



Pastor's Corner **Always someone Bigger than You!**



India's famous actor of yesteryears Amitabh Bacchan shares this incident: "At the peak of my career, I was once travelling by plane. The passenger next to me was elderly gentleman dressed in a simple shirt and pants. He appeared to be middle class, and well educated. Other passengers perhaps recognized who I was, but this gentleman appeared to be unconcerned of my presence... He was reading his paper, looking out of the window, and when tea was served, he sipped it quietly. Trying to strike a conversation with him I smiled. The man courteously smiled back and said 'Hello'. We got talking and I brought up the subject of cinema and movies and asked, 'Do you watch films?' The man replied, 'Oh, very few. I did see one many years ago.' I mentioned that I worked in the movie industry. The man replied, 'Oh, that's nice. What do you do?' I replied, 'I am an actor' The man nodded, 'Oh, that's wonderful!' And that was it..."



When we landed, I held out my hand and said, "It was good to travel with you. By the way, my name is Amitabh Bacchan!" The man shook my hand and smiled, "Thank you... nice to have met you. I am J. R. D. Tata!" I learned on that day that no matter how big you think you are, there is always someone *bigger than you*.

Humility is the antidote to pride, and restores to the soul the light of God in and by which we see things as they are, and in their true relations. So be humble, even though it may be difficult to put it into practice! We can make our own the prayer of Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore: This is my prayer to thee my Lord; please give me the strength to be humble and bend my knees before insolent might.

+Lumen, CSC

Happy Children's Day

On November 14, India celebrates Children's Day (also known as Bal Divas). It was instituted as a tribute to our first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru on his Birthday. It is celebrated to increase the awareness of people towards the rights, care and education of children. Children are the key to success and development of the country as they would lead their country in different and new ways. Children are the God gifts to their parents and society. We wish all our little ones HAPPY CHILDREN'S DAY.

Editorial **Time to keep our Faith Strong & Heads High**



As we had perhaps anticipated, the run up to the State Assembly Elections is proving to be tumultuous. We've already had our share of strikes, shutdowns, riots and arson, and even a killing. And there's perhaps about four months yet to go for the elections!

Four important months. Extend that by a month or two and we have what is arguably the best season of the year. It is the time of the year when, taking advantage of the good weather and post harvest plentitude, our Parishes pack their calendars with many programs. For us in the Diocese, it is the time of important events like Parish Retreats, Parish *sabha*, Diocese-level Procession, Christmas, and Diocese level Youth Convention. Even for others, it is a season of festivities the Pujas, Diwali, New Year, *MakarSankranti* and so on.



This wonderful time of the year, however, could turn out to be a period of commotion this election year. With an important election round the corner, everything promises to be a wee bit different this time around. There are any number of Political Parties around that strenuously vie with one another for control over our mind-space and perceptions. Desperate to find themselves on the winning side, they do not hesitate, even to unleash violence or deliberately divide innocent people.

In such a scenario, the challenge before us does not consist in merely ensuring smooth conduct of programs, but in making sure that our minds and hearts remain attuned to the reasons behind those programs and celebrations.

As a Church, we do not subscribe to any Political Party but we do, along with the Universal Church and the Indian Constitution uphold values and positions like freedom, equality, fraternity, dignity of life, fundamental rights, etc. ?

Like in many other States, Christian presence in the echelons of political power is close to nil in Tripura. And yet, compared to many other states, Christians here enjoyed better respect and freedom to engage in various services and to practice and preach their faith in compliance with what our Constitution provides.

That is why perhaps, the Church, although a negligible entity in Tripura in terms of numbers, has been able to render and continue to render service that cannot be considered negligible by any standard. In a pre-election time such as this, the Church upholds and proclaims the God-given freedom of the individual to choose and not be nose-led by fabricated perceptions borne of misunderstanding, bias and falsehood. *J. Pulinthanath, SDB*

AMBASSA PARISH

Spiritual Renewal Maria

Ambassa, October 1, 2017: Two days of Charismatic Retreat was organized at the Parish as a part of annual spiritual renewal for the Parishioners. Mr. John Jaques and Mr. Ranjit Tirkey from Kolkata were the Retreat guides for the two days spiritual journey. On the first day many were not inspired because they were new to the Charismatic type or



Alleluia type of Praise and Worship. But on the second day, many were healed and gave testimony.

Thanks to the preachers who gave inspiring Talk to confess their sins. Many were flocking to receive the sacrament of reconciliation. As Jesus used to say, "your faith as saved you and sin no more" was also applicable to many people who came forward to confess their sins and were healed. Many said that yearly spiritual refreshment keeps their faith alive and propFosed that 'every year this spiritual exercise should be arranged'.

Marriage Preparation Course

Ambassa 28, September 2017: Ambassa Parish organized 3 days Marriage Preparation Course, from 26 to 28 September for all who were preparing to get married. There were 52 candidates. The Course was followed very strictly. The Resource Persons were well versed in their respective topics. The Course was concluded with Holy Mass and issuing the Certificates. Fr. Ivan D' Silva, SVD, Parish Priest of Ambassa conducted the Evaluation and exhorted that 'no marriage will be blessed unless marriage classes are attended'. And all said "YES" Thanks to all the Resource Persons and Family Commission who gave the Certificates.

Youth Seminar



Ambassa, October 5, 2017: Two days of Youth Seminar was held on October 4th & 5th. 60 Youth participated. It was conducted by

Parish Youth Animator, Mr. NathunglienHalam. Fr. Ivan welcomed the Youth. Several topics were covered by various speakers. There was also a Panel discussion on different issues like 'family & prayer', 'youth & media', 'youth & vocation'. On the end of second day, new parish Youth Committee was formed some actions plan was drawn. The newly elected Youth President promised to be active in his responsibilities and would create a 'WhatsApp Group' for the parish Youth.

News Desk, Ambassa

GACHIRAMPARA PARISH

Parish Sabah and Feast

St. Francis of Assisi Parish conducts Parish *Sabha* and celebrates the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of the Parish. It was anticipated to 1st October due to some local celebrations. As a preparation for the feast, we had all the *mondolis* under the Parish came together in advance for two days. These two days they revived their faith experience with the theme 'Christ the Way, the Truth and the Life.' The Resource Persons and Animators were Fr. Cyprian Pinto SVD, Mr. Chandra Reang and Parish Priest. Fr. Robert CSC, the Provincial of Holy Cross Fathers, preached a great homily.

Members from our new *mondoli* of Manacherra joined the Parish *Sabah*. It was a wonderful experience to renew their faith experience. Presiding at Mass on the Feast Day with 6 other priests Most Rev. Bishop Lumen CSC, administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to a large number of faithful. *Maria Sangh* celebrated their day by offering the new fruits of the season during the offertory procession. Parish Priest Fr. Felix Pinto OFM Cap, thanked all the participants and the participants after having a good deserving meal dispersed to their respective places.

Fr. Joel, OFM, Cap

KHUMULWNG PARISH

Retreat An occasion to avoid Communal Tension

As the Puja vacations began, the parishioners of St. Alphonsa Khumulwng began Praise and Worship. It was an occasion to avoid Puja celebration and communal tension. There were two charismatic Retreats of two days each from 24th to 25th and 27th to 28th September 2017 at two different locations. People of seven *mothas* attended each Retreat. Two Preachers from Kolkata, Mr. John Jacques and Mr. Ranjit Tirkey, animated the Retreat powerfully. People were inspired by their preaching and healing touch. The Retreat was well coordinated with Rosary devotion, Adoration, Confession, Holy Eucharist and Choir. The parishioners were inspired and strengthened in faith through the charismatic retreats.

Fr. Arun Minj SVD

Passion for Christ

St. Alphonsa Parish Khumulwng organized a Youth Convention on 29th

and 30th of September on the theme 'Passion for Christ'. There were 47 Youth who actively participated and benefited from this great event. The Youth Convention began with the ice



breaking session followed by Praise and Worship conducted by Br. John Jacques from Kolkata. There were other speakers too who dealt with topics like Youth and Spirituality, Youth and the Media, Youth and Addictions, Youth and Career. To add more colour to the event we divided the Youth into 4 Groups and organized some Games and Competitions. We ended the Youth Convention with an Action Plan for the next year.

Fr. Stany Pereira, SVD

KUMARGHAT PARISH

Maria Sangho Annual Meet

Maria Sangho Annual get together was held at Kanchancherra village from on the 29th, 30th September and 1st October. The theme chosen for this year was Mt 11:22-24 "Whatever you ask in prayer with faith, will



be granted". Members of Maria Songho from different villages of St. Paul's Parish Kumarghat. "It was led by Fr. Paul CR, CSC and the main highlight was healing sessions through adoration, Eucharist and Praise and worship. It began on 29th Friday with adoration and praise and worship at 6.30 P.M. there was active participation and people had a deep experience of prayer through the guidance of Fr. Paul C.R. there was opportunity to for confession on the second day and it was benefitted by all. There were different competitions conducted on the second day. The program came to an end on the 1st October with the Holy Mass. It was decided that the next annual meet would be held at Sonaimuri Village.

Confirmation at Shantipally



On October 2nd the feast of the Guardian Angels, 24 people were administered Confirmation at

Shantipally by Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro CSC. The holy Eucharist was celebrated by Frs. Arun CSC, Fr. Aneesh CSC, and Fr. Cyprian SVD. The candidates were prepared by Sr. Pushpa M.C inclusive of both children and

elderly, some of them being differently-abled. It was a joyful occasion for all the inmates as it was a time of spiritual renewal with the presence of our dear Bishop Lumen.



'Let your Light Shine' Annual Youth Retreat

What better day could it be than to begin the Youth Retreat on 13th Oct 2017, the day Our Lady of Fatima during this centenary year? The Theme-“Let Your Light Shine”. 120 youth attended. The program was inaugurated by Fr. Aneesh CSC, Kumarghat PYA followed by Rosary, Dinner and movie. Next day Fr. Abraham, VC, took over leading the Youth into a deeper knowledge of the world of God. In the evening God poured down His mercy as all 120 youth made their confession. Fr. C.V Jose came to help us. Then Mr. Roitua Darlong took a session on Values needed for the Youth of today. On the final day Fr. Lawrence Darlong the DYD from Agartala using PowerPoint presented to the Youth the values and dangers of the electronic media. Then Mr. Sumanta Debbarma of Khumulwng Parish spoke to the Youth on prayer and the Bible, sharing his own conversion story. The Retreat ended with a Thanksgiving Eucharist by Fr. Lawrence and Fr. Aneesh. The Youth left reluctantly with hope and joy to let their Light Shine.

Sr. Pushpa M.C.

Conference on Family Catechesis at Gujarat



A National Catechetical Conference on Training for Regional and Diocesan Secretaries of Commission for Catechetics in India was held at Pastoral Centre, Nadiad, Gujarat from 12 to 14 September. There were 127 participants from 93 different Latin Dioceses. Various topics were discussed pertaining to family Catechesis based on *Amoris Laetitia*. Also success stories from SCC, and Couples for Christ were shared. Challenges for family catechesis, faith formation, family prayer, etc. were also discussed. Some guidelines, tools and techniques were also presented.

Fr. Cyprian Pinto, SVD

Voice of the Youth on 2nd Regional Youth Convention, 2017 Sonaiguli, Guwahati

Cheerful and vibrant--Those are the adjectives that other Dioceses of the Northeast associated us with. They are certainly not wrong as our Youth are some of the smartest, hardworking and talented ones. My experience of the recently concluded Convention has been an eye opener. I had doubts when Fr. Lawrence Darlong, our DYD, asked me to register for the Convention; but now I thank him for giving me the opportunity to attend. Our 23 hours journey to *Sonaiguli* was not the most comfortable one, but we held on with faith and hope. We were 54 faithful Youth delegates from our Diocese.



An invaluable list of dignitaries and speakers which included Bishops, IAS Officers and Doctors, spoke to the Youth. The Sessions were eye-openers and made me feel proud of being a Catholic. One such Session by Rev. Fr. James Zodinliana on the need for Confession was a beautiful message to us young people. Then there was the entertaining animation and cultural showcasing from different Dioceses. We performed our Mamita, Reang modern and Hojagiri dances and did our best. What I bring back from the Convention is an experience unparalleled to any I have experienced before--the way the program was organized, the work put behind it, the strength of the Youth of today, and most importantly, a stronger bond between me and Jesus. I come back from the Convention stronger in faith and zealous to do the work of the Lord and to share the experience with the people from our Diocese.

Let me close with what Sarah, one Youth said: “The most important thing that I learnt from the Convention is about our Vocation as a Christian, as a believer, and as a follower of Jesus. It is not only the Priests and Religious who are to spread the Good News but it is the duty of every baptized Christian, and I am one. Personally I was motivated to discipline myself to spend more time to learn the Bible and God. We can train ourselves to read and meditate the Word of God every morning, spend quiet and quality time in praying at least half an hour every day; then the rest will follow. I was really blessed and feel great joy to have been able to attend the Convention.”

Mr. Biswajit Tripura

Annual Day at Gokulnagar

St. Joseph's English Medium School, East Gokulnagar, celebrated its 3rd Annual Day on 18th October. Mr. Nantu Ranjan Das (SDM of Bishalgarh) was the Chief Guest. Mr. Gopal Debnath (Panchayathpradhan) and Fr. Blasius, SDB, were Guests of Honour. The program was graced with the presence of many fathers, brothers, sisters and the parents. The annual function was special as almost all the students participated in



various programs. This year emphasis was given to save nature, thus creating in children's mind the importance of nature for our better living as well as bringing awareness to the parents. The theme was “When we heal the earth, We heal ourselves”. 15 items were performed that were scintillating and praiseworthy. The Guests and Parents and Chief Guest all appreciated the program. Over 1,500 people attended the program. **Fr. Bennet Joseph**

JUST News Roundup

Nutrition to Children

400 children from 12 JUST Coaching Centers under Ganganagar R.D. Block and Damdamia are being feed with nutritious food like egg, banana and biscuits twice a week with the support of Smile Foundation. This Nutrition Program has made the children regular in the class and also has enabled the poor children to get some protein for their health.



Malaria Control

In September JUST organized a series of Behavioral Change Communication activities at Dhalai and Khowai Districts of Tripura under the IMCP-3 Project assisted by Caritas India. The programs were conducted in order to create awareness and also keeping good linkage with the village heads so as to reduce Malaria in the project villages. 18 Community Consultation and Message Dissemination, 21 Infotainment, 21 Mikings and 1 Local school activity were conducted during the month. The FSs and CHVs of JUST organized the activities in the selected village under IMCP-3 project.



Mr. Vincent Debbarma

Bishop's Program for November 2017

- 01: DB School Blessing, Bishramganj
- 02: All Souls Day, Cemetery Mass, Mariamnagar
- 04: Parents Day, Gandacherra School
- 05: Confirmation, Gandacherra Parish
- 06: Health Commission Meet, Agartala
- 07: Clergy Meet & Recollection, Agartala
- 08-09: Silver Jubilee of SVD arrival in Tripura
- 10: Caritas National Seminar on Volunteerism, Delhi
- 11: Andre School Blessing, Bodhjungnagar
- 12: Diocese level Eucharistic procession, Agartala
- 15: Assisi School Blessing, Gachirampara
- 16: Assisi School Blessing, Kanchanpur
- 18: Murabari Confirmation, Bodhjungnagar Parish
- 19: Tamakari Chapel Blessing, Bodhjungnagar Parish
- 21-24: Ashakiranam launch, Palghat&Sultanpet
- 25-26: Christ the King Parish Feast, Depacherra
- 28-29: Charismatic Seminar for Priests & Religious
- 30: To Bangladesh for Pope's Visit

Pope Francis - Religions for Peace

"I express my esteem appreciation for the work of 'Religions for Peace'," Pope Francis said on October 18, as he received a delegation from the organization. "You provide a valuable service to both religion



and peace, for the religions are bound by their very nature to promote peace through justice, fraternity, disarmament and care for creation." The Pope noted that "peace remains an urgent task in today's world, where so many peoples are scarred by war and conflict". He reminded the group that "peacemaking and the pursuit of justice go together". {zenitnews}

Fides: Catholic Population Growing to 1.3 Billion

The number of Catholics in the world is increasing: almost 1.3 billion, 17.7 percent of the world's population, reported Agenzia Fides on October 20, 2017. Agenzia Fides is the information service of the Pontifical



Mission Societies. According to figures from the Church's Book of Statistics (data related to 2015), the baptized are 12.5 million more than the previous year (2014). This is one of the data in the Dossier published by Agenzia Fides on the occasion of the 91st World Mission Day, which is celebrated on October 22, 2017. Asia has 141 million Catholic, 3.24 percent of the population. The Dossier offers a wealth of statistical information about the Catholic Church around the world.

Our Distinguished Visitors

SVD Frs. Bala Prasad and Satish from Andhra Pradesh
 SCV Sisters Ancita Superior General & Sr. Primosa from Kerala
 Archbishop Thomas Mar Koorilos of Thiruvalla
 Bishop Mar Barnabas of Gurgaon
 Msgr. Fr. Shaji Manikulam, VG of Gurgaon Diocese
 Fr. Joy Plackal from Ernakulam