

FOOTPRINTS

"How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news." 1S.52:7

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Itanagar Diocesan News Bulletin

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REAL LOVE
BEGINS AT
CALVARY

FOOTPRINTS IS HAPPY TO WELCOME THE NEW PRIESTS TO THE DIOCESE OF ITANAGAR:



Rev Fr Joyson



Rev Fr Jobin



Rev Fr David



Rev Fr Linus



Rev Fr Krupa

IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial	01
Shepherd's Voice	03
Inspirational Story	04
Called to be a Pastor (Poem)	05
Ask your Question	06
The Vinegar offered to Jesus on the Cross	10
Christian Parenting	13
Jesus Christ is our Hope	15
News from the Diocese	18
News: National and International	35
Bible Quiz - 46	39

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT:
"Faith without love is just
noise." - Author: unknown

EDITORIAL

Lent: A Call to Repentance

Dear Friend,

We are in Lent, one of the most holy seasons of our Catholic liturgical calendar. At the very beginning of this holy season, on Ash Wednesday, we were reminded about our mortal nature and were told to do fasting and penance in order to renew our lives and thus gain God's favour. Let us, then, reflect on the powerful message of our Lord Jesus Christ: "*Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand*" (Mt 4:17). These words remind us that acknowledging our sins and failures is the first step toward renewal. True repentance allows us to open our hearts to God's transforming grace. During this Lent, let us arouse within ourselves the spirit of repentance and spiritual renewal, which also will effect in our overall wellbeing.

Throughout Christian history, the saints have recognized the importance and necessity of repentance. Consider the life of St. Augustine, who, after acknowledging his sins and weaknesses, encountered the boundless love and forgiveness of God. His life teaches us that when we sincerely confront our faults, God grants us the grace to change. We must remember that repentance is not just feeling sorrow for our sins; it is a profound inner transformation that draws us closer to God.



The Bible repeatedly calls us to repentance. In the Gospel of Mathew, as already quoted above, Jesus proclaims, *"Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (Mt 4:17). Similarly, in the Gospel of Luke, he assures us, *"I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance"* (Lk 15:7). These verses remind us that life is transitory, and only God's mercy can grant us true renewal. Hence, we must embrace His Word, acknowledge our sins, and take steps toward transformation.

Dear reader, repentance is not just about words; it is about a radical change of heart. Step away from the busyness of your life for a moment and reflect: 'Are you confronting the burdens weighing on your heart?' Make a promise to yourself: *'I acknowledge my sins and commit to renewing myself in the love of the Lord.'* Through this promise, you will not only experience peace and spiritual awakening but also become a reflection of God's love to those around you.

Today, as we rediscover the foundation of true repentance - a journey that helps us face our sinful nature, strive for holiness, and experience the eternal love of Jesus for us, let us make every effort to always live in union with Him. As the Gospel says, *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"* (Mt 6:21). Let us seek the greatest treasure - 'God's love and grace' - so that our hearts may remain fixed on Him. When we value the Lord above all else, our thoughts and desires align with His will, leading us to complete surrender in His loving hands; and that is our happiness.

- Fr. Boniface Dhanwar

BANK LOAN SECURITY

Once, a farmer applied for a loan at a Rural Development Bank. "How much do you want to borrow?", asked the loan interviewer. "20 Lakhs", said the farmer. "All right, but you will have to show me the security. How many cows do you have in your farm?" "99". "Oh, that is a good enough security. The loan is approved."

Several months later the farmer returned to the bank to repay back the loan. "Here is your money", he declared, taking out plenty of brand new notes. "Well, let me congratulate you on your sudden prosperity", said the bank man, seeing the money in the farmer's hands. "And for safety's sake, may I suggest you to deposit the extra money in our bank?" Staring at him coldly, the farmer asked, "How many cows do you have?"



SHEPHERD'S VOICE

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I am delighted to introduce the First Issue of Volume 15 of "FOOTPRINTS", our Diocesan News Bulletin, skillfully edited by Rev. Fr. Boniface Dhanwar. This publication is a proof to the vibrant faith and community that thrive in our diocese.

As we read and reflect on the stories, news, and reflections in this bulletin, I invite you to remember that we are all part of the one Body of Christ. May the inspiring accounts of faith, hope, and love that you read here deepen your relationship with God and with one another.

As we journey together as a diocesan family, let us recall the words of St. Paul, "Let everything you do be done in love" (1 Corinthians 16:14). May our words and actions be guided by the love of Christ, and may we always strive to build one another up in faith, hope, and love.

As we approach the feast of Easter, I invite you to rejoice with me in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. May this season of renewal and rebirth bring us closer to God and to one another.

I encourage you to share the stories and news from this bulletin with your families, friends, and communities. May the Good News of Jesus Christ be proclaimed loudly and clearly through our words and actions.

It was truly heartening to see many pilgrims visiting the three Churches

dedicated as Pilgrimage centres in our diocese during this jubilee year: St. Joseph Cathedral, Itanagar; Holy Trinity Church, Banderdewa;



and St. Joseph Church, Kaying. Furthermore, we have dedicated the Rosary Altar at St. Mary's Church, Pakke Kesang, a unique feature in the North East region.

I was also deeply inspired by the numerous retreats and recollections organized by our parishes, which provided our faithful with opportunities to experience the providence of God. Despite the challenges and tensions we faced, we have remained steadfast in our faith. Let us continue to live out our faith with courage, hope, and love, and may our pilgrimage of life be guided by the presence of God.

Let us pray for one another, and for our diocese, that we may be example and encouragement of hope, love, and light in our world. As we journey through this year, let us hold on to the promise of Psalm 23:4, "Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff comfort me." May God's presence be our comfort and strength.

Wishing you all a blessed Easter and a joyful new year!

+ Most Rev. Benny Varghese Edathattel
Bishop of Itanagar





When & in What Form the GURU Appears is Difficult to Say

I started my first job (as a medical doctor) at a hospital in Alibaug. Each case provides me new knowledge more than my books. Every patient teaches me something.

One afternoon an injured woman came who was pregnant for 7 months, after 11 years of marriage. A bull roaming around the streets of Alibaug had knocked her stomach with its horn. It was a scary sight with part of the woman's stomach injured and a baby's hand peeping out of the crack of the uterine wall. My mind was in turmoil. The mother's life could be saved because the stomach wound was not serious. But to sew up the wall of the uterus was unthinkable as it was impossible to put the child's hand inside. The family's

mandate was clear - "Save the mother's life." But how would I ignore the call of that little hand which appeared to be asking for help.

The operation theatre had a skeleton staff. Apart from me there were two nurses, a compounder and a helper whose job was to sterilize tools. He was middle-aged and an alcoholic (remained always high) but was extremely sincere and efficient in his work for which the entire staff tolerated him. In the OT (operation theatre), I observed that he was standing quietly behind, observing the proceedings. After healing the stomach wound, how do I get that little hand inside was beyond bookish knowledge. It required innovative approach. The creator had made the



uterine wall so strong that it cannot be opened easily. And even if we opened it, then the possibility of the birth and survival of the child from seven month pregnancy, while the mother seemed difficult to come to consciousness, was remote. No option came to my mind but to perform surgery.

At this point the helper, who was silently watching, all of a sudden came up to me and whispered in my ear, "Saheb, there is a way that the child's hand will automatically move in." I stared at him. Time was precious. I didn't know why but my inner conscience made me ask him what he had in mind. He said, "Heat the injection needle and touch the child's hand, it will immediately go back." Having no other option, I agreed to his suggestion. I prayed God in my heart and asked for a hundred apologies from that little one and gathered courage and warmed the needle and pricked it lightly. The miracle happened and the hand immediately withdrew back in with a jerk. Further work was easy. I immediately put the strap on by dressing the uterine wall.

For Two months of faith in God I prayed that the child inside would be safe and God above did not disappoint me either. Two months later, the woman safely delivered the baby in the same hospital and that little baby was smiling right in my hands. I consider that helper as my guru. His name was Sande. To my mind, I believe that when there is no cure by the books, God shows the path as a guru in any form as Sande showed me.

His tip will not be found in any medical book. In the end, I will say, this is the will of God.

Courtesy: CNUA

Called TO BE A Pastor

Here I am, gladly saying yes
To be mindful of the people
I can tell nothing except yes
To touch the hearts of the people

To be the lover of the humanity
Radiating and permeating love
To be a strength and shield to any
Taking troubles with great sacrifice

In times of pain and affliction
Giving fervent joy and comfort
In times of hate and tribulation
Giving ardent care and concern

When defected and suppressed
Bringing hope and nourishment
When dejected and depressed
Bringing joy and refreshment

I dare in faith and conviction
To rescue the weak and the lost
I dare in freedom and dedication
To find the least and the last.

- By: Bro. Pius Ngayin Khangrah



ASK YOUR QUESTION:

Question: Dear Father, some Protestants claim that when Catholics call their Priests as "Fathers" they indulge in an unbiblical practice forbidden by Jesus - "... call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father - the one in heaven." (Mt. 23:9). How should we Catholics respond to this?

Answer: To understand why the charge against the Catholics you have mentioned does not work, one must first understand the use of the word 'father' in reference to our earthly fathers. No one would deny a little child the privilege of addressing his/her parent as "father". Common sense tells us that Jesus was not forbidding this type of use of the word "father." In fact, to forbid it would rob the term 'father' of its meaning when applied to God, for there would no longer be any earthly counterpart for the analogy of divine Fatherhood. The concept of God's role as 'Father' would be meaningless if we removed the concept of earthly fatherhood.

Moreover, in the Bible the concept of 'fatherhood' is not restricted only to our earthly fathers and God. It is also used to refer to people other than biological or legal fathers, and is used as a sign of



respect to those with whom we have special relationships. For example, Joseph (of Old Testament) tells his brothers of a special fatherly relationship God had given him with the king of Egypt: "*So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.*" (Gn. 45:8). Job indicates he played a fatherly role with the less fortunate: "*I was a father to the needy, and I championed the cause of the stranger.*" (Job 29:16). And God himself declares that he will give a fatherly role to Eliakim, the steward of the house of David: "*On that day I will call my servant Eliakim son of Hilkiah, and I will clothe him with your robe and bind your sash on him. I will commit your authority to his hand, and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.*" (Is. 22:20-21).



This type of ‘fatherhood’ applies not only to those who are wise counselors (like Joseph) or benefactors (like Job) or both (like Eliakim); it also applies to those who have a fatherly spiritual relationship with someone. For example, Elisha cries, “*Father, father!*” to Elijah as the latter is taken up to heaven in a whirlwind (2 Kgs. 2:12). Later, Elisha himself is called a father by the king of Israel, “*When the king of Israel saw them he said to Elisha, ‘Father, shall I kill them?’*” (2 Kgs. 6:21).

A Change with the New Testament?

Some Protestants argue that this usage of ‘fatherhood’ as spiritual fathers changed with the New Testament – that while it may have been permissible to call certain men ‘father’ in the Old Testament, since the time of Christ, it is no longer allowed. This argument fails for several reasons.

First, as we have seen, the imperative ‘call no one your father’ does not apply to one’s biological father. It also does not exclude calling one’s ancestors ‘father,’ as is shown in Romans 4:16, where Paul refers to ancestor Abraham as “the father of all of us”. There are many other references in the New Testament where ancestors are referred to as ‘fathers’ as in Romans 9:10 and Gal. 3:7.

Second, there are numerous examples in the New Testament of the term ‘father’ being used as a form of address and reference, even for men who are not biologically related to the speaker. There are, in fact, so many use of ‘father’ in the New Testament, that the objection to Catholics calling their priests ‘fathers’ is

indeed wrong, as we shall see.

Third, a careful examination of the context of Mathew 23 shows that Jesus did not intend for his words here to be understood literally. The whole passage reads, “*But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father – the one in heaven. Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah.*” (Mt. 23:8–10).

The first problem is that although Jesus seems to prohibit the use of the term ‘teacher,’ in Mathew 23:19–20, he himself appointed certain men to be teachers: “*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations . . . teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.*” Paul speaks of his commission as a teacher: “*For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle . . . a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.*” (1 Tim. 2:7); “*For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher*” (2Tim. 1:11). He also reminds us that the Church has an office of teacher: “*And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers . . .*” (1 Cor. 12:28); and “*The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers*” (Eph. 4:11). There is no doubt that Paul was not violating Christ’s teaching in Mathew 23 by referring so often to others as ‘teachers’.

Fundamentalists themselves fall in this point by calling all sorts of people ‘doctor’; for example, professors and scientists who have Ph.D. degrees (i.e., doctorates). What they fail to realize is that ‘doctor’ is simply the Latin word for



‘teacher.’ Even ‘Mister’ and ‘Mistress’ (‘Mrs.’) are forms of the word ‘master’, also mentioned by Jesus. So, if his words in Mathew 23 were meant to be taken literally, fundamentalists would be just as guilty for using the word ‘teacher’ and ‘doctor’ and ‘mister’ as Catholics for saying ‘father’ to priests. But clearly, that would be a misunderstanding of Jesus’ words.

So What Did Jesus Mean

Jesus criticized Jewish leaders who loved *“the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, and to be greeted with respect in the market-places, and to have people call them rabbi.”* (Mt. 23:6–7). He was using hyperbole (exaggeration) to show the scribes and pharisees how sinful and proud they were for not looking humbly to God as the source of all authority and fatherhood and teaching, and instead setting themselves up as the ultimate authorities, father figures, and teachers.

Jesus used hyperbole often, for example when he declared, *“If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.”* (Mt. 5:29, also cf. 18:9; Mk. 9:47). Jesus certainly did not intend this to be applied literally, for otherwise all Christians would be blind amputees because all have sinned. (cf. 1 Jn 1:8; 1 Tim. 1:15).

Jesus is not forbidding us to call men ‘fathers’ who actually are such – either literally or spiritually. He is warning people against *inaccurately* attributing ‘fatherhood’ – or a particular *kind* or

degree of fatherhood – to those who do not have it.

As the apostolic example shows, some individuals genuinely do have a spiritual fatherhood, meaning that they can be referred to as spiritual fathers. What must not be done is to confuse their form of spiritual paternity with that of God. Ultimately, God is our supreme protector, provider, and instructor. Correspondingly, it is wrong to view any individual other than God as having these roles.

Throughout the world, some people have been tempted to look upon religious leaders who are mere mortals as if they were an individual’s supreme source of spiritual instruction, nourishment, and protection. The tendency to turn mere men into ‘gurus’ is worldwide. This was also a temptation in the Jewish world of Jesus’ day, when famous rabbinical leaders, especially those who founded important schools of thought, such as *Hillel* and *Shammai*, were highly exalted by their disciples. It is this elevation of an individual man – the formation of a ‘cult of personality’ around him – of which Jesus is speaking when he warns against attributing to someone an undue role as master, father, or teacher. He is not forbidding the dutiful use of honorifics (a title or word used to show honour or respect) nor forbidding us to recognize that the person *does* have a role as a spiritual father and teacher. The example of his own apostles shows us that.

The Apostles Show the Way:

The New Testament is filled with



examples of and references to spiritual father-son and father-child relationships. It is worth quoting some of them here.

Paul regularly referred to Timothy as his child: *“For this reason I sent you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ Jesus, . . .”* (1 Cor. 4:17); *“To Timothy, my loyal child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”* (1 Tim. 1:2; also cf. 2 Tim. 1:2); *“I am giving you these instructions, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies made earlier about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight,”* (1 Tim 1:18); *“You then, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus”* (2 Tim. 2:1).

He also referred to Timothy as his son: *“But Timothy’s worth you know, how like a son with a father he has served with me in the work of the gospel.”* (Phil. 2:22).

Paul also referred to other of his converts in this way: *“To Titus, my loyal child in the faith we share: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.”* (Titus 1:4); *“I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment.”* (Philem. 10). None of these men were Paul’s literal sons. Rather, Paul is emphasizing his spiritual fatherhood with them.

Spiritual Fatherhood:

Perhaps the sharpest New Testament reference to the theology of the spiritual fatherhood of priests is Paul’s statement, *“I am not writing this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For though you might have ten thousand*

guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers. Indeed, in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.” (1 Cor. 4:14–15).

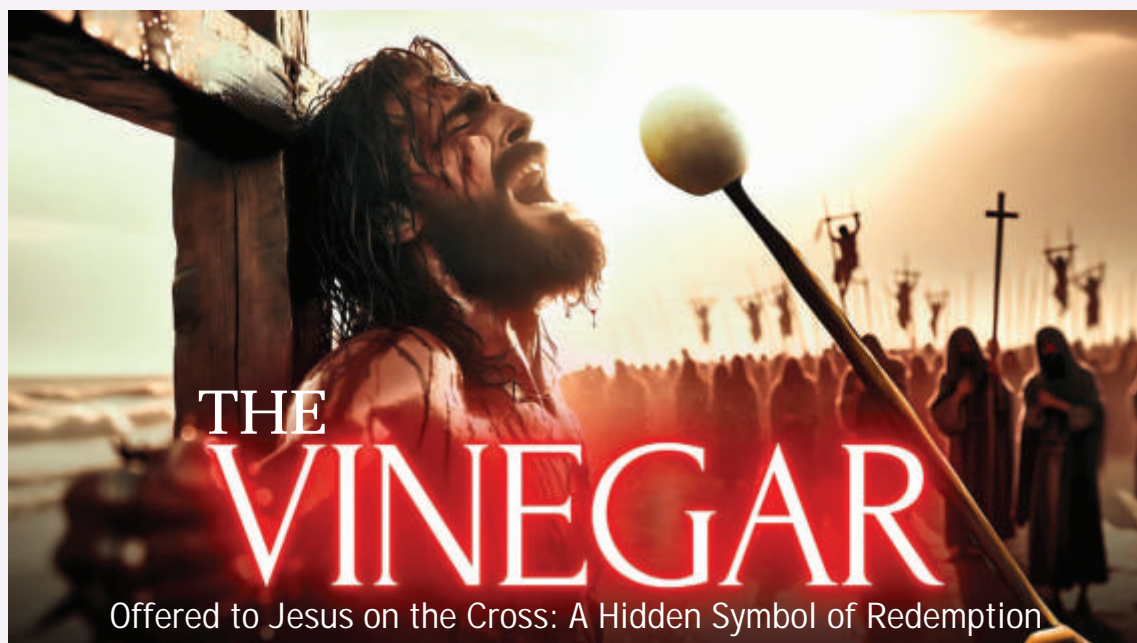
Peter followed the same custom referring to Mark as his son: *“Your sister church in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings; and so does my son Mark.”* (1 Pet. 5:13). The apostles sometimes referred to entire churches under their care as their children. Paul writes, *“Here I am, ready to come to you this third time. And I will not be a burden, because I do not want what is yours but you; for children ought not to lay up for their parents, but parents for their children.”* (2 Cor. 12:14); and, *“My little children, for whom I am again in pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you,”* (Gal. 4:19).

John said, *“My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;”* (1 Jn. 2:1); *“I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my children are walking in the truth.”* (3 Jn. 4). In fact, John also addresses men in his congregations as “fathers” (cf. 1 Jn. 2:13).

By referring to these people as their spiritual sons and spiritual children, Peter, Paul, and John imply their own roles as spiritual fathers. Since the Bible frequently speaks of this spiritual fatherhood, we Catholics acknowledge it and follow the custom of the apostles by calling priests ‘fathers.’ Failure to acknowledge this is a failure to recognize and honor a great gift God has bestowed on the Church: the spiritual fatherhood of the priesthood.

– Answered by: Fr. Boniface Dhanwar





By: Fr. Boniface Dhanwar

Have you ever considered the meaning behind the vinegar offered to Jesus as He hung on the cross? This seemingly minor detail in the Passion narrative holds profound significance, revealing a mystery of Calvary that often goes unnoticed. Why was such a bitter substance given to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in final moments of His earthly life? Could this act carry a message that resonates even today?

In this reflection, we will uncover the true symbolism of the vinegar offered to Jesus on the cross and explore how it reveals God's eternal plan for our redemption. Read on, therefore, you may find that this revelation transforms not only your understanding of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross but also your perspective on faith and life itself.

The Agony of Calvary

Imagine the scene atop Mount Calvary: dark, desolate, and heavy with the weight of human sin. The cross stood as a harsh symbol of both suffering and love. Upon it hung Jesus, the righteous and innocent Son of God enduring unimaginable physical as well as emotional pain.

Every wound He bore, every gasp for breath, was a testimony to the greatest sacrifice ever made. His hands and feet were nailed to the wood, His body shattered and crowned with thorns. Yet beyond the physical torment was the deeper anguish of rejection - the pain of seeing those He came to save turn away from Him.

As creation itself seemed to hold its breath, Jesus bore the weight of



humanity's sin, bridging the abyss between a holy God and a broken world. His sacrifice is more than an act of suffering; it is the ultimate display of love and obedience to the Father's will.

The Bitter Offering of Vinegar

Amid this profound agony, a strange and seemingly insignificant detail occurs: a soldier soaks a sponge in vinegar and offers it to Jesus. At first glance, this act might seem like mere mockery - a final insult to a man already broken. But could there be more to this gesture?

The offering of vinegar, bitter and sharp, carries layers of meaning. On the surface, it appears as an act of cruelty. Yet, when viewed through the lens of Scripture and prophecy, it becomes clear that this moment was not random. It fulfilled an ancient prophecy written in Psalm 69:21: *"They gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst, they gave me vinegar to drink."*

Was this an accidental fulfilment, or a deliberate part of God's redemptive plan? This detail reminds us that every moment of the crucifixion, down to the smallest act, was foreseen and woven into the fabric of God's eternal purpose.

The Vinegar as a Test of Endurance

For Jesus, the vinegar was more than a bitter drink - it was a final trial. In His agony, He faced one last temptation to abandon His mission. The bitterness of the vinegar mirrored the bitterness of sin, a taste Jesus willingly accepted for our sake.

This moment challenges us to reflect on the depth of His obedience and love. Despite the pain and rejection, Jesus remained steadfast. He endured the bitterness to the very end, demonstrating the perseverance that faith requires, even in the face of trials.

A Symbol of Humanity's Rejection

The vinegar also symbolizes humanity's rejection of God's love. It reflects the bitterness of sin - how it hardens the heart, sours the soul, and separates us from our Creator. By offering vinegar to Jesus, the soldiers unknowingly mirrored the way humanity often responds to God's grace: with indifference, mockery, or outright rejection.

Yet, in His response, Jesus showed us another way. He accepted the bitterness, not with retaliation, but with humility and love. His acceptance of the vinegar points to the heart of the Gospel: that even in the face of rejection, God's love remains steadfast, offering redemption to all who will receive it.

"It Is Finished"

When Jesus declared, "It is finished," He was not merely signalling the end of His suffering. These words marked the completion of God's redemptive plan - a plan that began long before the cross. In that moment, the cycle of imperfect sacrifices was ended. The price for sin was paid in full, and the way to eternal life was opened.

The weight of those words - "It is finished" - resounds through history. They are not just a statement of victory



but an invitation. Jesus' sacrifice invites us to respond with gratitude, faith, and a transformed life.

A Call to Decision

The cross and the vinegar confront us with a choice: will we accept the gift of salvation, or will we, like those at Calvary, offer indifference? The bitterness of the vinegar reminds us of the cost of sin, but it also points to the sweetness of grace made available through Jesus' sacrifice.

This choice is deeply personal and eternal. To accept the cross is to embrace a life of peace and communion with God. To reject it is to remain in the bitterness of separation.

If you had stood at Calvary, watching Jesus suffer, how would you have responded? Would you have joined the

mockery or fallen in gratitude and worship at His feet? That question remains relevant today just as it was then. Jesus calls each of us to take up our cross, deny ourselves, and follow Him.

The Invitation of the Cross

The cross is not merely a symbol of suffering - it is an eternal invitation to life. The decision to accept or reject Jesus' sacrifice defines our relationship with God and our eternal destiny.

May we respond with hearts full of gratitude and lives transformed by His love. Let us not delay in choosing the life that Jesus offers. The cross stands before us as a reminder of God's boundless grace and an invitation to walk in newness of life. Let us choose life - life abundant, eternal, and filled with the peace of God.

MARITAL FAITHFULNESS

A man approached a very beautiful woman in a large supermarket and said, "You know, I've lost my wife somewhere in this huge supermarket. Can you talk to me for a couple of minutes?" "Why?" she asks. "Because every time I talk to a beautiful woman, my wife suddenly appears out of nowhere and I'm tired of looking for her!"

BIRTH REGISTRATION:

George goes to the Birth Registration Office to register his newborn son. The woman behind the counter asks the name he wants to give to the boy, and the father replies: "Euro." The woman says that such a name is not acceptable, because it's a currency. George says: "What? There weren't any objections when I called my first two sons Mark and Frank."





Christian Parenting

By: Fr. Sebastian Ayilookunnel, Seijosa

It is a huge responsibility parents have to undertake in order to form their children as God fearing, respectful, honest and sociable personalities who will be an asset to the society and a joy to their parents.

The first and foremost step in this direction is to set themselves as an example before them as models to follow as the children grow up. The parenting starts from child birth and the parents become the first teachers who impart values along with food and clothing. The psychologist say that the child's learning process begins right from the womb of the mother as the child in the womb is able to pick up positive and negative vibes which will mould its emotional growth.

The basic thing parents must know is that they are NOT the owners of the child but the Trustees to who God entrusts the child to be nurtured and brought up as God's children. Therefore possessiveness beyond a certain limit must be strictly avoided. Giving into all the whims and fancies of the child is not love as some parents think. It is very important to teach the child to take a 'No' though it may displease him/her for a moment. But in the long run the child learns vital lessons for life which will keep him/her in good stead. Parents need not provide everything the child asks. Refusing the demands need not be judged as lack of love but an act of love. Pampering can only spoil the child; it does no good to him. The old maxim,



'Spare the rod and spoil the child' is a perennial truth that holds good even today. One need not inflict physical punishment but discipline is the need of the hour. A child that grows up without being disciplined will be the greatest cause of worry and anxiety to the parents in the future.

The parents must pay utmost attention to spiritual and moral formation of the child. Spiritual values must be instilled into the child's mind from early childhood. Teaching them to have a great reverence and love for God who is the true Father is an important duty of the parents. The best gift you can give to your child that will benefit him/her forever is to TEACH them to PRAY. A person rooted and grounded in prayer

will be able to navigate through all the challenges of life. Prayer will make a difficult life easy to live.

Sociability, honesty and respect for fellow human beings, kindness to God's creation etc are basic qualities a child must acquire as it grows up to adulthood. In the absence of these human qualities he/she may end up as a monster, hated by the society. His/her future family life will be a hell and breeding ground for all evils.

Think about your call as parents and seek God's Holy Spirit for guidance in fulfilling your mission as responsible parents.

God bless you as he blessed the first parents.

SHARING BY EXAMPLE

A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin (5), and Ryan (3). The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson and said to them, "If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, 'Let my brother have the first pancake. I can wait.'" Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, "Ryan, you be Jesus, today."

CONTROL YOUR....

If you are in a group, control your behaviour;
If you are alone, control your thoughts;
If you are with your friends, control your tongue;
If you are angry, control your decisions; and,
If someone praises you, control your pride.





JESUS CHRIST IS OUR HOPE

By: Bro. Pius, Itanagar Diocese

The world around us is filled with love and goodness. We see the beautiful nature everywhere. The birds in the air, the animals on the earth rejoice and sing the praises of God. The goodness of the people we do experience in various ways. There are many good people living after the teaching of Jesus. There are many who render help to the helpless. Many sacrifice their lives for the service of the gospel. There are people who love and advocate peace and justice. Yet, there are also a few who do just the opposite of all these virtues. Thus, it is a high time for us to ponder upon one of the fundamental questions of life, that is: Where am I? The basic nature of the world and humankind is goodness. Unfortunately, today, we are living in a world of uncertainties. A world filled with hatred, wars, violence and crimes has become a daily routine. Social media is taking control over us. Our

spiritual life has been contaminated. We have become selfish and corrupt. The loss of self control and no patience attitude have become prominent. Thus, kindness is being ruled out and we have become unhappy.

This year (2025) a year of Jubilee of Jesus Christ has opened a door for us to get transformed and hopeful, since it paves a way for us to increase our faith and hope in Jesus Christ. Though we live in a world filled with injustice and wickedness, "Hope will not disappoint us" (Rom 5:5). In this life of uncertainties, we need to have courage and hope. That is why Pope Francis in his Encyclical Letter: *Lumen Fidei* - The Light of Faith (29 June 2013) says: "Faith, hope and charity are the driving force of the Christian life as it advances towards full communion with God" (7). Christian life basically is to love God and neighbour (Mt 22:37-39). It also invites us to love enemies and pray for those who are persecuting us



(Mt 5:43). Thus, to love one another becomes one of the challenges that we are to ponder upon today.

To have hope does not mean that hope is something material in nature. In fact, hope is someone not something and that someone is Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus is the only hope. He is the hope of the world. Everyone in this world needs hope to live. That means everybody needs Jesus our hope. Thus the theme of the Jubilee year 2025 resounds: "We are pilgrims of hope" (1 Pt 2:11). In fact "Hope will not disappoint us" (Rom 5:5).

Having an examination of conscience on the basic question of life, Where am I? Sure to help us to realize the redemptive work of Jesus Christ for humanity. By baptism the grace of God is poured upon us, and we have received the Holy Spirit. Thus, we have received Jesus Christ. So, an access or a privilege is given to us by Jesus. He is our hope. That is why Pope Benedict XVI in his Encyclical Letter: *Spe Salvi - Saved in Hope* (30 November 2007) says: "Redemption" - salvation - is not simply a given, it is offered to us in the sense that we have been given hope, trustworthy hope, by virtue of which we can face our present" (1).

We are living in a wounded world where the voice of love seems fading. One of the interesting facts is that, hope is always connected with suffering and in suffering hope is to be sustained. In

sufferings, there is always an internal faith crisis but hope will keep us going because of Jesus in our hearts. The psalmist exclaims: "I kept my faith, even when I said, I am greatly afflicted" (Ps 116:10). In fact, in the hour of trial faith brings light, while suffering and weakness make it evident that "We do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord" (2 Cor 4:5).

Pope Francis says: To those who suffer, God does not provide arguments which explain everything; rather, his response is that of an accompanying presence, a history of goodness which touches every story of suffering and opens up a ray of light. Christ is the one who having endured suffering, is the pioneer and perfecter of our faith (Heb 12:2) Suffering reminds us that faith's service to the common good is always one of hope - a hope which looks ever ahead in the knowledge that only from God, from the future which comes from the risen Jesus, can our society find solid and lasting foundation. (Encyclical Letter: *Lumen Fidei - The Light of Faith* (57), (29 June 2013).

In this world of desperation, hope is the only answer. Hope becomes the driving force of charity and preaching the gospel. Hope leads us to action moved by the Spirit of God. Thus, hope is what brings transformation into our life. That is why the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), teaches us



that, hope is one of the theological virtues by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength but on the help of the grace of Holy Spirit (CCC 1817). Hope inspires human's activities and purifies them so as to order them to the kingdom of heaven. Hope keeps us away from discouragement and it sustains us during the times of abandonment (CCC 1818). Hope is also a weapon that protects us in the struggle of salvation (CCC 1820). Thus, St Paul writes his letter to the Thessalonians requesting, "Let us...put on the breastplate of faith and charity, and for a helmet the hope of salvation" (1Thess 5:8). So, hope always affords us joy even under trial. As St Paul says, "*Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation*" (Rom 12:12).

Pope Benedict XVI in his Encyclical Letter: *Spe Salvi* - Saved in Hope (30 November 2007), bring out settings for learning and practicing hope.

Prayer as a School of Hope: He says that prayer is very essential in our life to learn to have hope. When no one listens to you anymore, God still listen to you. When you no longer talk to anyone, you can always talk to God. When you are in need of help and there is no longer anyone to help you deal with a need that goes beyond the human capacity for help, God can help you. When you have plunged into complete solitude, if you pray you are

never totally alone (32).

Action and Suffering: We could see that the power of evil is a constant source of suffering and we have no power to banish suffering from the world. Only God is able to eliminate the power of evil. Thus, it is an action of living gospel in Spirit and hope that gives us the courage to place ourselves on the side of good even in seemingly hopeless situations (36).

Judgement and Practicing Hope: Our consolation and hope is that God is justice and creates justice. In God's justice there is also grace. This we come to know by turning our gaze to the crucified and risen Christ, who is the only hope of our life (34).

Mother Mary as Star of Hope: Mother Mary is the true model of hope for us because with her "Yes" she opened the door of our world to God Himself. She became the living Ark of the Covenant, in whom God took flesh, became one of us, and pitched his tent among us (Jn 1:14).

Finally, we are a pilgrims of hope, journeying our life, like a life in voyage on the sea of history, often dark and stormy, a voyage in which we watch for the stars that indicate the route. The true stars of our life are the people who have lived good lives. They are light of hope and Jesus Christ is the true light, the sun that has raised above all the shadows of history (49). Thus, Jesus Christ is our only true hope.



NEWS FROM THE DIOCESE:

Annual Eucharistic Procession of Aalo Deanery

AALO, November 17, 2024: The Annual Eucharistic Procession of Aalo deanery was held at Aalo parish on 17th November, 2024. Bishop Emeritus, Rt. Rev. John Thomas officiated at the Eucharistic celebration held at a make-shift tent at St. Mary's School ground. Together with many Fathers and Sisters, many faithful from different parishes of the deanery participated in the Holy Mass and the procession.

After the Holy Mass, the Eucharistic procession was taken out with the Holy Eucharist placed on a decorated vehicle moving through the streets of Aalo town. The faithful joined the procession with prayers and singing and holding flags and banners in their hands.



After the procession, the faithful felicitated the Bishop Emeritus with gifts, as he was visiting the deanery for the first time after his resignation as the bishop of Itanagar Diocese. After the common meal, everyone departed to their respective places.

- Fr. Lukose, P.P.

New Books Released in Itanagar Diocese



ITANAGAR, December 08, 2024: Today, the 8th of December 2024, two new books were released in Itanagar Diocese - Er. Takam Majeng released the first ever Nyishi Bible Diary: 2025 (Contributed by Taku Tayu Stephen) at St. Joseph Parish, Gohpur Tinali, in the presence of Most Rev. Benny Varghese, Rev. Fr. Francis T.J sdb, Rev. Fr. Tomy J. Orathel (Parish Priest) and the Faithful. It was also jointly released by Shri Nabam Pekhi (President APCA) and



Shri Dominic Khongkham (President, Miao Diocese) at Infant Jesus Parish, Doimukh, in the presence of Rev. Fr. C.C Jose and the Faithful.

Bishop Emeritus, Most Rev. John Thomas released Holy Bible in Nyishi (Deutro-canonical Books of OT - Translated by Fr. Francis T.J. sdb) at St. Joseph's Cathedral Church, Itanagar,

in the presence of Rev. Fr. Thomas Lakra, Rev. Fr. Martin Munda and the Faithful; and by Shri Tarh Miri Stephen (President ACF) at Holy Trinity Parish, Jollang. These were also released at Chimpu Parish along with the Diocesan wall Calendar: 2025.

- Fr. Boniface Dhanwar

Pre-Christmas Recollection & Meeting of Priests & Religious

NAHARLAGUN, December 12, 2024: This year, the pre-Christmas recollection and pastoral meeting were held on the 11th and 12th of December, 2024. The recollection was held at Sacred Heart Parish, Naharlagun, in the evening of 11th December, which was preached by Rev. Fr. Emmanuel msfs from Guwahati. He preached on the call of God to us, to live priestly and religious life according to God's will as exemplified by the biblical characters, like Moses. The talk was followed by adoration and confessions. After the recollection, the dinner was served in the presbytery along with the screening of the movie "Face of the Faceless", that portrays the life of St. Rani Maria.

On the following morning, the Holy Mass was celebrated in the Bishop's House chapel at which the main celebrant was Bishop Emeritus John Thomas. In his homily, Bishop Emeritus spoke about Our Lady of



Guadalupe and drew lesson that we too must give importance to ordinary lay people in our apostolate and ministry in the diocese.

After breakfast, the pastoral meeting began at 9:00 a.m for which Most Rev. Bp. Benny Varghese appointed Rev. Fr. Mathai sdb as the moderator. The enthronement of the Holy Bible and the opening prayer were conducted by Fr. Mathai himself. Rev. Fr. Jacob Mattathilany VG, said the welcoming words, heartily welcoming all the participants, especially the new comers. After this, the report of the previous meeting was read by Rev. Fr. Manu Mathew that was passed



without any comment. This was followed by the presentation of the reports of various commissions.

After the tea break, there was Deanery wise group discussions on the Pastoral Plan for the parishes basing on the National Pastoral Plan of CCBI. After lunch, at 2:00 p.m all gathered again for the final session of reporting the

matters discussed on the Pastoral Plan. After that Bp Benny Varghese gave his remarks on the matters discussed and some new information concerning pastoral ministry in the diocese of Itanagar. And with that the meeting was concluded with a concluding prayer.

- Fr. Boniface Dhanwar

The True Missionaries

KAYING, December 12, 2024: Jai Jisu to all! On 7th December, we started our Gospel tour and today, we will go back to Kaying Parish Church. During these days, we are out of network and communication with any except God.

Friends, Payum circle was established in 1958, but still there is no road, no network. Yet, 99% of the population is Catholic. So, in a year twice we go to visit our faithful. It is not easy to walk in the rocky path every day 6/7 hours between the two villages. But sometimes I think that I am the luckiest lay missionary, working in this area, which is under Itanagar diocese.



- Mathew Tabang
(Catechist & Church leader, Aalo zone)

A Pre-Christmas Evening at Priests' Home, Nyorch

NYORCH, Yupia, December 18, 2024: A pre-Christmas get-together was held at the newly constructed Priests' Home, at Nyorch, Yupia, in the evening of 18th December, 2024. The event was organized by the Bishop's House and assisted by the APCA. It was a happy occasion of coming together of the

Priests, Religious, church and community leaders, Catholic politicians and govt. officials of the Capital Complex, together with the shepherd of Itanagar diocese, Most Rev. Benny Varghese, and Bishop Emeritus, Most Rev. John Thomas.





The programme began at 6:00 p.m. with a prayer hymn sung by Alphonsa Home girls of Sacred Heart parish, Naharlagun. It was followed by the welcome address given by Rev. Fr. Jacob Mattathilany, VG of Itanagar diocese.

This was followed by some entertaining performances of songs and dances by various groups and parishes. In the midst of it all, Bp Benny Varghese shared his Christmas message asking all participants to remain united and work together for the mission Jesus in the Church of Itanagar. Bishop Emeritus John Thomas also shared his remarks and Christmas message at the end of the cultural programme and advised the gathering to keep Jesus in the centre of their life and family to receive blessings from Him. After the distribution of Christmas gifts, the programme came to an end with the dinner.

- Fr. Boniface Dhanwar

Blessing & Inauguration of Sensory Integration Room

I T A N A G A R , December 19, 2024: The Sensory Integration Room was blessed and inaugurated on 19.12.2024. This provides a controlled environment for individuals to integrate and process sensory information from their surroundings. This sacred space will empower individuals to regulate their emotions, calm their nervous system, and reduce anxiety and stress. This noble endeavour, undertaken by Sacred Heart Sisters, aims to improve individuals' functionality,



independence and participation in daily activities. By providing a supportive environment, we seek to enhance the overall quality of life, well-being and happiness of the less fortunate.

- SH Sisters



Parents' Day cum Pre-Christmas Celebrated at St. Francis' School, Karsingsa



KARSINGSA, December 20, 2024: Today, the 20th day of December, 2024, St. Francis' School, Karsingsa celebrated Parents' Day cum Pre-Christmas celebrations. Shri Nabam Vivek, hon'ble MLA 14th Doimukh constituency and Shri Arun Kipa Loram were the Chief Guest and Guest of Honour, respectively. Important guests like, Rev. Bro. Collinsius Wanniang (Provincial Councillor of St. Paul's Province NE), Rev. Fathers, Brothers, Sisters, Parents, and teachers and students graced the special occasion.

The Franciscan Missionary Brothers of St. Paul's Province, North East India, have been actively engaged in missionary work at Karsingsa since 1999. Through collaborative efforts with the Daughters of St. Francis De Sales (DSFS) since 2021, they've made significant strides in faith formation, education and serving vulnerable communities, embodying Franciscan virtues of simplicity, environmental stewardship, compassion, humility, and obedience.

- Bro. Principal

St. Anthony's Church at Rilloh Blessed

PAKKE KESSANG, December 21, 2024: St. Antony's Church at Rilloh under Pakke Kesang parish was blessed today on 21st December, 2024 in the presence of Shri Tok Botom, Shri Nabam Pekhi (President, APCA), Shri Michi Chalo (General Secretary, APCA), Adv. Raju C. Tok, and many Fathers, Sisters and the faithful. The Church is the generous contribution of Er. Tangum Techhi Tara and family. May God bless all!

- Parish Priest, P. Kessang



Catechists' Training Programme at Kimin

KIMIN, February 08, 2025: A day of Training Programme for catechists and church leaders of Kimin Parish was held at Kimin on the 08th of February, 2025. Thirty-three participants attended



the training programme. The resource persons for it were Rev. Fr. Boniface Dhanwar from Bishop's House and Mr. Taku S. Tayu, former catechist of Cathedral Parish, Itanagar. Fr. Boniface gave a detailed interpretation and explanation on "the Apostles' Creed", the basic faith of the Catholic Church; and Mr. Taku Stephen spoke on the topic of Catholic prayers.

The training programme which had begun at 9:00 a.m., concluded at 2:00 p.m. After the days' meal, all departed to their destinations.

We, the Catholic community of Kimin Parish, are grateful to Rev. Fr. Boniface and Mr. Taku Stephen for having come and given a faith orientation to our catechists and church leaders.

- Fr. Jacob, P.P., Kimin

Leadership Training Programme for APCA Leaders & Catechists

ITANAGAR, February 22, 2025: A Leadership Training cum Catechesis Programme was held at Pastoral Centre, Itanagar, from February 20-22, 2025. The programme was organised jointly, by Most Rev Bp Benny Varghese and the APCA (Arunachal Pradesh Catholic Association) leaders. Moreover, the programme was conducted in collaboration with NBCLC (National Biblical, Catechetical & Liturgical Centre), Bangalore.

After the Holy Mass, which began at 4:30 p.m on the 20th, the programme kicked off with the inaugural function that included lighting of the lamp, veneration of the Bible and the welcome address by His Lordship, Bp Benny Varghese. This was followed by the first session of the programme, which was the inaugural talk by Rev Fr Nysson Luka, Asst Director of NBCLC. And after dinner, the movie, "Face of the Faceless" on the life story of Sr. Rani Maria was screened for the participants.



On the following morning, the Holy Mass was offered by Rev Fr Jacob Mattathilany, the VG of the diocese. At 9:00 a.m, the first training session of the day began that was animated by Rev Dr Fr Benny Nediymalayil, OSMdL, who is a professor at RG University, Itanagar. The topic of his talk was "Prophetic Leadership: Catholic Leaders to be the Sings of the time". In the second session at 11:00 a.m, Rev Dr Fr Jose Thomas, SDB (Councillor & Faculty at Don Bosco College, Itanagar) talked on the "Leadership Characters in the Bible". In the afternoon session, Fr Boniface Dhanwar conducted Catechesis or Faith Formation and clarified the doubts and questions of the participant on topics of Catholic faith and practices. After the tea break, Father also took an additional session and taught about the "Liturgy of the Catholic Church". After dinner, a Christian movie, "The Ten Commandments" was shown.

On February 22, the Holy Mass was offered by Rev Fr John Bosco Kujur (the Director of the Pastoral Centre). The first training session on this final day of the programme was animated by Rev Fr John Pudussery, SDB (Parish Priest of Infant Jesus Catholic Church,



Doimukh). He talked on "Leadership Modelled on Christ". The second session was taken by Rev Fr Mathai, SDB, who spoke on the theme of "Jubilee 2025". The final session of programme was taken again by Fr Boniface, who taught the catechists "How to make a proper Confession".

At 3:00 p.m, the valedictory function was conducted by the APCA President, Shri Nabam Pekhi and the General Secretary, Shri Michi Challo, during which "Audio Bible" and the book written by Rev Fr Kulandaisamy, "The History of the Catholic Church in Arunachal Pradesh" were distributed to all the participants. With that the Leadership Training Programme for APCA Leaders & Catechists was concluded with a prayer and all left for their destinations.

- Fr Boniface Dhanwar

Catechists' Training at Parsi-Parlo

PARSI-PARLO, March 02, 2025: A two-day Training Programme for the Catechists of Parsi-Parlao Parish was organized on the 1st and 2nd of March, 2025. Rev Fr Boniface Dhanwar, the Catechetical Director of Itanagar Diocese was the resource person for the programme, and he was assisted by Shri Taku Stephen Tayu, the former catechist of the Cathedral parish. All together seven sessions each being one and half hour in average were scheduled in the programme - five on the first day and two on





the second day. On the first day, Fr Boniface taught the catechists about "Catholic Apologetics", and on the second he interpreted and explained to them the "Apostles' Creed". Shri Taku Stephen spoke to them about Catholic prayers, taught them how to pray, and interpreted and explained to them the "Lord's prayer" and the "Hail Mary".

About 45 catechists and some lay leaders participated in the training programme in which nine of them were from Damin parish. As a whole, it was a very good programme as the bodily expressions of the participants showed that they should have surely learnt and profited from the training programme. We are grateful to Fr Boniface and Shri Taku Stephen for having come and conducted this useful programme.

- Fr Navin Kumar, P.P.

Resonance 2024-2025 Concludes at SCCZ

ZIRO, March 08, 2025: The annual art, literature, cultural, sports, and games festival, Resonance 2024-2025 of Saint Claret College (Autonomous), Ziro, concluded on Saturday here. Organized collaboratively by the College's St. Claret Art & Literary Endeavour (SCALE) and Sports and Games Association (SAGA), the fest showcased diverse talents and fostered community spirit among students.

Team Lohit, under the leadership of Ms. Tamuk Jumi and Mr. Tamo Huto emerged as the overall champions with

252 points while Team Kameng, led by Mr. Duyu Delyang and Ms. Boni Juli, secured the second position with 245 points.

This year, the students were grouped into four teams, viz., Lohit, Kameng, Siang and Subansiri. Team Siang was led by Mr. Tage Huto and Ms. Millo Nanu and Team Subansiri was led by Mr. Engo Tacho and Ms. Newlee Natung.

Mr. Judia Krangkhawl of Team Kameng was honoured as the Individual Champion for his outstanding performance across various events.



This year's festival was uniquely structured in two phases, with the first phase held from October 28 to 30, 2024, and the second phase from March 6 to 8, 2025.

A total of 31 events were organized during the annual fest, encompassing a wide array of competitions in art, literature, culture, sports, and games. The festival aimed to promote creativity, foster community spirit through cultural exchange, and provide a platform for emerging talents in various domains.



The successful organization of Resonance 2024-2025 underscores SCCZ's commitment to holistic education, encouraging students to excel not only academically but also in extracurricular activities.

- Fr Principal, SCCZ

A Day Retreat for AMYC

NAHARLAGUN, March 12, 2025: Ane Moriam Youth Sangram came together for one day spiritual retreat at Sacred Heart Parish, Naharlagun. It was a resounding success, marking a significant moment of spiritual renewal. The event saw a diverse group of participants, including 19 youth, 4 elders, and 15 children from Alphonsa Home, all coming together for a day of reflection and growth.

The retreat was thoughtfully animated by Mr Josy, along with his son De Paul and Peter, who guided the participants through the day's activities. This was a particularly special occasion as it represented the first attempt to gather the youth for a dedicated spiritual renewal. Praise and worship, sharing the word of God, adoration, confession and Holy Eucharist enhanced the faith of youth.



The organization of this meaningful retreat was a collaborative effort, spearheaded by Fr Roshan, the director of the Itanagar Diocesan Youth Commission, who acted on the request of Fr Sijo, the parish priest of Ane Moriam Parish, Sangram. Their combined efforts created a nurturing environment for spiritual enrichment.

We extend our thanks to Fr Jacob for all

the help and support rendered towards the success of a day retreat. And also thank Sisters for all the arrangements in the church for the adoration and Mass.

And special thanks to Didi Teresa and Didi Faustina for preparing delicious lunch for the youth. May God bless them all for their generosity!

- Fr Roshan Bamin Peter, DYD

Rev Fr Ashwin D'Silva, SJ Installed as Parish Priest of St. Xavier's Parish, Palizi



PALIZI, March 15, 2025: On March 15, 2025, Rev Fr Ashwin D'Silva, SJ, was appointed as the Parish Priest of St. Xavier's Parish, Palizi, a vibrant community known for its dedicated team of priests, religious Sisters, and catechists. The parish serves a

significant Catholic population of 1,600 across 30 mass centres in West Kameng and East Kameng districts.

As Fr Ashwin D'Silva, SJ, assumes his new role, we wish him all the best in building a strong, committed community engaged in spiritual growth. Building on the collaborative efforts of the parish team and community, he aims to enhance pastoral activities and foster a deeper sense of faith and belonging among the faithful.

The installation ceremony, conducted by Bishop Benny, marked a significant milestone for the parish, as Fr Ashwin D'Silva, SJ, embarked on his new role, ready to serve and nurture the spiritual growth of the community.

- Being WhatsApp Message



Itanagar DYC Visits Good Daporijo Youths

DAPORIJO, March 15, 2025: On 14th March 2025, the Itanagar Diocesan Youth Executives, together with President and General Secretary of Itanagar Deanery visited Good Shepherd Parish, Daporijo for an interaction program to strengthen the Parish Youth.

The Daporijo parish youth presented a report on their activities and also the challenges they face in youth ministry, especially, about youth not coming for church services. Miss Tai Jeming Moya, the Diocesan Youth Vice President gave a brief introduction about the youth movement particularly about ICYM, NERYC and YUVODAYA and also emphasized on the importance of building a strong relationship with the Church. Mr Mudang Sira, who serves as the accountant in YUVODAYA, REXCO Member and the President of Ziro Deanery, encouraged the youths to take active participation in the upcoming youth events in the deanery and the diocesan level.



Fr. Roshan (DYD) gave the concluding remark by appreciating their activities and efforts to build a strong youth movement in the parish and also encouraged them to be united always in prayers as well as in youth activities.

Our visit to Daporijo Parish will bear good fruits in days to come (John 15:8). The purpose of our visit was to encourage and motivate our parish youth to build a spiritual path in this corrupted world to reach our goal (heaven). (John 14:6)

- Fr Roshan, DYD

Bhalukpong is Erected as a New Parish

BHALUKPONG, March 16, 2025: On March 16, 2025, a historic milestone was achieved in the Diocese of Itanagar with the declaration of Our Lady of the Way at Bhalukpong as a new parish. This momentous occasion was graced by the presence of esteemed dignitaries, including Bishops, Provincials, Regional Superiors, Fathers, Sisters, and a large

gathering of faithful from neighbouring parishes.

St. Xavier's Parish, Palizi is bifurcated into Our Lady of the Way at Bhalukpong, which is under the pastoral care of the Society of Jesus. Rev Fr YanlumoYanthan SJ has been appointed as the first Parish Priest of the newly erected parish.



St. Xavier's Parish, Palizi, has been a thriving community, with a dedicated team of 12 Priests, 3 Scholastics, 20 religious Sisters actively engaged in various pastoral activities. The parish encompasses a vast area, comprising 30 mass centres spread across West Kameng, East Kameng, Bichom, and Tawang districts.

The pioneering work of evangelization, initiated 26 years ago by Rev Fr Hector SJ and Rev Fr Paul Cohelo SJ, has borne fruit, and the parish has grown significantly. Given its extensive geographical reach and a significant Catholic population of over 1,600, it was deemed necessary to create a new parish to ensure more effective pastoral care and evangelization.

The newly formed Our Lady of the Way Parish, Bhalukpong, will have territorial jurisdiction over the following areas: West Kameng District: (Upper Bhalukpong, Lower Bhalukpong, Tippi,



Khimi, Buragoan, Goitang, Jameri, Nadigoan, Bomdila, Tenga Valley, and Dirang); Bichom District: (Upper Djang/Nafra, Khelong, Debin, and Kajalang); Tawang District: (Manpat/Lumla)

This new parish will enable more focused and targeted pastoral care, evangelization, and community development initiatives, ultimately serving the spiritual and temporal needs of the faithful in these regions.

- Being WhatsApp Message

Hope on the Move: 5th Regional Youth Convention Cross Arrives



NAHARLAGUN, March 17, 2025: The Indian Catholic Youth Movement (ICYM) North East Regional Youth Convention (NERYC) Cross arrived at Itanagar Diocese on 17th March 2025, marking the beginning of a regional pilgrimage that will traverse all 15 dioceses in North East India.

This year's convention theme, "Pilgrims of Hope," resounds



deeply with the aspirations and ideals of young people in our region. As the Cross journeys through our dioceses, let us pray for the youth, that they may be inspired to become beacons of hope, faith, and love in their communities.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Rev Fr John Burman MSFS and Rev Sr

Wansuk Mary Lyngdoh MSMHC for bringing the Cross to our diocese. The journey of this Cross will culminate at St. Mary's Cathedral, Kohima, where the 5th Regional Youth Convention will be held from 27-30 June 2025, under the theme "Pilgrims of Hope."

- NERYC Correspondent

Career Guidance Programme Organized at SCCZ

ZIRO, March 17, 2025: A Career Guidance Programme was organized at Saint Claret College (Autonomous), Ziro (SCCZ) on Monday, in collaboration with Helping Hands (NGO) and ALS IAS. The event aimed to provide students with valuable insights into career planning and competitive examinations.

Shri Robin Hibu, IPS, DGP & Special Commissioner of Police, Delhi, and President of Helping Hands served as the resource person for the programme. Addressing the students, he emphasized the significance of pursuing one's passion as a key factor in achieving success.

Robin defined a career as the pursuit of one's passion with success, stating, "Whatever you like, whatever your career is, if you achieve success in it, that is a career." He further emphasized the importance of discipline and commitment, urging students to step beyond their comfort zones.

He further added that when preparing for competitive exams, a thorough understanding of the syllabus and unwavering focus are essential to achieving the goals.

The interactive session saw students engaging actively, asking relevant queries regarding career choices, preparation strategies, and overcoming challenges in competitive examinations.

He also had an interaction with the teaching staff of the college and offered various academic and professional insights.

Later in the day, the Lower Subansiri District Administration in collaboration with the Health Promotion Cell of Saint Claret College (Autonomous), Ziro organised an awareness campaign on drug addiction, and health and hygiene for adolescent girls under the Arunachal Rising Campaign.

- PR team of SCCZ



Feast of St. Joseph Celebrated at Cathedral

ITANAGAR, March 19, 2025: The Feast of St. Joseph, the husband of Mary, and the Patron of the Diocese of Itanagar and of the Cathedral was celebrated here today with solemnity. About 150 Faithful of the Capital Region participated in the celebration. His Lordship, Most Rev Benny Varghese presided over the Holy Eucharist, which was concelebrated by 14 other priests. In his homily, Bishop Benny spoke about the qualities and character of St. Joseph, the foster father of Jesus Christ. He said Joseph was a humble, generous and dutiful servant of God, and that all of us must try to imitate.

Today's Cathedral choir was praiseworthy. They sang the Mass hymns beautifully well and with devotion that



made the congregation participate in Mass devoutly too.

The festal Holy Eucharist was followed by the blessing of the renovated cemetery below the church, and the dinner thereafter.

- Fr Boniface Dhanwar

A New Hub for Spiritual Growth at Gumto Retreat Centre

GUMTO, March 22, 2025: On March 22, 2025, the St. Vincent Retreat Hall at Gumto was blessed by Most Rev Benny Varghese, Bishop of Itanagar, in the presence of Rev Fr Paul Puthuva VC, Priests, Sisters, APCA office bearers, and a large gathering of faithful.

This momentous occasion marked a new chapter in the ministry of the Vincentian Congregation, which established its presence in the Itanagar diocese in 2007. Responding to the invitation of Most Rev John Thomas, Bishop Emeritus of Itanagar, the Mary Matha Province of the Vincentian Congregation set up a

retreat centre at Gumto, with Fr Augustine Kizakkevalayil VC as its first associate priest.

Over the years, the congregation has expanded its ministry, establishing another retreat centre at Joram in 2012, which was later erected as a parish. Both retreat centres have been instrumental in conducting retreats, faith formation courses, animation courses, and other spiritual activities that have greatly benefited the spiritual welfare of the people.

In addition to their spiritual ministry, the Vincentian Congregation has also





undertaken various developmental projects, which have been highly appreciated. Their commitment to holistic development, encompassing both spiritual growth and socio-economic upliftment, has been a blessing to the people of Itanagar diocese.

The St. Vincent Retreat Hall at Gumto will serve as a hub for spiritual growth, providing a serene and sacred space for people from far and near to spend time in prayer and reflection, guided by the able leadership of the VC Fathers.

Regular retreats and prayers have helped community members develop a deeper connection with their faith, fostering a sense of spirituality and purpose. Retreats and prayer sessions have provided opportunities for community members to come together, share experiences, and strengthen bonds, promoting a sense of unity and belonging. Regular retreats have offered individuals a chance to reflect on their lives, values, and goals, facilitating personal growth, self-awareness, and

transformation. Prayer sessions and retreats have provided a safe space for community members to share their struggles, receive emotional support, and experience healing. Regular retreats and prayers have helped community members reconnect with their values, passions, and purpose, inspiring them

to make positive changes in their lives and communities. Through shared prayer and reflection, community members have developed greater empathy and compassion for one another, fostering a more caring and supportive community. Retreats and prayer sessions have provided opportunities for community members to receive spiritual guidance and mentorship from experienced leaders, helping them navigate life's challenges. Regular retreats and prayers have helped preserve cultural and traditional practices, passing them down to younger generations and promoting cultural heritage. Retreats and prayer sessions have inspired community members to take action on social justice issues, promoting positive change and advocacy. Regular retreats and prayers have brought community members a deeper sense of inner peace, joy, and contentment, enriching their overall well-being and quality of life.

- Being WhatsApp Message



St. Joseph Parish Kaying Celebrates Feast Day with Grandeur

KAYING, March 23, 2025: On April 23, 2025, St. Joseph Parish Kaying, established in 1998, joyfully celebrated the Feast of St. Joseph in the presence of esteemed dignitaries and a large gathering of faithful. The celebration was graced by Most Rev. Benny Varghese, Bishop of Itanagar, Shri Nabam Tuki, former Chief Minister, Shri Nabam Peki, President of Arunachal Pradesh Catholic Association (APCA), Shri Tarh Miri, President of Arunachal Christian Forum (ACF), Executive members of APCA and ACF, Fathers, Sisters, and thousands of faithful from various villages and regions.

The festivities commenced with the laying of the foundation stone for the Perpetual Adoration Chapel, followed by the Holy Eucharist. The celebration also featured a Eucharistic procession and a formal felicitation program.



St. Joseph Parish Kaying has been designated as one of the Pilgrimage Centres in the Diocese of Itanagar for the Jubilee Year: 2025, making this celebration even more significant.

Once again, warmest greetings to all on the Feast of St. Joseph! May this special day bring blessings, joy, and spiritual renewal to our community.

- Parish Priest, Kaying

6th Parish Youth Joint Fellowship



NAHARLAGUN, March 23, 2025: The 6th Naharlagun Parish Youth Joint Fellowship was held at St. Peter's Church, Nirjuli, dated 23rd March, 2025,

marking a resumption of fellowship after a three-month gap. The Theme for the fellowship was from St Paul's letter to 1Corinthians 1:9, "God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." The gathering was primarily focused on prayer and the sharing of personal testimonies, reflecting individual experiences of God's presence in their lives.



Approximately 52 participants attended, including Fr Roshan Bamin (DYD, Diocese of Itanagar), 2 Priests, 2 Sisters, and 2 Postulants. The fellowship provided a space for spiritual reflection and community building.

The event concluded with refreshments, generously provided by the Nirjuli youth. The session was considered fruitful, fostering a renewed sense of connection with God and spiritual growth among the youth of the Parish.

- Fr Roshan Bamin, DYD

ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUIZ-45

1. The serpent. (Gn 3:1)
2. To eat the fruit that God had told them not to eat. (Gn 3:4)
3. No, they did not obey God and ate the forbidden fruit. (Gn 3:6)
4. They realised that they were naked. (Gn 3:7)
5. Fig leaves. (Gn 3:7)
6. God cursed the serpent. (Gn 3:14)
7. Because of the sin of man. (Gn 3:17)
8. Dust, dust. (Gn 3:18)
9. Because she was the mother of all living. (Gn 3:20)
10. Garments of skins. (Gn 3:21)
11. No, God drove them out of the garden. (Gn 3:24)
12. The tree of life. (Gn 3:24)
13. Cain and Abel. (Gn 4:1, 2)
14. Cain was a tiller of the ground and Abel a keeper of sheep. (Gn 4:2)
15. Because God had regard for Abel's offering, but not for Cain's. (Gn 4:4, 5)
16. He killed his brother. (Gn 4:8)
17. He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" (Gn 4:9)
18. In the land of Nod, east of Eden. (Gn 4:16)
19. Enoch. (Gn 4:17)
20. Enoch. (Gn 4:17)



NEWS: NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL

POPE, FROM HOSPITAL, WRITES ABOUT 'BLESSING' HIDDEN IN FRAILTY



VATICAN CITY, March 02, 2025: Pope Francis' condition remained "stable", March 2, and he "did not require non-invasive mechanical ventilation, but only high-flow oxygen therapy," the Vatican said in its evening medical bulletin.

The 88-year-old Pope did not have a fever, it said, but "in view of the complexity of the clinical picture, the prognosis remains guarded." In the morning, the Vatican said, Pope Francis participated in a Mass "together with those who are caring for him during these days of hospitalization, then alternated rest with prayer."

The pope had what his doctors described as "an isolated crisis of bronchospasm", Feb. 28, which caused him to vomit and to inhale some of it, leading to concern that he could contract

another infection. Signs of an infection could have included a fever and an elevated white blood cell count, neither of which was present, a source said. The crisis also forced doctors to employ "non-invasive" mechanical ventilation using a mask; by the next day, he could alternate the mask and high-flow oxygen therapy administered through a nasal cannula.

As he continues to receive treatment in Rome's Gemelli hospital, Pope Francis sent written thanks for people's prayers, but he did not go to his hospital window as some people had hoped.

Young people and members of the House of Mary, both groups associated with the Pontifical Academy of the Immaculate Conception, led the recitation of the Angelus prayer, March 2, around a statue of St. John Paul II below the Pope's hospital window. A couple, dozen other people and many photographers and TV correspondents joined them.

The Vatican press office released a message from Pope Francis with a brief reflection the day's Gospel reading, but also with a reflection on being hospitalized since Feb. 14 with breathing difficulty and a diagnosis of double pneumonia.

In his message, the pope thanked his



doctors and all the medical professionals assisting him. But he also told people, "I feel in my heart the 'blessing' that is hidden within frailty, because it is precisely in these moments that we learn even more to trust in the Lord; at the same time, I thank God for giving me the opportunity to share in body and spirit the condition of so many sick and suffering people."

Pope Francis expressed his gratitude "for the prayers, which rise up to the Lord from the hearts of so many faithful

from many parts of the world: I feel all your affection and closeness and, at this particular time, I feel as if I am 'carried' and supported by all God's people." The pope assured people he was praying for them, too, and said, "I pray above all for peace. From here, war appears even more absurd. Let us pray for tormented Ukraine, Palestine, Israel, Lebanon, Myanmar, Sudan and Kivu, in eastern Congo."

- Cindy Wooden (Courtesy: CNS)

GOOD FRIDAY COLLECTION CREATES 'LIVING CONTACT' WITH HOLY LAND

[Cardinal Claudio Gugerotti, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches, invites Catholics to contribute to the annual Good Friday Collection, saying the appeal provides essential resources and connects us directly with the land trod by Jesus.]

VATICAN, March 17, 2025: As Christians prepare spiritually for Easter during Lent, the Prefect of the Dicastery for Eastern Churches has recalled the vital connection between faith and charity. Cardinal Claudio Gugerotti sent a letter to all Catholic Bishops on Monday, March 17, to invite them to promote the annual Good Friday Collection, taken up at the liturgy on that holy day. Each year, the faithful contribute money to support Christians in the Holy Land and the Church's mission to care for the places linked to Jesus' earthly life. In his letter, Cardinal

Gugerotti urged Catholic Bishops - in the name of the Holy Father - to convey the Church's appeal "in response to the cry of those who are suffering so much." He said the ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war has halted the destruction that has killed tens of thousands of people in Gaza. "Our hearts are lifted by the ceasefire in effect," he said. "We know that it is fragile and that, by its very nature, it will not be enough on its own to solve the problems and extinguish the hatred in that area." Cardinal Gugerotti expressed the Church's hope in Christ's eternal victory over death, but noted that the Christians residing in the Holy Land require the concrete assistance of the universal Church.

He recalled Pope Francis' letter to Catholics of the Middle East, sent on October 7, 2024, in which the Pope called



them "a seed loved by God." As darkness surrounds Christians in the Holy Land, said the Pope in his letter, they must keep the light of faith alive and testify to love and unity amid tension and words of hatred.

Cardinal Gugerotti urged Christians to remember our "duty" to help life be reborn, starting with rebuilding schools where children can learn and play together "without the fear of seeing the satanic grin of death again." "For us Christians, the Holy Places have a special value," he said. "They are the incarnation of the Incarnation."

The Cardinal Prefect also thanked the Franciscan Friars Minor who have provided pastoral care through the Custody of the Holy Land for centuries. He pointed to the many initiatives they run, including parishes, schools, hospitals, homes for the elderly, and assistance centers for migrants, displaced persons, and refugees.

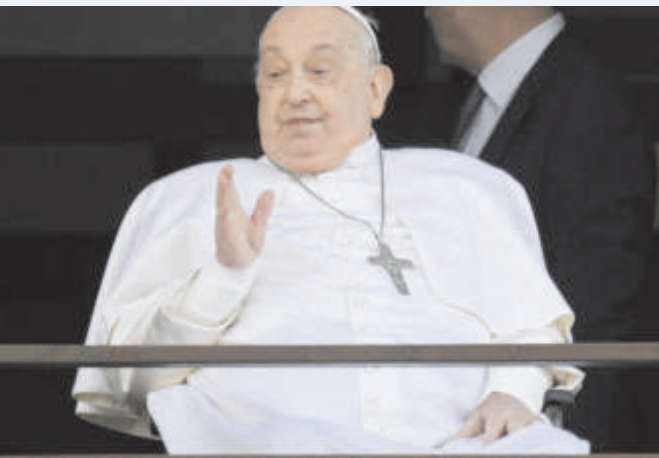
Cardinal Gugerotti said this year's Good Friday Collection will provide an "essential resource," especially following the pandemic years and the disruption to pilgrimages that resulted from the war in Gaza. "If we want to strengthen the Holy Land and ensure living contact with the Holy Places," he said, "we must sustain Christian communities that, in their various traditions, offer perennial praise to the God-with-us, also in our name."

The Prefect of the Dicastery for Eastern Churches urged Catholic Bishops to help remind Christians of our connection to the Holy Land and its people. "I implore you to feel the Collection as one of your pastoral priorities," he concluded. "At stake is the survival of this precious presence of ours, which dates back directly to the time of Jesus."

- Devin Watkins
(Courtesy: Vatican News)



AFTER 38 DAYS POPE FRANCIS LEAVES THE GEMELLI HOSPITAL



VATICAN, March 23, 2025: 38 days have gone by since February 14, when Pope Francis left the Vatican to be hospitalized at the Gemelli Polyclinic Hospital. These weeks have been challenging for an 88-year-old patient battling bilateral pneumonia. Medical reports did not downplay the severity of his condition, the crises he endured, or the complexity of his clinical picture. Yet, throughout this time, he was surrounded by an outpouring of prayers for his recovery: personal prayers, the prayers of communities, rosaries and Eucharistic celebrations. They came not only from Catholics and Christians but also from people of other faiths and those without religious beliefs, who sent him good thoughts and well-wishes. It was for all these people in prayer that today's brief greeting was wanted and shared.

During these long days of suffering, we accompanied the Bishop of Rome in spirit. We waited, prayed, and were moved when, on March 7, Pope Francis,

with his frail voice, reached out to the faithful gathered in St. Peter's Square and those connected worldwide, thanking them for their prayers. We were reassured on the evening of Sunday, March 16, when, for the first time, we saw him again-albeit filmed from behind-while he prayed after concelebrating Mass in the chapel on the hospital's tenth floor.

After weeks of concern but also of trust and surrender to the will of the He who grants us life and may call us to Himself at any moment, today, we have seen him again. On the day of his return to the Vatican, we received his blessing again. From his hospital room, Pope Francis has reminded us that every moment of life is precious and that, at any time, it may be asked of us. He has shown us that suffering and weakness can become opportunities for evangelical witness, a testament to a God who became Man, suffered with us, and accepted annihilation on the cross.

We thank him for sharing that, from his hospital room, war seemed even more absurd to him; for reminding us of the need to disarm the world rather than rearm it by stuffing arsenals with new instruments of death; and for praying and offering his suffering for peace, which remains so fragile today.

Welcome home, Holy Father!

- Andrea Tornielli
(Courtesy: Vatican News)



BIBLE QUIZ - 46

[From the Book of Genesis, Ch. 4-7]

Write the answers in the space given and cut out this page and send it to the Editor, Footprints, Bishop's House, Post Box No. 294, Naharlagun - 791 110, Papum Pare Dist. (A.P.), or send the answers by e-mail at footprints.arunachal@gmail.com. Your answers should reach us latest by 15 January, 2025. Winners will be awarded. [N.B: This Bible Quiz is meant for the general Catholic faithful, students, youth, and candidates to priesthood and religious life; it is not meant for priests and already finally professed religious.]

Name:

Address:

Ph. No: Status:



1 Who was the ancestor of those who live in tents and have livestock?

.....

2 Who was the ancestor of all those who play the lyre and pipe?

.....

3. Who was the ancestor of metal workers?

.....

4. Who were the parents of Seth?

.....

5. How long did Adam live before he died?

.....

6. How long did Seth live?

.....

7. Who was the father of Noah?

.....



8. How many sons did Noah have? Name them.
.....
9. Why did God decide to destroy all living being on earth?
.....
10. Who found favour in the sight of God when He decided to destroy the humankind?
.....
11. What did God command Noah to make?
.....
12. What wood was used to make the Ark?
.....
13. What means did God choose to destroy all living beings on the earth?
.....
14. How many persons went into the Ark before the flood, and who were they?
.....
15. What else did Noah take with him into the Ark?
.....
16. Who shut the door of the Ark?
.....
17. How old was Noah when it began to rain?
.....
18. When did it begin to rain on the earth?
.....
19. How many days and nights did it rain?
.....
20. For how many days did the water flooded the earth?
.....



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