



TEA LEAVES

DARJEELING DIOCESE NEWSLETTER

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2024

Bishop's House, Darjeeling - 734101 INDIA

JANUARY/FEBRUARY

Bishop's Lenten Message



The Lenten Season is indeed a grace-filled moment for all Christians. After the baptism at the Jordan, Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit to the desert to be tempted for forty days (Mark 1:12-13). Jesus' mission was not easy, given his adoption of human nature. However, the Holy Spirit accompanied Him, fortifying him throughout the forty days. Finally, he became strong to face the Cross, awaiting him for his glorification. As the saying goes, "No pain, no gain." The success behind the glorification of Jesus after the Cross and resurrection, along with the glorification of every human being, was the fasting of forty days in the desert. Jesus began his ministry with a forty-day desert experience. One can have the positive view that observing the Lenten season is journeying with Jesus to battle our own human nature and experience glorification with divine nature.

The present scenario of our country is full of temptation, suffering, and the crucifixion of innocent people around us, whether Christian or any other voiceless innocent human being. These are the real faces of Christ Jesus today in reality. In his Lenten message, Holy Father Pope Francis provides tips to observe this Lenten season. Lent is a time to pause in prayer, contemplate the word, and act to love God and Neighbour. The love of God and Neighbour are one. The Holy Father draws a message for us

that the exodus from slavery to freedom is not an abstract journey. The Israelites' forty years journey through the desert is our journey too. "I have observed the miseries of my people in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmaster. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I come down to deliver them from the Egyptians and bring them out of their land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey" (Ex.3:7-8). The Holy Father emphasizes that today too, the cry of many of our oppressed brothers and sisters rises to heaven. Do we hear the cry of these people? The Holy Father is asking each one of us. During this grace-filled season of Lent, let us listen to the Lord and examine our way of life. Lord, increase my faith.



+Bishop Stephen Lepcha

THREE PILLARS OF LENT



PRAYER



FASTING

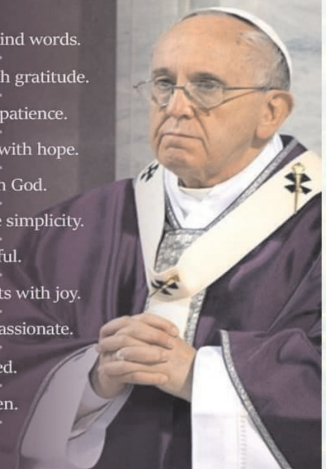


ALMSGIVING

DO YOU WANT TO FAST THIS LENT?

In the words of Pope Francis

- Fast from hurting words and say kind words.
- Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.
- Fast from anger and be filled with patience.
- Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.
- Fast from worries and have trust in God.
- Fast from complaints; contemplate simplicity.
- Fast from pressures and be prayerful.
- Fast from bitterness; fill your hearts with joy.
- Fast from selfishness and be compassionate.
- Fast from grudges and be reconciled.
- Fast from words; be silent and listen.



PEDONG DEANERY HOLY CHILDHOOD CONVENTION 2024



The Pedong Deanery Holy Childhood Commission organized a three days' Convention at St. Margaret Mary Church, Barbot-Nimbong from 8th January to 11th January 2024 with the theme "The Sacraments of the Holy Catholic Church". The Programme was inaugurated by Rev. Fr. Joseph Chettri, the Dean of Pedong Deanery with the Hosting of the Deanery Holy Childhood Flag and lightening of the Lamp followed by the Inaugural Holy Eucharistic Celebration. Rev. Sr. Susanta Chettri, Holy Childhood Animator of Nimbong Parish delivered the Welcome Speech. This Annual Holy Childhood Convention was attended by 275 children and 24 Animators from 15 Parishes. Rev. Dn. Fredrick Gurung, Rev. Dn. Suraj Tamang, Rev. Dn. Peter Toppo, Rev. Dn. Roger Ethen Lepcha and Rev. Br. Pranit Gurung (Regent) were the resource Persons. This Convention included the 8 (7+1)



talks on Seven Sacraments, Eucharistic Celebration, Rosary and Adoration, Procession towards the Krush Dara, Skit presentation based on Seven Sacraments, Parish Report Presentation by the Children, Action Songs, Basketball Match for Animators, Musical Chair and other Party Games for Children and Cultural Programmes and Religious Movie Show. This three Days' Holy Childhood Convention was concluded with the Holy Eucharistic Celebration celebrated by Rev. Fr. Augustine Subba, Parish Priest of St. Margaret Mary Church, Barbot-Nimbong. At the end of the Convention Fr. Christopher Lucksom, the Holy Childhood Co-ordinator of Pedong Deanery thanked everyone who were behind the success of the Convention (i.e. the Parish Priest, Sisters and Parishioners of St. Margaret Mary Church, Barbot-Nimbong, Fr. Joseph Chettri, the Dean of Pedong Deanery, Rev. Fr. Swid Singh, the Diocesan Holy Childhood Director, all the five Resource Persons, Rev. Fr. Urgen Thomas Lepcha, Mr. Gelas Chettri of Homes and all the Children and Animators).

Fr. Christopher Lucksom



NEW ARCHBISHOP FOR RANCHI ARCH DIOCESE

Ranchi: Pope Francis has appointed Bishop Vincent Aind of Bagdogra, West Bengal as the new Archbishop of Ranchi Archdiocese. This was announced simultaneously on 30 December, at 12 noon from Vatican Rome and at 4.30 pm Indian time from Ranchi. In Ranchi, Archbishop Felix Toppo, in a meeting with the parish priests and major superiors of Ranchi at the Archbishop House, read out the letter received from Nunciature Delhi and announced the name of Bishop Vincent Aind in front of them.

Archbishop Felix Toppo thanked all the priests and Major Superiors for their support during his tenure. He also called upon them to support the new Archbishop Vincent Aind. Archbishop Felix Toppo will continue to serve the Archdiocese of Ranchi as Apostolic Administrator until Bishop Vincent Aind takes over.

New Chairman of BEC for BRBC

Bishop Stephan Lepcha of Darjeeling has been appointed Chairman of the Bengal Ecclesiastical Commission (BEC) for the Bengal-Sikkim Region. His leadership promises to strengthen collaboration and pastoral care across the region's dioceses and parishes. Congratulations to Bishop Lepcha on this significant appointment!

"Empowering Lay People: CCBI's Canon Law Diploma Convocation Marks Milestone in Strengthening Synodal Church Participation"



Bangalore: In a very first initiative to empower lay people on canon law, the commission for canon law under the aegis of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI) conducted a one year annual diploma course in Canon Law from December 2022 to December 2023. This was aimed at empowering the lay people for their

communion, participation and mission in the life of the church to strengthen the Synodal way. The culmination of this impactful annual diploma programme saw the Convocation ceremony, held on Saturday, 3 February 2024 in Archbishops House Bangaluru, where participants were formally recognized for their dedication and achievements. Most Rev. Arulselvam Rayppan, in the inaugural session, underscored the necessity for Lay persons to acquire a profound understanding of canon law and further emphasized the instrumental role it plays in fulfilling parochial and diocesan responsibilities, guiding magisterium. All the participants were awarded Diplomas in Canon Law. His Eminence Cardinal Filipe Neri Feraro, the president of CBI, awarded the certificates to the participants and emphasized the importance of Canon Law and its relevance for the lay people's participation, mission and co-responsibility in the life of the church. On the day of the convocation, two formative sessions were conducted. Rev Dr. John Mendonca DCL spoke of laypeople being co-responsible in the activities of the church in order to create a Synodal and emphasized the need for their proper formation for their synodal Participation. Most Rev. Alex Vadakumthala, Bishop of Kannur and a Canon Lawyer, mentioned the importance of the participatory structures, such as the Parish Pastoral

Council, Parish Finance Council, Diocesan Pastoral and Finance Council, Diocesan Synods, Diocesan Pastoral Council and other Commissions wherein the laypeople could commit themselves to render their mission and participation in order to blossom the Synodal church in India. Offering his heartfelt congratulations, His Eminence Filipe Neri Cardinal Feraro eloquently reaffirmed the crucial need for such initiatives, underscoring how equipping laypeople with knowledge of canon law empowers them to contribute meaningfully to the church and its participatory structures. Most Rev. Antony Savarimuthu (chairman Bishop of the Commission for Canon Law in CCBI) who delivered a compelling address stressing the paramount importance of lay involvement within the church and significance of Canon Law as an instrument of faith. A total of 437 lay People hailing from 23 countries across the globe embarked on this enriching journey. The teaching faculty for this course comprised Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops, and renowned Professors of Canon Law from India and abroad, lending their valuable expertise to each session. Rev. Fr. Dr. Samuel Lepcha and Mr. Denis Lepcha had joined this course from the Diocese of Darjeeling. Mr. Denis Lepcha witnessed this convocation ceremony in Bangalore but Fr. Samuel could not do it due to his ill health. Mr. Denis who has completed his Theological Bachelor diploma course (2020-22) with Distinction and now with this Canon Law Diploma he has added one more feather in his Academic career.

Denis Lepcha

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**A felicitation citation in honour of
His Grace Archbishop Vincent Aind**

*"Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving,
and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms." - Psalm 95:2*

Your Grace,

It is our profound privilege to present this citation to you as a token of our love and gratitude. You have always been an integral part of the Diocese of Darjeeling as a young seminarian, a brother priest and then as the Bishop of our closest neighbor, Bagdogra Diocese. You have left an indelible mark of Christ's love in our hearts through your life and service. Your presence in our Diocesan and Regional events have always added blessings and graces abundant.

God has blessed you with great wisdom, something that you have humbly shared with everyone without any reservations. Many of our priests here have been your pupil who can proudly testify to this. Greeting people of all walks of life with a radiant smile and a kind word is characteristic to Bishop Vincent Aind. We can say that this simple but notable trait of yours brings life to the lifeless, hope to those in despair, comfort and solace to the lonely. You are an exemplary person, bestowed with so many gifts, yet it's your Humility that stands foremost and that we must seek to imbibe.

We are joyous at the news of your appointment as the Archbishop of Ranchi Archdiocese and we join you in singing praises to the Almighty who willed for this to happen. As you take up this ministry this is our prayer for you -

*"May The Lord watch over you
May the Lord be your shade at your right hand;
May the sun not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.*

*May the Lord keep you from all harm
and watch over your life;
May the Lord watch over your coming
and going both now and forevermore."
(Psalm 121)*

With warm regards,
Bishop, Priests, Religious and Faithful,
Diocese of Darjeeling.

Place : St. Teresa's Church, 8th Mile, Kalimpong
Date : 13th February 2024

Warm greetings from Caritas India!



I hope this message finds you well. I am reaching out with heartfelt gratitude for the unwavering support you've extended to Caritas India during our previous Lenten campaign launches. As we prepare for the upcoming Lenten Season, we humbly seek your benevolent guidance and support for the Lenten Campaign 2024 in your revered Archdiocese/Diocese.

This year, our Lenten Campaign carries the theme "Fraternity in Humanity, Together with Everyone," signifying our collective commitment to fostering unity and solidarity in the face of challenges.

Your leadership has been instrumental in the success of our previous endeavours, and we believe that with your benevolent guidance, this year's campaign will reach even greater heights of impact and outreach.

We earnestly request your support in promoting the Lenten Campaign 2024 in your Diocese, thereby contributing to the collective efforts of Caritas India in addressing issues of Hunger and Disease within our communities.

Your continued support is a beacon of hope for those in need, and we are confident that together, we can make a significant difference in the lives of many.

With heartfelt prayers and warm regards,

Fr. Jolly Lukose, Assistant Executive Director

Kindly Communicate!!!

Tea Leaves is the medium through which the individual parishes, communities and institutions can share with others, about the activities and events of your areas of work. So please send in the reports of your initiatives and programmes to:

**Fr. Alex Gurung, Fr. Richard Lepcha,
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