



DIOCESE OF AGARTALA



Link

Lead Us Onward

Agartala Diocesan Newsletter

Vol. XXII - No. 05 - May 2018

Pastor's Corner

Joy and Gratitude as we turn Twenty Two!



The month of May always brings back memories of 1996, and especially the 26th day of the month, on which day I was consecrated the first Bishop of the Diocese of Agartala, even though the Diocese itself was established on 11th January 1996 by Pope St. John Paul II. As I sit to pen these lines, emotions of joy and gratitude well up in my heart. Lord, for all that has happened THANKS...for all that will happen YES!

As SUMIT PAUL writes in The Speaking Tree, nothing comes easily.'God gives every bird its food, but he doesn't throw it into the nest.' This famous aphorism by J G Holland underlines the importance of efforts, diligence and optimism. It's by the dint of courage and perseverance that the aim is achieved. A Persian adage states, 'Options are before you; but the Choice is yours.' We're all endowed with numerous opportunities but it depends upon our power of discernment as to which opportunity is to be availed. What comes easily, also goes easily, he says and goes on to add about the Dhammapada: 'Mangoes are on every branch of a tree but not a single mango will automatically fall into your lap; you'll have to pluck it.' The Sanskrit poet Bhavbhuti's 'Uttarramcharit' has this story: one day, Rama saw a bird feeding worms to its young ones in the nest. He called out to Sita and Lakshmana and said, 'Worms are available here and there. The bird flies away to get them for its young ones. The same applies to life. It's the indefatigable spirit that makes the things happen.'The same applies to

me.

Lead Us Onward has been my motto and prayer since the day of my Episcopal Ordination. I know that the Spirit guides me, empowers me, enlightens me, and sends me forth... all I need to do is to obey in faith. Today I thank Almighty God for His numerous blessings throughout the last 22 years. The Holy Spirit who descended on the Apostles and set them on fire precisely that they in turn would set the world on fire is the same Spirit who sends us forth to be missionaries. This Pentecost Sunday while we pray for our Diocese on its 22nd Anniversary, let us beg the Spirit to give all of us the spiritual gift of fortitude especially at this time when the Catholic faith is under assault by many in the secular world.

+Lumen, CSC



Editorial

26-05-1996 to 26-05-2018

Year after year, when 26th May



comes round, our hearts well up in deep gratitude to Almighty God for

another year of grace and blessing bestowed on our Diocese. Although the formation of the Diocese was announced on 11th of January 1996, it was the Episcopal Ordination of its first Pastor, Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC, DD, on 26th May the same year which gave it an identity and marked its full fledged beginning.



Twenty two years have gone by since that solemn day of Ordination. A glance back at the contours of those
Contd. on page 2



Happy Anniversary

As Bishop Lumen Monteiro celebrates the Anniversary of his Episcopal Ordination on May 26, LINK offers felicitations to our beloved Bishop and promises him obedience and respect. His long service as shepherd of this Diocese since 26th May 1996 is gratefully remembered and we continue to pray for him that God may bless him with good health and strength for his ministry.

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Yesterday reveals a kaleidoscopic image of highs and lows, very like life itself. We could, for instance, consider with wonder at the steady growth of the Diocese, both qualitative and quantitative: from a total of 9 Parishes and 11,000 Catholics in 1996 to 22 parishes and 42,000 (hopefully better) Catholics today. We could also, in humility and truth, consider instances and areas where we have fallen short of the ideal - targets not met, and desired goals not reached.

On the anniversary of his Episcopal Ordination we congratulate and thank Bishop Lumen for the leadership he provides to his flock. The 22 year old episcopate has, over the years, acquired a distinct flavor of its own, one that is both distinguishable and admirable.

We also note that with the passage of time "the old order changeth..." Indeed, the interminable cycle of change baffles with its constancy; the myriad forms and hues it assumes baffles even more. In the midst of such change, God has granted 22 years of constancy to the Diocese in the person of Bishop Lumen. Together with him we thank God for His goodness and seek it upon Bishop Lumen for many more years to come.

Twenty two years also provide adequate leeway for a reshuffling and restructuring of mindsets and attitudes that have hitherto governed perceptions about the past. The widening gap of time, we hope, makes possible for us to adapt a kindlier and more compassionate view of the years gone past and its foibles. May each passing year not only help us fine tune our future dreams and cope with present predicaments, but also help us see the 'unalterable past' illumined by Time's winged chariot, hurrying near.

J. Pulinthanath, sdb

TUIKARMAW PARISH

Annual Charismatic Retreat

St. Mary's Parish Tuikarmaw organized two days Charismatic Retreat at the Parish Centre on 23rd and 24th March 2018. It was a prayerful experience for the people to get in touch with God. The faithful from all the Villages that belong to the Parish attended the Retreat and experienced God's blessings in their life. Fr. Abraham VC was main preacher for the Retreat. He invited the faithful to prepare well to enter into the Holy Week. There was opportunity created for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The faithful of the Parish expressed their happiness over having prayerful experiences in their life.

Holy Week Celebrations

The Holy Week Liturgical Celebrations were organized under four Zones of the Parish. Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil, and Easter Sunday Liturgies were meaningfully celebrated and large number of faithful took part in the Holy Week Celebrations. This year the Parish was blessed to have our beloved Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC as one of the celebrants during the Holy Week. The presence of our Bishop during the Holy week Liturgy doubled the joy of our faithful.

Fr. Alfred, CSC

KUMARGHAT PARISH

SCC Training and SCC Day celebrations



SCC Training and SCC Day were celebrated in Kumarghat Parish from 13th to 15th April 2018 to strengthen the SCCs. The Training was inaugurated by honoring the Bible and by sharing the word of God. It was followed by the lighting of the lamp by the Fathers, Sisters and SCC Leaders from the Parish on 13th evening at 6:30 p.m. After the Inauguration there was a presentation of Reports of SCC activities from different *mondolis* of the Parish.

The following day Training began at 8:30 a.m. The Resource Person was Fr. Lancy D'Souza CSC the Diocesan SCC Secretary. He was assisted by Mr. Piangloma Darlong the Parish SCC Secretary of Katalcherra Parish. The topics dealt were the meaning of SCC, the need for SCC and the functions of SCC in the Parish. The Resource Person motivated all the 62 participants by

creating deeper understanding of SCC. The last Session was an Action Plan for Village level and Zonal level of the Parish to invigorate SCCs in the Parish. **SCC Day** was celebrated on the 15th of April with the holy Eucharist at 10 a.m. that was presided by Most Rev. Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC. The concelebrants were CSC Frs. Lancy, Arul, and Aneesh. Bishop Lumen through his homily encouraged the SCC Leaders to share and proclaim their experience to others. At the end of the holy Mass Bishop Lumen commissioned the Leaders with a special prayer and blessing. The SCC Day ended with a fellowship meal.

Bro. Amalraj

KATHALCHERRA PARISH

Parish Feast and Confrimations



Good Shepherd Parish, Katalcherra celebrated the Parish feast on April 22, the fourth Sunday of Easter. Bishop Lumen Monteiro, CSC, was the main celebrant. Fr. Robert Mathias CSC, Provincial Superior of Holy Cross Fathers, North East Province and the Jesuit vice Provincial Fr. Hector SJ were special guests. Fathers and Sisters from different Parishes were present. The Sacrament of Confirmation was administered to 110 of our parishioners. People from all over the Parish came and took part in the grace filled occasion. There was a colorful cultural program (which had to be cut short due to a major storm) and the festive meal. During the program the first Religious Sr. Malati Sangma B.S. and the first priest from the parish Fr. Lawrence Darlong were felicitated by the Bishop and by Parish Community. As it was the Sunday for Vocations Bishop congratulated both the families and prayed for all the families to encourage vocations from their families. Fr. Davis CSC (Principal Holy Cross School, Panisagar) was also felicitated on his Ordination anniversary. People felicitated Fr. Lancy D'souza CSC on his election as the Vicar General of the Diocese of Agartala.

Fr. Ajith, CSC

Kokborok Course for Priests and Religious: 28 May to 13 June.
Requesting PPs to please inform Religious communities in your Parish.

Registration a phone call away:
9436126649

Thank you for LINK, though April fool's day, it was not foolery, but very real. Thank you for the Greetings.
Fr. Thomas Manjaly, Shillong

LINK is always so impressive and a great sign of the deep and strong faith present within the Diocese. God bless you!
Tom O'Hara, CSC, Indiana, USA

As you have rightly said, we share what we have! It is good to read about the happiness, learning and productivity you bring to the people of Tripura. Yes, your presence is felt with the vibration and the energy of Link. May the good Lord continue to guide your tender steps? Thanks again.
Marilyne and Chacko, Canada

Thank you very much for LINK. Please accept once again my hearty Congratulations for bringing out LINK on the first of every month. LINK is always informative and descriptive with colour pictures and I look forward to reading it. May God continue to bless you and your ministry.
Fr. Emmanuel CSC, Agartala

I am grateful to you for the copy of the LINK APRIL 2018. Your message on the Servant Leader inspires me and I do appreciate your initiative for home based care of the challenged.
Dr. Sunny Joseph, Dimapur

I thank you so much for faithfully sending me the LINK each month. I always enjoy reading your reflection especially, this month reflection about the true meaning of Servant Leadership. I feel so blessed for being able to hear all the good news that are taking place in each Parish. May God continue to bless our land and the people of Tripura.
Sr. Meri Halam CSC, South Bend, USA

Thank you Bishop for your wonderful Easter Message along with your timely gift of LINK, APRIL 2018. Your Message is short and sweet.
Mariaraj, CSC, Sumer, Meghalaya

Thanks for the April Link. I am impressed that it always comes for the 1st. of the month!
Alan, CSC, Valatie, USA

'Public Relations & Dialogue' for Denomination Leaders'



Ambassa: April 14, 2018: Social Communication Coordinator organized one day training program on Public Relation for the Denomination Leaders of Dhalai District of Tripura. There were 32 participants from different Churches. Dr. AsokDebbarma and Fr. Ivan D'silva, SVD, were the Resource Persons for the day. Dr. Asok spoke on Human Rights and Father talked on Public Relations and Social Media. In his talk Fr. Ivan dealt on the burning issues which the nation is facing today, such as rape cases and suppression of

minority rights. All the participants condemned in one voice the heinous crime of rape by men on the children in Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, and Haryana. The Diocesan Communication Coordinator insisted on taking up the matters publicly either by protesting on the road or by writing to the newspapers against the infringement of minority rights. He stressed that Leaders must come together by forgetting the petty misunderstanding and get united for a greater cause. Pastors and Deacons from different Denomination pledged to come together after two months for the better planning and forming a Team.

News Desk, Ambassa

FSM Sisters - Inauguration and Blessing of Maria Villa Convent & Girls Hostel



It was a day of great joy to all of us as we celebrate the little footing, that we the FSM Sisters have placed on this North East Zone for the mission of Christ. On 6th of April 2018, we had the inauguration and blessing of Maria Villa Convent and Girls' Hostel. It was inaugurated by Sr. Angela, FSM Provincial Superior, Bangalore Province, Fr. Valerian Castelino, CSC the Province Administrator and Fr. Joe Paul, CSC Holy Cross Education Secretary who unveiled the flex. It was blessed by Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSC, the Bishop of Agartala who also offered the holy Eucharist for us. We thank first

and foremost Almighty God for His tremendous blessings that have been bestowed on us all. "Gratitude is the memory of a heart that recognises the good done". We thank whole heartedly Most Rev. Bishop Lumen, Provincial Fr. Robert Mathias, CSC, Fathers of Holy Cross College community, all Holy Cross Fathers, Diocesan and Religious Fathers, Brothers and Sisters of other Congratulatory and our own, the friends, well wishers, parishioners and neighbours, for their gracious presence on this occasion.

Sr. Mariet FSM

Agartala Diocese Youth Commission

On 15th April 2018 the DEXCO members along with the DYD Fr. Lawrence Darlong visited Debthang village under Moharpara Parish to have one day program with the Youth. The theme selected was "Youth to Youth-sharing faith and experience". The program began with a Holy Mass celebrated by Fr. Lawrence and Fr. Arbok CSC, PYA of Moharpara Parish. After the Mass all the DEXCO members participated by sharing their own experiences, testimony and some motivational thoughts. A motivational speech was also given by the DYD Fr. Lawrence Darlong covering topics like importance of Eucharist, Holistic Development and Power of Team Work. The program ended with a joyful fellowship meal. Sandhya Hrangkhawl (ADYC Secretary)

JUST NewsNuggets

JUST distributes Aids and Appliances to Disabled

Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) distributed 8 special chairs for Cerebral Palsy child (CP) and 11 educational kits for Children with Mental Retardation at Teliamura Panchayat Samiti hall on March 31st 2018. The Panchayat Samiti Chairperson, BDO, CDPO and Inspector of School (IS) of Teliamura were present in the program. Fr. Jeevan Kennady the Director of JUST began the program with a welcome



address. All the government officials explained the various schemes available under SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA), Social welfare and Rural Development (RD) and appreciated JUST for the service done to the PwDs and CwDs.

Promotion of Seed Banks

Numbers of awareness program were conducted in the month of March 2018 for 236 farmers in view to promote Seed Banks. The resource person began the program by explaining to the farmers on the importance of indigenous seed banks. He then continued saying that during our forefather's time there was nobody who depended on others for any seeds for showing or cultivating. He also spoke on the ill effect of hybrid seeds. People preserve themselves for their own use in their own household. He then shared the process of preserving the seeds, the farmers choose the best matured seeds and then he takes out the seeds and



dry it under the sun for at least 3 days. Then, he keeps it in a dry bamboo in the kitchen on top of the cooking place or some farmers preserved it by wrapping with a cotton cloth and keep it in a safe place in the house. Then they use those seeds for the next season for cultivation. The farmers are also given awareness that they should not depend every time to get free seeds from other sources but save it when they get it free and use it in the next season for cultivation.

Mr. Cyril Darlong

Protestors march against India's Rape crisis



As outrage grows over sexual assaults and murders of minor girls, people question the country's culture of impunity. In Bhopal, Priests, Nuns and lay Catholics were among thousands of people who joined a candlelight march to express solidarity with the nationwide outrage over gang rape and murders, especially of minor girls. About 1,500 people including children and the elderly from various religions marched through Bhopal, the capital of Madhya Pradesh state, on April 16. Protests and marches increased across India after media highlighted at least four brutal rape cases of minors in Jammu and Kashmir, Gujarat, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh states this month. "Hard-line Hindu groups are out in the open attacking and threatening minorities with impunity. There is no rule of law. There is no security for minorities of any nature," said Brother Simon. Benedictine Sister Virginia, who was part of the Bhopal protest, told ucanews.com that elements opposed to religious minorities and Dalits have become stronger since the BJP came to power in New Delhi in 2014. (*Matters India*)

Youth say they want a Church that's transparent, up-to-date

Vatican City: At the end of a week-long meeting held at the Vatican, young people from around the world have urged the Church to be more authentic, modern and creative in the way it interacts with young people, and in addressing controversial contemporary issues. "We want to say, especially to the hierarchy of the Church, that they should be a transparent, welcoming, honest, inviting, communicative, accessible, joyful and interactive community," the youth delegates said in the final document of this week's pre-synod meeting in Rome. *Elise Harris*, (*CNA/EWTN News*)

People's Bishop gets Bharat Gaurav Award

London A Catholic Bishop from the remotest corner of Northeast India was awarded Bharat Gaurav Award at a ceremony held at U.K. House of

Commons in British Parliament London on April 13th, 2018. Bishop (Dr.) George Palliparambil of Miao Diocese in East Arunachal is the first Catholic Bishop to get this award.

The Letter from Award Committee President Pt Mishra says, "You are one of the iconic personalities of our nation who always encouraged each and every one to bloom into a next idol of tomorrow. You are the pride of our country and we feel privileged to inform that our Award screening committee has chosen you to reward the "Bharat Gaurav Award." Started in 2012, the Bharat Gaurav Award" is in its sixth year. In his award acceptance speech Bishop George underlined his lifelong commitment and concern for young people's education and health, promotion of indigenous methods for environment conservation, and upholding of traditional tribal values of valour, dignity and honest work.

Matters India

Our Distinguished Visitors

- Fr. Johnson Puthenpurackal, OFM Cap. from Eluru
- Sr. Angela, FSM Provincial from Bangalore
- Sr. Valsa, FSM Provincial Councillor from TN
- Fr. Sebastian Thundathikunnel, VC Superior General from Kerala
- Fr. Antony Moonnupeedikackal, VCGeneral Councillor from Kerala
- Fr. Sudhakar Meka, MHM from Hyderabad
- Fr. V M Thomas, SDB Provincial from Guwahati
- Sr. Aniese Vallipalam, FCC Provincial from Kerala
- Sr. Jyothis, FCC Provincial Councillor from Kerala
- Fr. John Lugun, SVD from Pune
- Mr. Joseph Peter from Kerala
- Fr. Hector, SJSocius, from Guwahati
- SJ Fathers Thomas EJ, Anto MF, and Babu Paul, from Kerala
- Sr. Jolly, FS, Provincial, from Rangia

Bishop's Program for May 2018

- 01-02: Caritas GB & Caritas Council Meet, Bengaluru
- 03-17: Program, USA
- 19-24: CSC Provincial Chapter, Agartala
- 20: Parish Feast, Ambassa
- 25: State level NGOs Meet, JUST Agartala
- 27: Parish Feast, Mandwi
- 29: Sr. Pushpa MC, Silver Jubilee, Kumarghat
- 31: Abingcherramondoli under Tuikarmaw Parish