



Pastor's Corner

The Dad who runs marathons with his disabled son

14th November is CHILDREN'S DAY in India. I thought of sharing this heartwarming true story which I got via CNA. I dedicate it to all children (especially the differently-abled ones) and wish you Happy Children's Day.

+Lumen, CSC



Most fathers like to share their hobbies with their sons. But for José Manuel this proved a challenge given that his fourth child Pablo suffers from a severe form of cerebral palsy. Despite this, however, José Manuel had idea. "I don't remember when we began to run together. I know that the first time was in the summer. I was getting ready to go out for a run, but neither my wife nor children could stay to take care of Pablo. So I decided I could take him with me," José Manuel Roas Treviño told CNA. Even though José Manuel said he did not know if Pablo would like the experience or not, he quickly demonstrated that he did. "He sat up straight

in the chair and when he does that it means 'okay,' because it takes a huge amount of effort to keep sitting up straight." "We were running down a nearby bicycle lane and he was totally into it, he was laughing, shrieking, lifting up his arms. I was singing to him and he was laughing more and more. And I realized that what we were experiencing was very special." Pablo is 18 years-old and is affected by acute cerebral palsy, which makes him completely dependent on his parents, José Manuel and Maite. He cannot speak or walk, nor will he be able to in the future. But for his parents, Pablo far from being a burden, he is a gift. "I thank God every day for Pablo and for this life story that God is having us experience. Because when he was born, a wall certainly was raised up with all the limitations that appeared, because you were presented with a terrible life. But for me, I live it every day in the first person, this still is surprising. God has given us a complex life story to live but he also helps us to go forward with it and to do it with hope, with a sense of humor. Because I too have looked the other way from those who had children in their cars like Pablo and my heart just recoiled."

José Manuel does not deny that the sufferings are "enormous, more than I had ever imagined" but he stressed that "it is suffering that you get much more out of than what you lose. God is near the weak, and Pablo is certainly the weakest there is. We find in him things you don't find anywhere else such as love and forgiveness of the purest sort." This

father also commented that "there are very hard days, like I never in my life thought of, but it's true that afterwards you discover who you are and also who God is, which is that which makes these impossibilities possible." That is why he insists that despite the difficulties his faith in God is stronger, thanks to Pablo. "Yes, it's precisely because of Pablo that we believe in God, because we are living the impossible. We're a normal family that gets into fights everyday, and we've got our things...but where Pablo is concerned, our differences end. This is what unites us the most, and so for us Pablo is a blessing, he's what draws us together." In addition, José Manuel emphasized how encouraging it is to see during races and marathons everybody wants to hi five him, how the people applaud him during the race course and he lifts up his hands and laughs"... and he insists "It's a miracle that we're living and much more so to be able to share it with him." So far they have run six marathons: three in Seville, two in Madrid and one in New York, and he assures there are more races left to share. For José Manuel and his entire family, having Pablo is "a true privilege, I say it with all my heart."



Editorial

Eucharistic Procession the best is yet to be



The Annual Eucharistic Procession of the Diocese is round the corner. A practice which began nine years ago has

today become an integral and important part of the Diocesan Calendar. It is interesting to trace the growth of the event from the date on which it was first held - 31st October 2009, till date. We look forward to its 10th edition in the hope it will be an event of intense spiritual fervor and renewal of faith for all.

The organizational acumen that Tripura unit of AICU (All India Catholic Union) shows in the organization of the Procession is admirable. In a place where at times we are content with just about anything, it is refreshing to see the Procession Team spare no efforts to tackle



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CONGRATULATIONS

Sr. Nanditha Pereira SRA, is elected as the Superior General of the 'Missionary Sisters of the Queen of the Apostles' (SRA) on October 5, 2018 for a term of six years. Her Councilors are: Sr. Eva Maria, Sr. Vincentia, Sr. Zeena and Sr. Annie D'Souza. LINK congratulates the new Superior General and her Team.

Sr. Elizabeth George, FMA, is the new Provincial of the Shillong Province. She was installed as Provincial on 6th October. LINK congratulates the new Provincial and her Councilors: Sr. Pyngrope Rosa, the Vice Provincial, Sr. D? Cunha Celine, Sr. Shangpliang Marvella, Sr. Puweñ Helen and Sr. Maslai Celina, Sr. Susngi Kyntiewlin Euginia (Provincial Secretary), Sr. Pohrmen Gemima (Provincial Economist).

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that natural tendency to shabbiness. Their aggressive stand in this regard has borne fruit and produced impressive result, a trifle stiff one, though, at times. They deserve a pat on the back for putting to good use the cumulative experience of previous years.

Over the years, there's something else that's changing - the spirit in which the Procession is held. Started at a time when Agartala knew only political 'michils', the art of which it had perfected to unbeatable levels, the Eucharistic Procession confused the general public with its benign nature and lack of belligerence. *(That the earlier editions always featured some devotees who went overboard 'expressing faith', perhaps out of a bewilderment at having for the first time the entire Highway at their disposal is another matter, though).*

With each year, the Procession became more a spiritual event, a Eucharist-centered faith act. It became less an occasion to flaunt what we had, more an occasion to proclaim the Lord. The size of the banner and the straightness of the line became less important than the prayer on one's lips and the faith in his heart. A very desirable direction, indeed. Another pat on the back for the organizers!

It's not that we have arrived entirely. But we know we shall reach. Perhaps a time will come when the Annual event at the capital will be a culmination of a host of preparatory events held in parishes, for example. Or may be, in the future it will offer to the participants a more extensive time of reflection, prayer, reconciliation and renewal. Right now sandwiched as it is between two train journeys on the same day, these are futile thoughts.

The Procession is something we look forward to as it brings blessings on us and the whole Diocese. Despite numerous constraints that may be there we would do well to focus more on the essentials. If we truly believe that the round shaped bread we carry along with us is God Himself, there can be no better thing to do during the Procession than to talk to Him and commune with Him. It would also help us not to fall into the trap of spending our precious Procession time 'showing' our faith to thousands of bystanders.

J. Pulinthanath, SDB

BODHJUNGNAGAR PARISH

Bible Sunday Celebration

Welcoming the New Principal to the School:

On 16th August Rev. Fr. Joe Paul CSC was cordially welcomed as the principal of St. Andre School, Bodhjunnagar by Rev. Fr. Binoy CSC, the Secretary of the School and the Parish priest along with Headmistress Sr. Tincy SABS during the Assembly where the new Principal expressed his joy of serving them with the help of all the Teachers and Students.

Maria Sangho Parish exchange program:



On 19th August the members of Maria Sangho from Mariamnagar Parish along with their parish Priest Fr. Abraham V.C visited St. Andre Parish. Their day began with the Eucharistic celebration and the special Eucharist was animated by the Maria Sangho members of Lefunga and Bodhjunnagar motha. After the Mass Praise and Worship and a Talk on the importance of family prayer was given by Sr. Julie SML. After the Talk, Sr. Renu CSC initiated the open discussion and action plan for the Maria Sangho Members of both Parishes. In the group sharing, they have exchanged their faith, problems and activities that they do in their Parishes as a faith community of Women. It was really enriching experience for all.

Diocesan Pastoral Plan: In view of Diocesan Jubilee celebration, Parish level Pastoral Plan was held on 26th August. The Holy Eucharist was presided over by Fr. Jeevan SVD. After the Holy Mass, there was animation, Group discussion and sharing of Questionnaire. Fr. Jeevan SVD, Director of JUST, lead the Leaders of the Parish. Around 60 representatives from all the substations actively participated and suggested valuable ideas for the renewal in their home, parish and the Diocese of Agartala. the main thrust was given on faith formation and faith transfer. The Meeting ended with a sumptuous meal.

Youth Sunday: Annual Youth Sunday was



held at Radhanagar on 2nd September. 58 active Youth of our Parish participated and gained

spiritual strength from Mass that was celebrated by Rev. Fr. Binoy CSC, the parish priest. 4 members of Diocesan Youth Team animated the program. They urged the youth to seek the wisdom that is hidden in the Bible and live Family life meaningfully. The Youth expressed their joy and happiness of renewing their spiritual life. The program ended with a delicious meal.

Confirmation at St. Thomas Church, Yacharai: The Sacrament of



Confirmation was administered to 52 persons at St. Thomas Church, Yacharai on 23rd September 2018. Bishop Lumen Monteiro was warmly welcomed by the people of Yacharai zone. Bishop Lumen presided the Holy Eucharist in which he emphasized the importance of faith and taking certain concrete measures for preserving the faith in his instruction. There were 52 faithful who took the sacrament of confirmation. There was a short felicitation programme soon after the mass and the entire programme was ended with 'agape' for all those who participated. **Fr. Binoy, CSC**

KATHALCHERRA PARISH

Girl Child Day celebration!



Nativity of Mother Mary which also marks celebration of Girl child day was kept up on 9th September 2018 at Kathalcherra Parish. Bethany sisters along with the Maria Sanga made the girl children feel proud of their worth and dignity. Around 260 girls from 3 hostels, neighboring families gathered for the same. Sr Suman BS highlighted the importance of the girl child, accept the girl child as a gift of God to the family and humanity. After the talk they all gathered in the school ground for the games. Group wise various games were conducted and the girls enjoyed it to the full. Winners were honored with the

prizes, sponsored by the Parish Priest Fr Lancy CSC. *Sr. Suman, BS*

TUIKARMAW PARISH Family strengthening through Family Counseling

St. Mary's Parish Tuikramaw, organized Family Strengthening through Family Counseling from October 4th to 11th October 2018. Fr. Satish CSSR from West Bengal was the Resource Person. The program was held in the following villages Holket, Katalia, and Tuikramaw. The Resource Person stayed in the villages instructing people and inspiring them to follow the catholic family living. He visited all families and met them personally listening and counseling. The evening hours were spent on catechetical instructions, sacrament of Reconciliation and holy Mass.

Jericho Cross Pilgrimage

The Jericho Cross Pilgrimage was held in the Parish from 8th to 10th October. The Cross was solemnly received on 8th October 2018 from Sindukpatar Parish. The Cross was taken to the following villages Holakhet, Potechery, and Tuikramaw. The people were instructed about the importance of venerating the Jericho Cross and praying for the peace in India and the State. People participated in large numbers.

Parish Sabha

The Annual Parish *Sabha* of Tuikarmaw was held from 12th to 13th October at Luku Catholic *monodli*. The *Sabha* was inaugurated on 12th October by Fr. Satish who was the Resource Person during the *Sabha*. Classes were taken on topics like, who is a catholic, the importance of catholic marriage, and role of Mother Mary in the Church. The Parish Priest Fr. C. Abraham, CSC, presented the Annual Report of the parish followed by the *monodli* Reports. The next day Bishop Lumen CSC was welcomed to the Parish *Sabha*. He addressed the faithful and encouraged them to imitate the model of Holy Family in their daily life.

Luku St. Paul *mondoli* Silver Jubilee

Luku St. Paul *mondoli* Silver Jubilee celebrations began on 13th evening with a cultural program and ended on 14th noon with the Eucharistic celebration. In spite of the showers and grey skies the people were jubilant. The theme of the Jubilee was Journeying Towards Light. To mark the Silver Jubilee celebrations, a new Grotto of Mother Mary was blessed and a Souvenir was released. The Jubilee Holy Mass began at 10am. His Lordship Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC presided over the holy Eucharist. Fr. Satish broke the word of God calling on the people to thank God for the countless blessings that they received. People expressed their gratitude to Holy Cross Fathers for sowing the seeds of faith in

their hearts. The celebration ended with a festive meal. *-Miss Mina Marak*

KHUMULWNG PARISH Youth Seminar

Divine Mercy *motha* under St. Alphonsa Parish organized one day Youth Seminar on 30th September. The day began with Praise and Worship, followed by confessions and a meaningful Eucharistic celebration, presided over by Fr. Stany Pereira SVD, the Youth Animator of the Parish and assisted by Dn. Cyprian Soreng SVD who preached the Word of God. Mr. David, the Youth Leader from Bishramganj Parish, Fr. Stany SVD, and Mr. Gautam Debbarma the *motha* leader were the main Speakers. All the Speakers dealt on different topics like, importance of Youth in the Church, importance of daily Prayer, Word of God and being generous in doing good works. Beside this Seminar there was Praise and Worship and our Youth actively participated in it. The melodious singing and music by Mr. Manik Molsom added more beauty for the event. The Youth spent one whole day with the Lord through different activities and ended with the prayer and thanksgiving.

Fr. Stany Pereira, SVD

Diocese News Nuggets

Anti-Human Trafficking One Life, No Price and POCSO Act

Ms. Leeza, Manager for Safe Migration and Anti-Human Trafficking from Caritas India Office Delhi, conducted a Seminar on 2nd October for Agartala Diocese on **Anti-Human Trafficking. She talked on the following topics:**

- Human Trafficking... The meaning and occurrences; various kinds of Trafficking
- Trafficking as a process ...
 - Recruitment, Movement, Exploitation
 - Reasons Behind Human Trafficking
 - Constitutional Provisions against Human Trafficking
- Indian National Legal Framework:
 - Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, 1956 (being amended); Indian Penal Code (select provisions)- section 370, 370 A; Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2000
 - Child Marriage Prohibition Act 2006; Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986
 - Protection of Children from Sexual Offenses Act, 2012 (POCSO)
 - National Policies and Plans:
 - National Child Labour Policy, 1987; National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001; National Plan of Action

to combat trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of women and children (1998) etc.

The measures she suggested were - Public education at School Level; create Awareness at the school. Have peer groups/learning and sharing among peer groups; Orient teachers on human trafficking; etc. She also talked about measures that we could do at Parish level. CPP and its importance were also discussed.

She ended her Talk saying: We can be agents of change too, Restoring Faith...Ensuring Hope.

On the same day Fr. James Morais, SJ, made a Presentation on POCSO (The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012), making the audience aware of the kinds of offences and the punishment such as: Substantive offences; Penetrative Sexual Assault; Aggravated penetrative sexual assault.; Sexual Assault; Sexual Harassment; and Using child for pornographic purposes: He also presented the Procedure of investigation, trial etc; Reporting of offences; Procedure for media; Recording of statement of child.

Fr. Lawrence Darlong

Media Literacy and Social Communications Seminar



Ambassa, September 28, 2018: Holy Cross Higher Secondary School, Tuikarmaw organized two days of Media literacy class for higher class students. More than 300 students participated in the two days training conducted by Fr. Ivan D'Silva, svd, the Agartala Diocesan Communication Coordinator. The well thought-out plan of Fr. Alfred D' Souza, CSC, the Principal, to have a workshop on Media for the growing students of his School was successful. September 27 & 28 were very hectic for the students. The Resource Person Fr. Ivan spoke on the different levels of communication and explained 'what is good communication?' Through interesting video clips the Resource Person spoke on Media & advertisements, Media & Violence, Media & Women, Media & films and about good use of Mobile. The regular interaction between the students and Resource Person kept the class interesting and resourceful.

Cancel the Cancer



Ambassa, September 21, 2018: Sr. Prema, BS, gave a practical lesson on how one has to be aware of the Cancer and its symptoms. The pictographic class by the Resource Person drew the attention of the participants of Ambassa Parishioners. There were around 40 participants, mostly women and girls. She elaborately spoke on how to prevent the cancer by early diagnosis and not to get panic about it. She said, "Women and girls either shy or frightened to show any lump which grows

in the breast or anywhere in the private parts". She further said, "If diagnosed in the initial stages then certainly it will be cured".
News Bureau, Ambassa

Vocation Camp

The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. With these inspirational words we the Staff of Jeevadhara Diocesan Minor Seminary, Champaknagar, organized the Vocation Camp 2018 on the theme "Speak Lord Your Servant is Listening". The three days Vocation Camp, began on 17th of October with the introduction and welcome by Fr. Stany Pereira SVD, the Vocation Promoter of Agartala Diocese. The Icebreaking Session by Dn. Cyprian Soreng SVD helped each participant to become more lively, active and familiar with the new faces. The inaugural Mass and the Session by Fr. Balan helped everyone to get to know the purpose of this Vocation Camp.



The Sessions were conducted on different Topics. The Speakers were Fr. Balan, Fr. Bosco, Fr. Sunny, SDB, Fr. Valentine SVD, Mr. Gautam Debbarma and Mr. Subol Debbarma. The 19 participants of this Vocation Camp were also given many opportunities to show their talents through many games and stage programs. At the concluding ceremony the winners were awarded with the prizes. We thank each and everyone who supported, helped and prayed for the success of this Vocation Camp. *Fr. Stany Pereira SVD*

Our Readers Write

Condolences at the death of your Priest Fr. Bennet. Thank you for the newsletter.

+P.K. George, Miao

Thank you for LINK-OCTOBER 2018. Sad to hear of the untimely death of Fr. Bennet. Condolence and prayers. He was my student in Oriens. *+James Thoppil, Kohima*

Thanks for the Link Bishop Lumen. It is very much appreciated. It indeed is a ray of hope. *Chacko and Marilynne, Canada*

My deepest condolences on this huge loss. God rest the soul of this young priest Fr. Raj and grant him the Beatific Vision.

Sr. Visitation, RGS, Bangalore

Sad to hear of the untimely death of Fr. Bennet. Thanks for the LINK of Oct. Your message on Ahimsa is truly inspirational. *Fr. Jolly, Delhi*

Shocked to hear the death of Fr. Bennet. I join you with bereavement, consolation and in prayers. Thank you for the Link.

Cardinal Patrick, CSC, Bangladesh

Thanks for a nice issue, once again right on time. So sad to hear about Fr. Raj: keeping him, his family and the Diocese in prayers.

Tony Krisak, USA

Thanks for the Link. Sorry to hear of the sad demise of Fr. Bennet. May he rest in peace. May

God give enough strength to his family members and all of you his extended family to bear the sad loss. *Biju Mathew, Calicut*

Thank you, Bishop Lumen, for the October LINK. I will remember you and the diocese in prayer as you mourn the death of Fr. Raj. *Joel, CSC, USA*

Thank you for the LINK. Very sorry to hear of the sudden passing away of Fr. Bennet.

Sr. Mirabelle, AC, Kolkata

I express my condolences at the tragic death of Fr. Bennett. It's a great loss for the diocese. Thank you for the Link. *Fr. Pius Thuruthiyil, CMF, Shillong* Thanks for LINK and all the news. May the soul of Fr. Bennet rest in peace!

Conrad, CSC, Montreal, Canada

India News Nuggets

Pope Francis to young Indians at the National Assembly: "Make your lives fruitful"

The first national Catholic Indian Youth Conference organized by the Youth Commission of CCBI, got underway in New Delhi with a video message from Pope Francis to the young Indians: "Make your lives fruitful for the benefit of all. Do not forget that youth is a wealth that bears fruit. You have the future

and the present in your hands. Go forth. Do not be discouraged". More than 500 young delegates, from 132 Indian Catholic dioceses, are taking part in the National Conference which lasts until October 25. The event is organized by the Indian Catholic Youth Movement, which wanted to prepare it in harmony with the Synod of Bishops. "The meeting will become a fixed annual event: we think it is important to offer young people the opportunity to participate in a national training program", says Manoj Mathew, among the organizers of the Movement to Fides. Percival Holt, National President of the Indian Catholic Youth Movement and presently at the Synod in Rome told Fides: "On October 18 I met Pope Francis and gave him a gift on behalf of the Youth of India". The gift was a Cross of the Good Shepherd carved by hand on sandalwood, together with a lotus flower, the national flower of India. *(Agencia Fides)*

Bishop's Program for November 2018

- 01: Jericho Cross Concluding Ceremony, Don Bosco Nandanagar
- 02: All Souls Day, Mariamnagar Cemetery
- 04: Parish Day, Baijalbari
- 06: Consultors Meet, Agartala
Clergy Meet & 40th day Mass, Agartala
- 07-11: With Visitors from Hielfswerk, Lichtenstein
- 11: 10th Diocese level Eucharistic Procession, Agartala
- 12: Annual Day, Fatima School Damdamia
- 14-15: With Engineer Denny
- 16: Sanskriti Program
- 17-18: P.U.S.H. Moringoor, Kerala
- 19-23: Caritas PSC Meet, Kerala Region
- 24-25: Parish Feast & Church Blessing, Depacherra
- 27-28: Caritas National Conference, Delhi
- 30: Montfort Jubilee Mass, Champaknagar

Our Distinguished Visitors

- Frs. Victor, Jerome and Pascal from Udupi Diocese
- Ms. Leeza from Caritas India, Delhi
- Frs. Albano and Edmund from Goa Archdiocese
- Frs. Diniz and Joseph SAC, from DNH
- Sr. C.J. Mary, UFS Provincial, from Dimapur
- Sr. Jolly, FS, Provincial from Rangia
- Fr. Subrata and Ms. Poonam from Kolkata
- Fr. Andrew Gawrych CSC, from Santiago, Chile
- Fr. Thomas Manjaly, Professor from ORIENS Shillong
- Fr. M. K. George, SJ Provincial Superior from Kerala