More than 250 people from different sub-stations participated in the two-and half-hour program of cultural dance, Biblio-drama and Gospel Songs. On 19th morning was the festive Holy Eucharist. During the Mass presided over by Fr. Maxim, 26 children received first Holy Communion. At the end of the Mass the Parish Priest thanked everyone for their contribution. A grand festive meal was arranged for everyone.

Fr Ivan D'Silva, SVD

## Ambassa Parish - Ganganagar Mission

## "Let the children come to Me"



The month of June is dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. On 8th, MC Sisters from Agartala, showed the love of Jesus to children in action visiting the least, last and poor children of 19-mile village, Ganganagar Block. They had a bag full of gifts for them with study materials, toys, biscuits, etc. Arrangements for coaching classes are also made for them by Fr. Jaibu Mathew, the Principal of St. Arnold School, Ganganagar. The Sisters visited the houses and encouraged parents and village leaders to send their children to school and coaching classes. ".....for the kingdom of heaven is among such of these" (Mt. 19: 14)

Frs. Cyprian & Jaibu SVD

## Depacherra Parish

## Altar Servers Training



In a dedicated effort to empower the children with essential skills for serving Holy Mass, our Parish hosted a comprehensive Altar Servers Training from June 3rd to 7th June. This initiative saw the enthusiastic participation of 30 students eager to delve into the intricacies of church service. Under the guidance of esteemed mentors, including Fr. Amalraj, Fr. Derrick, Sr. Isabella B.S, and Sr. Remee B.S, the week-long training delved into various vital aspects of the liturgy. The

curriculum covered crucial topics such as Liturgical norms, postures and gestures, and insights into Liturgical articles.

Throughout the training period, participants were engaged in hands-on learning, practical experiences and theoretical sessions aimed at enhancing their understanding of their roles within the church. The mentors, with their wealth of experience and knowledge, imparted valuable insights and guidance to the eager students, ensuring they were well-prepared for their responsibilities. The culmination of the training was marked by a significant event on Sunday, where participants were honored with certificates of appreciation. This gesture not only acknowledged their dedication and commitment throughout the training but also served as a testament to their readiness to serve the church community. The Altar Servers Training at Christ the King Parish stands as a testament to the parish's commitment to nurturing the next generation of church leaders. Through such initiatives, the parish aims to instill a sense of responsibility, reverence, and dedication among its children, fostering a deeper connection to their faith and community.

## Joseph Bodol Seminar



On June 22, 2024, Christ the King Parish in Depacherra hosted a significant event: the Joseph Bodol Seminar. This gathering brought together 35 dedicated members of the parish to explore the themes of family, faith, and fatherhood. Fr. Amalraj the PP, opened the Seminar by animating the attendees with an inspiring talk on the aims and objectives of Joseph Bodol. His presentation highlighted the importance of community and the collective efforts needed to strengthen family bonds and spiritual growth within the parish. Then Mr. Hemento Uchoi, the president, shared insightful reflections on St. Joseph as a model for families. Catechist Daniel then took the floor to discuss the crucial role of fathers in both the family and society. Mr. Simon Uchoi encouraged the attendees by stressing the importance of men's participation in spiritual activities. To conclude the Seminar, Mr. Ashim Uchoi outlined a series of activities planned for the next three months. The Joseph Bodol Seminar proved to be a fruitful and inspiring event, leaving participants with a renewed sense of purpose and a clear direction for their spiritual and familial endeavors.

News Bureau, Christ the King Parish



## Khumwlng Parish

## Media and the Word of God



St. Alphonsa Parish Khumwlng organized three days of youth convention beginning from June 2nd to 4th. Fr. Maxim Rodrigues SVD the parish priest along with the Parish Council members took keen interest in coordinating this program. On the second day Fr. Ivan D'Silva SVD the commission secretary for Social Communication in Agartala Diocese was invited to give a class on 'Media and Word of God'. The youth found sessions were very interesting because they were of interest and familiar subjects. The youth were aware of the media but they were not aware of the negative impact it creates in their mind. Fr. Ivan said, "Youth of today communicate through mobile and other social media very fast but fail to communicate the Word of God". He further said, "due to the mobile and internet youth have lost interest in prayer, Bible reading, and going to the Church". He educated them through different life examples, the real life of the tribal youth and reel-life youngsters who fall prey to the untrained media world. Adolescents were interested to know about more things with their spontaneous questions to the resource person. Some of them said the class on Media could be given longer because that is what affects today's youth.

*Ivan D'Silva, SVD*

## Moharpara Parish

## Annual Parish Sabha



Immaculate Conception Parish organised its annual Parish Sabha from 14th- 16th June, in the Parish centre. The theme was Be Rooted in the Living word. The programme commenced with flag hoisting and lighting of the lamp which followed by a welcome note by the Parish Secretary followed by Adoration by Fr. Arbok. A cultural program was organised in the evening where in different mothas took part and show cased their cultural richness and heritage. On the second day, we began with the Holy Eucharist presided over by Fr. PJ Joseph SDB the resource person for the event. Animated session was held where on the theme and was beautifully explained and elaborated on by the resource person. In the afternoon a time was kept for question hour, in which the participants were allowed to clarify their doubts on anything related to faith. In the evening, the faithful welcomed Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC with flowers and a welcome

dance. Soon after, followed by reporting from the Parish Priest, Parish Secretary, different Commissions, different motha reporting, and a speech from Rev. Bishop Lumen. On the final day of Parish Sabha, a solemn Holy Mass was celebrated by Rev. Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC along with three concelebrants Frs. Hormis John csc, Roby Menechary csc and Arbok Lyngdoh csc. At the end of Holy Mass, half an hour of praise and worship adoration to the Blessed Sacrament was held. As part of the celebration of World Environmental Day, treesaplings were planted by Rev. Bishop Lumen in the presence of local church leaders and elders. The event comes to a close with a vote of thanks followed by a common meal shared by all the participants.

*Fr. Arbok CSC*

## Mandwi Parish

## New Parish Priest Installed



We have a new Parish Priest in the person of Fr. Blasius Kujur SDB who was installed as PP of our Parish on 16th June. Bishop Lumen had delegated Fr. Christopher SDB, the Parish Priest of Nandanagar and the Diocesan Consulter to install the new PP. the Holy Eucharist began with a thanksgiving Mass during which our beloved PP Fr. Hubert Thynriang SDB was accorded a loving send off. A number of Priests, Religious, and parishioners from all mothas were present. After the homily Fr. Blasius was installed in a short ceremony that included the reading of the Appointment Letter of the Bishop, the profession of faith, the reverencing of the altar, and the handing of the keys. The Holy Eucharist was followed by a short felicitation program. Fr. Blasius SDB, the new PP, thanked everyone and pledged to work for the people, and asked for their cooperation.

*News Reporter*

## Khumwlng Parish

## Parish Youth Bible Convention



The Youth of Khumwlng along with the Jampuijala Parish gathered together at the Khumwlng Parish Centre from 2-4 June for the Parish Youth Bible Convention to mark the year of the Word of God being observed in the

Diocese. About 90 Youth were present for this significant event. The theme was The Word in our Life and Our Life in the Word.

The Bible convention began with the enthronement of the Bible by Fr. Babu Paul SJ, Parish Priest of Jampuijala. Fr. Maxim the Parish Priest of Khumwlng welcomed the guests and youth. Frs. Babu Paul, Cyprian Pinto, Lawrence Darlong, Maxim Rodrigues, Ivan Dsilva and Fredy M. were the Resource Persons for the three-day Convention. Bible skit and the Bible quiz were the highlights of the Convention which enthused the youth during the three-day long event. The Convention brought a deep realization of the theme and a resolve to make the theme of the convention a life conviction as to: The Word is our life and our life is the Word. The event ended with closing Eucharistic celebration on the 4th of June.

*ICYM News Reporter*

## Chailengta Parish

## Chapel Inauguration at Hakaraipara



16 June 2024 was a red-letter day for the residents of Hakaraipara area where the 12 Catholic families inherited the infrastructure of now defunct St. Joanne's School. The said School was run by a group of believers who could not find the resources to maintain it they had called it off. The land belonged to our faithful viz., Mr. Lalit Debbarma and Pranesh who willingly donated it to the Village chapel. Hence on the above-mentioned auspicious day the Parish Priest, yours truly, blessed and inaugurated the Village Chapel dedicated to the Patron Saint Joachim. The liturgy was well prepared and the singing was excellent. Parishioners from far and near, farthest being Tuichanda and closest being Mainama witnessed the event joyously. A tasty agape followed which was prepared by the Hakaraipara faithful themselves who willingly came over to us after due preparation by Fr. Cyprian Pinto SVD in 2022. Hence it was a long-awaited Village Chapel for around 12 families of the area.

*Rev. Fr. Joachim Harry D Silva CSC*

## Ganganagar Mission

## Confirmations



23<sup>rd</sup> of June was a great day of joy for the faithful of Ganganagar, Dhalai Dt. They witnessed the descending of the Holy Spirit on 51 baptized Christians in the Sacrament of Confirmation. The candidates were prepared well on the previous day by animators, like Frs. Jaibu Methew, Nabin Lakra, Cyprian Pinto SVD, Br. Canet, Mosiram Reang from Chailengta, and Mr. Indrojit Sangma, Ambassa catechist. Most Rev. Bishop was warmly received in a simple ceremony. The confirmation ceremony in Ganganagar was a first of its kind

witnessed by SSPS Sisters of Gandachera and MC Sisters from Nirmal Hriday, Agartala. A few families who take a lot of interest in spreading the faith as sponsors of families were also present on the occasion. We all prayed that the new life of faith in Christ received by the newly confirmed may grow and become strong. The program ended with a shared meal.

*Fr. Cyprian Pinto, SVD*



### Blessing and inauguration of St. Xavier's Girls' Hostel, Kailashahar



St Xavier's School at Kailashahar was blessed with a newly built Girls' Hostel meant for the SC/ST students of the school. It was blessed on 1st May by Most Rev Lumen Monteiro, Bishop of Agartala and inaugurated by Fr E.P. Mathew, Kerala Jesuit Provincial. The function was attended by the parents, teachers and many religious from the neighboring communities. Nearly 30 girls have moved into the new Hostel that can accommodate 50 students. Sisters of St Joseph of Annecy are looking after the Hostel. St Xavier's School, Kailashahar, which had its origin in 2022, conducts classes from Nursery to Class IV and has a student body of 330 as of now. Fr T.V. George, SJ, is the present Principal of the School.

*Fr. P. T. Mathew, SJ*

### Two Deaneries B.E.C. Meeting at Gandatwisa



Kumarghat Deanery and Ambassa Deanery together had a Basic Ecclesial Community meeting in Gandatwisa parish. 55 participants from different parishes participated. The Zonal BEC Secretary Mr. Pionglama Darlong moderated the session. He asked the host parish leaders to lead seven steps of Bible sharing. After that the Assistant Parish Priest of Gandatwisa Fr. Praveen welcomed the participants. This was followed by the parish reports and also their action plan. Then there was a call for open discussion. Many expressed their apprehension about the future of BEC. One participants said that if all the priests in the parishes encourage the BEC, certainly the laity will be motivated. Fr. Ivan DSilva, SVD the coordinator for BEC in the North Zone insisted that for a good monodoli to

survive BEC is a must. This will strengthen the local Church.

*Ivan DSilva, SVD*

### Retreat for full time Catechists of the Diocese



The full time Catechists of the Diocese gathered at the Pastoral Centre, Belbari, Champaknagar for an annual Retreat for three days. They arrived on the 17th June and departed on 21 June 2024. Fr. Leenus VC guided the Catechists, leading them to a deeper experience of the Lord and His Word. The Catechists were happy to have this precious time to be by themselves, be with the Lord and listen to His Word and be empowered to be sent forth. It has brought in a new enthusiasm and zeal in their hearts to be more committed for the Lord.

At the end of the retreat there was joy and happiness. They thanked Fr. Leenus VC for his enthusiastic and inspiring inputs. We thank the Lord for these Catechists of our Diocese for their committed service for the Lord and the Church at large. We pray for their family members and be thoughtful of their needs.

*Fr. Maxim Rodrigues, SVD*

### Empowerment program for Women in the Diocese



Women Commission of Agartala Diocese organized one day program on 9th June for the women in Don Bosco Baijalbari Parish on Leadership and Empowerment. There were 98 women participants. Sr. Veronica, the commission secretary spoke about leadership and its qualities and about women Empowerment through holistic development. She gave examples of women in Bible and the saints whose

examples we should follow. She spoke about the importance of the living word of God and daily family prayer.

Mrs. Padmini Debbarma the resource person and Fr. Paul SDB the parish priest emphasized the faith formation in the family. They also spoke about children being taught about saints and holy people in the Bible.

*Sr. Veronica Fernandes, FS,  
Secretary of Women's Commission*



We offer our sincere  
**CONGRATULATIONS** to Dear  
Deacons Daleiki Shylla, Jojappa  
Pamisetty, & Sebin Thomas  
On your Ordination to the Diaconate.

### CBCI Welcomes Meeting between PM Modi and Pope Francis



New Delhi, 14 June – The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) expresses immense joy and satisfaction at the historic meeting between Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, and His Holiness Pope Francis, which took place on 14 June 2024, during the G7 summit in Italy. This momentous occasion marks a significant chapter in the relationship between the world's largest democracy and the global spiritual leadership of the Catholic Church. The CBCI is hopeful that the meeting between Prime Minister Modi and Pope Francis was both meaningful and constructive, paving the way for enhanced understanding and cooperation. The CBCI is delighted by Prime Minister Modi's invitation to Pope Francis to visit India, reflecting a spirit of dialogue and mutual respect. Notably, during a meeting with CBCI President Archbishop Andrews Thazhath last year, Prime Minister Modi had mentioned that he had already invited the Pope and would do so again. The Catholic Church in India eagerly anticipates the visit of Pope Francis and looks forward to extending a warm and heartfelt welcome.

*Fr. Robinson Rodrigues, PRO, CBCI*



## JUST Celebrates World Environment Day



Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST), an NGO based in Damdamia, on the outskirts of Agartala celebrated World Environment Day on 8th June, 2024 to encourage awareness and environment protection by planting trees. The day began with an awareness program with the theme "Save the environment, plastic free environment and organic consumption". More than 50 children participated in the program. To motivate the children for making an effort to conserve the environment fruit saplings were also distributed to the children for planting in their own houses. They were also motivated to save the environment from plastic pollution. As a part of the campaign to reduce the usage of plastic, one each plastic Bank is installed in the Office premises and in the Damdamia market area to collect the plastic waste, to reuse and recycle. Children promised to collect the plastic waste to safeguard the environment.

## Training On Leadership Development for Single-headed Women



Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) organized a training on Leadership Development for Single-Headed Women at Kumarghat Parish. 140 Single Headed Women attended the program. Fr. Lathees, Director of JUST and Fr. Lancy CSC, the Parish Priest, were present in the program. The Resource Person was Mr. Paul Sangma, Engineer by Profession. Using mostly Bible verses for the women as his main source of inspiration, he spoke primarily on the topics of building potential for a managerial role in the future, developing confidence, and exhibiting leadership qualities. Then, Fr. Lathees took the session on the role of the Single Headed Women in the Society. For the project to run smoothly, parish-level and Deanery-level executive committee leaders for the Single-Headed Women were formed during his session. The training sessions inspired the Women to participate actively in both parish programs and society at large.

*Mr. Robert Lushai*

## Condolences

**Lucia Anastasia  
Bemvinda  
Monteiro e Gonsalves**

**We offer our deepest condolences to our Bishop Lumen  
who lost his sister recently,  
On 20th June 2024.**

**We thank God for her life and ask Him to grant her  
eternal life in heaven.**

**Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord,  
and let perpetual light shine upon her.  
May her soul through the mercy of God, rest in peace.**

### Our Distinguished Guests

- Fr. Peppe Ahamada CSC from Peru
- Fr. MC Abraham CSC from Bangalore
- Sr. Angela Devi Reddy, SAC Provincial from Bangalore
- Sr. Inacinha SAC Assistant Provincial from Goa
- Sr. Sharmila, SAC Provincial Economist from Goa
- Fr. Roy, SVD from Manipur

### Bishop's Program for July 2024

- 02 : Clergy Meet, Agartala
- 07 : New PP Installation, Gachirampara Parish  
Green Sunday in the Diocese
- 09 -11: NE Commissions & NEDSSS Board Meet, Guwahati
- 14 : Pastoral Visit, Karbook
- 17 : JUST GB Meet, Damdamia
- 18 : Consulters Meet, Agartala
- 20 : CSC Educators Meet, Agartala
- 20 : Depacherra Deanery SCC Convention at Depacherra
- 21 : Confirmations, Nandannagar Parish
- 22 : FMA Convent Blessing, Mandwi
- 28 : Parish Feast, Khumulwng
- 30 July to 23 August: Mission Appeals, USA