



Hello, everyone! It seems ages since we last interacted via this newsletter. I cannot not feel the excitement of sharing my thoughts once again! Our Life is a great journey for each of us.

We continue the journey which challenges us to be a living sign of God's love and compassion. Living our life with meaning makes that witness real, tangible and attractive. Hence, we continue to launch on this journey once again by sharing our views and news on various activities.

The IPCC had organized four training programmes of which a little has already been shared. Hence, though late, this issue projects the experiences of participants of these programmes.

What they saw and experienced makes their missionary witness very effective. They communicated messages of life and love through their efforts of being on "mission" & experiencing the day-to-day challenges of ordinary people who told their stories of how they live God's mercy and goodness. The participants were exposed to various experiences and situations which enabled them to effortlessly create an atmosphere of mercy and love. Pope Francis says: *"Whoever loves has been created by God because God is love."*

In our context of mission today, we provide everything to those who are on mission.... our time, our talents, our knowledge, our experiences, whatever we can share with them. Let us therefore, create a spirit of bonding love with our brothers and sisters whom God has sent on our path. It is with and through them that we are called to create Unity and Love!
Enjoy reading this issue!

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Sr. Cecile Coutinho



First Communication Training Programme at Snehalaya, Nagpur, India.

The IPCC – Indian Provinces' Communication Commission - held its first training programme for Sisters of the four provinces at Snehalaya, Nagpur, from 16 to 18 Feb... 2018 at which 16 sisters from Nagpur and Nirmala provinces participated. It was organized, prepared and conducted by IPCC members – Navya, Cecile, Fabiyola and Laveena. Three of them except Fabiyola were present.

The main focus of the programme was to train the sisters in journalism; specifically in writing for the website, CS Journal, Indian Province website and CSJ Ripples (a common newsletter for Indian provinces).

Discussion and development on the articles based on field visits, theoretical and practical knowledge of photography, demonstration of group calling through Skype and Zoom, use of drop box, Google drive and the ethical usage of social media were well explained. An emphasis was also laid on the use of Adobe Photoshop and video editing.

The programme was simplified and well conducted by the IPCC team. The group work organized by them was easily understood and captured the interest of all the participants. The ambience created by the team, empowered the participants to freely ask questions and clarify doubts.

At the evaluation session the sisters expressed gratitude and joy of learning through easy and practical ways and means. The hard work and meticulous planning of the team was much appreciated by all the participants.

S. Olinda Fernandes (Province of Nagpur)

"PAVAN PUG SAMAROH"

"Pavan Pug Samaroh" was organized by St. Anthony's High School, Chembur, Mumbai. This celebration was mainly for the students to inculcate in them respect for their parents.

This day was dedicated to all parents of students from classes 7 to 9. Five students were selected from each section, to invite their parents for the occasion.



There was excitement in the air as the students prepared for the event. The celebration began with an inter-religious prayer service in their honour with appropriate songs. It was an emotional moment for all as the students bent down before their parents to wash their feet. A note of appreciation was then gifted to the parents. One of the parents remarked, *"It was a great initiative by the school to inculcate the values of respect and gratitude in our children"*.

This moment of deep love and gratitude came to a close with a prayer and the parents left accompanied by their children with sparkling eyes.



S. Sadhana D'Cruz (Province of Nagpur)



A HOPE FILLED DIFFERENCE

As part of the outreach programme planned by the Communication Commission in India, the group ventured into the slums of Gulshan Nagar, Nagpur, on 17 Feb. 2018. This was done under the guidance of S. Philomina Pichappalli and her team of social workers who tirelessly work for the development of slums in and around the area.

As the group went about interacting with the women folk, they were amazed at the faith and hope with which people went about their daily chores. Many questions crossed their minds and the group had much to learn from each of them. "Despite their poverty they seemed so happy, secure and contented" commented one of the group members. They did not have much leisure time nor



did they receive a just remuneration for their tedious work, but the perseverance and dedication with which they worked together, was commendable. No complaints escaped their lips, each did her best and all have hope and confidence that the future will be a successful one; with this same hope they go about educating their children who hopefully, would not have to struggle like them but have a brighter and better future.

The group came across women making incense sticks, and for every 1000 sticks made, they receive a meagre amount of Rs.15/-. Another group of women work to stick sequences on pieces of material which will later be used for patching garments. They hardly earn Rs. 10-12/-, for the tedious work put in for 8-10 hours at the risk of even losing their eye sight. "This is sheer injustice," commented S. Pramila, one of the group members. "It's really sad to see them being underpaid," added S. Namita, yet another member. The long hours of hard work put in was not appreciated nor acknowledged.

The group expressed a deep feeling of pain and sadness to see them being taken advantage of, and desired to do something to unburden the women of this injustice. However this was not the case for the courageous women there. Safira, one of the women said, "We are happy to work and earn something rather than sit idle." There was hope amidst the cloudy situation they lived and worked in. They preferred to work and earn the little they got rather than sit idle doing nothing. This positive attitude and contentment powerfully noticed by the group was very empowering.

Latabai, one of these self-help-group member who stitches garments said, "This little job though less-paid, gives me an identity of my own and I feel good contributing to my family's income." She further said that she did not have to depend on her husband's income to run her family. Having felt empowered to be contributors and life-giving members to not only their families but to the society at large, these same women are now an inspiration to others.



Srs. Olinda, Namita, Pramila, Lilly



BLOOM WHERE YOU ARE PLANTED

The Temporary Professed sisters of the Province of Nagpur were gathered together at Kharibahar, Chhatisgarh for their annual session and retreat.

The Retreat commenced with the celebration of the Eucharist with the theme: *“Open your heart for Jesus and let Jesus come into your heart”*. Father Basil (OFM), our retreat preacher gave us a traditional welcome. The words on the door - *“Atithi deva bhava”* or *Welcome* or *Swagatam*, gave us a feeling of welcome and joy. Very often we read on certain doors of homes..... *“Be aware of dogs”* which can instill fear and a feeling of not being welcomed. Yet, this message was an invitation for all, to *“Be open to welcome Jesus Christ”* into our hearts; He who is knocking at the door of our hearts.

Fr. Basil introduced himself and we were introduced by Sr. Olinda. Sr. Charmaine wished us on behalf of the Provincial team and prayed for us.

Our first talk began with 3 W's to reflect on, *Why am I here? What am I doing? Where am I going?* He also said that, retreat is re-treating into one's self. Every day's talks were based on different themes such as - call of God, vocation from family, prayer, community life, vows, leadership, Good Shepherd, God's love and reconciliation, etc. During those day we meditated and reflected

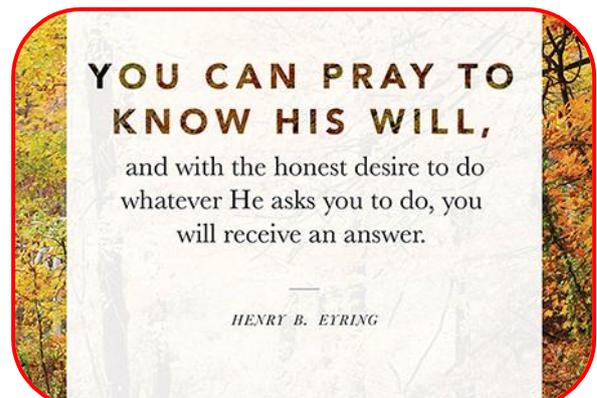
on different psalms and scripture passages. All these topics focused on 4 areas: God, Family, Community, Mission. We were enlightened with the thought on Mary our mother that....." *Mary Always Remembers You*".

He gave us very concrete examples based on Gospel passages. All this was related to family and life experiences. The journeying of Re-treating oneself ended on 12th June, with the solemn thanksgiving mass and renewal of vows.

We were sent forth on a new mission through a final message: *“Bloom wherever you are planted and spread the fragrance of Jesus wherever you go”*.



**Temporary Professed Sisters
Province of Nagpur**





STRUGGLE TO MAKE A LIVELIHOOD IN THE SLUM OF HANUMAN NAGAR

We, participants of the Communication Seminar had an awareness trip to Jagruti Sadan, Vidya Nagar, Nagpur. Jagruti Sadan is in the midst of 45 slums which is taken care of by Sr. Philomina Pichapilly, along with her Social Workers. They empower the occupants through education, self help groups, awareness programmes of government schemes, Balwadi and with legal advice. Her presence has brought tremendous change in those slums.

Our group visited the slum area of Hanuman Nagar and witnessed the struggle of women to earn their livelihood. Many families and most of the women were seen working on “Charkha” to make colored threads, earning Rs. 250/- per week. One of the women, Ruhana said, “*We don't have machines, but whatever is given to us we try to do to earn our livelihood.*”



A group of women engaged in making incense sticks, earned Rs.30/- for 2000 incense sticks. Nabeesha said, “*it is better to keep ourselves occupied than sitting idle and doing nothing. It means hard work, mixing colours, with coal ash, and rolling it on a stick, drying it and taking it to the center.*” A joint family of Muslim women worked on sequence, earning Re. 1/- per piece. Their eyes and fingers were affected. Areen explained to the group how these pieces of material were given to them and as a family how they work together for hours.



Few women worked on sewing machines making various garments for women and children. After a whole day's hard work they barely received any income. Hence, the income they earn is not sufficient to feed the entire family.

Most of the women we visited belong to the Muslim community and these women live in a joint family. Though they are poor they welcomed us cheerfully. These groups of women undergo a lot of injustice from those who employ them and pay them a small amount. Yet, these women do all the hard work most cheerfully, with comfort and ease.

We visited a family where a woman named Faker Bai gave us the background of her family and shared with us why she was called Faker Bai. She belonged to a large family where many of her siblings died when they were born. Being a girl child, she was rejected by her family. From here she got this name and at the age of seven was given in marriage and had three sons. She educated her sons and brought into the home daughters-in-law whom she empowered; now, as a family, they all work together for the upliftment of their family. She experienced a lot of struggle in her own life but has given importance to her daughters-in-law to make a living.

This visit inspired us with the thought that there are struggles in life but there are many ways to cope with them and move ahead in life.

Sisters Deepika, Sadhana, Jeni, Nirmala.



ICJ - A Bud Opening Dynamism

“We are the light of the world, May our light shine before all, that all may see and give glory to God.”

Our heart and soul rejoices and overwhelms with joy and gratitude as we glance over the precious nine months journey of our life at ICJ. As we retrospect, our words are bubbling into a dynamic experience of the ICJ Programme. We are indeed blessed by God to make such a wonderful journey with 20 other sisters belonging to 13 various congregations from 8 states.

At ICJ, we, Chamberians were 12 in number. ICJ served as a spiritual power house and nurtured us with lot of theological input and life-touching assignments. As time passed, we started delving deeper, and treasured every moment. The more we delved deeply, the greater the treasure unfolded

into our lives because the theological training helped us to be rational. During the 9 months, we touched 35 topics by various professors. The entire programme gave us social and pastoral training, all-round human development, community building and growth in prayer and communion with God.

We appreciate the successful efforts of this institution, which helps carve a refined personality and promotes human qualities. ICJ taught us to be firm and to hold on to our convictions and principles. We were moulded, motivated, trained and shaped to be vibrant and effective persons.



From the day of our initiation at ICJ, we lived the motto: **“Transformative process of our God-oriented Journey.”** In life, we strive to be always on God’s side rather than God to be on our side.

Whatever we learned we lived out in possible ways and shared them in celebrative and appreciation gestures with other congregations. Sunday was set aside for sharing the Spirituality and Charism of each Congregation. On Tuesdays, we were enlightened to listen to testimonies of a sister’s vocation story. Each time we bonded with one another and indeed we were just amazed with the wonderful and creative ways of God.

Having acquired knowledge in ICJ, we moved back to our ministry with great enthusiasm and courage to live our life as witnesses of Christ and joyful religious, embracing the challenges of the present world.

We appreciate and thank each staff member, for his/her successful efforts and keen interest, which they have taken for our growth. Spending time at ICJ enlightened us to be goal-oriented in life and challenged us to boost our confidence. We are grateful to our provinces for releasing us from our mundane activities in order to set apart this time to deepen our convictions of our call; to be of service to Society with total commitment to live an exemplary life in today’s world.

**ICJ (Inter-Congregational Juniorate),
Temp.Prof. of St. Joseph’s of Chambery, Indian Provinces**



A single initiative - A paradigm shift

A single step of initiative by S. Philomina Pichapilly has brought a paradigm shift, in the lives of the people in Vigan Nagar, Nagpur. As a General Chapter option 'option for the poor', and the idea of an inserted community, 'Living with the people', Sr. Philomina took the challenge to venture into this mission. As a result 'Jagrudi Sadan' came into existence in 2002.



The values of democracy "for the people, by the people, of the people" was made visible with the initiative of S. Philo. She encountered the multiplication of loaves in her mission and started her work without any financial assistance from other resources. There are 45 slums, with a population of about 300,000. At that time it was very backward in all aspects; be it housing, education, health, or food. S. Sheetal, who had seen the reality 15 years ago, noted a drastic change in the people and area.

The Success of S. Philo's work began first with literacy. Then proceeded to "Balwadi" for children. By conducting awareness programmes she awakened the minds of women. Another important scheme for development was 'micro credit finance' - self help groups. Initially, it was difficult to convince the people, but now they are fully involved in it. They know it is their money, their own saving and their own banking. The Money came to them through hand crafts, sewing and mid-day meals.

S. Philomina's first priority was to fight for human rights by tapping Government resources, like pension, and other Government Schemes. The awareness created in the people had such an impact, that today people are able to fight for their own rights. S. Philo narrated an incident. The Government wanted this slum area for the purpose of a "sewage treatment plant" project. But people of one accord sat down for Dharana, for nights and days for three years, till the government abandoned this project.



S. Sheetal and her group went on a observation visit to the slum and noticed a vast change. Today



we could hardly find any old dilapidated houses; instead we could see a slowly developing township. People are educated, many have government jobs, or are self-employed, and own decent houses. The old small schools are being replaced with bigger ones.

We were surprised to see the empowerment of women. Today, most of them have their own small business. As we were talking to a couple we noticed the wife was engaged in electrical repairs. Her husband had taught her to sew, and now, he stitches men's clothes, and she, clothes for the ladies; while his mother sells vegetables in front of their house.

People of Vidhan Nagar have proved that all things are possible if you have a will, determination and commitment in life. It all came true, because of the vision and mission of S. Philomina Pichapilly.

Srs. Anila, Sheetal, Anju, Sybil.



THE FIRST SPARK OF VIDHYARAMBH CEREMONY

On 13th August 2018 for first time in the history of St. Joseph's Convent School, Ratlam, Vidhyarambh Ceremony was conducted for Nursery kids. The spark shone very brightly igniting the city with the presence of distinguished guests, parents and the little ones.

Vidhya means *knowledge* and Arambh means *beginning*. Hence, it is the beginning of the quest for knowledge. This holy and sacred ceremony was conducted according to our Indian tradition. When a child is old enough to explore the mysteries of life through study and acquisition of knowledge, s/he seeks the blessings of God, teachers and parents through a solemn ceremony.

Such a ceremony was organized at St. Joseph's, Ratlam during which the parents understood the importance of education for their children. S. Prabha, our Provincial Superior, S.

Nidhi, the Principal and sisters of our community were present. Parents responded positively and children showed much excitement and enthusiasm.



The ceremony began with the lighting of the lamp by the distinguished guests and parent representatives. Thereafter the L.K.G. students performed a meaningful dance through which they gave the message - *all must shine like the sun*. The effect of education is to shine in knowledge, virtues and values in every sphere of life.

The most awaited moment of the sacred ceremony arrived when some sisters held the tender hands of the children and made them write V, A and 1 on rice. After this, the parents followed the same ceremony of making

their children write the alphabets. By this the parents were reminded of their responsibility to be co-teachers and formators of their children. In our ancient Indian tradition it is believed that with this ceremony the child's intellect, thirst for knowledge and devotion to student life are greatly enhanced. Everyone appreciated this first effort and congratulated the management for organizing such a meaningful ceremony. The staff too expressed their great joy and happiness. They felt affirmed in their profession of teaching. At the end, refreshment was served to all. There was good media coverage of this ceremony.



S. Gloria Clarence
Ratlam (Prov. of Tanmaya)



TRANSFORMATION THROUGH AWARENESS IN WANJARI NAGAR

“Illiteracy is not a barrier for progress” said S.Philomena while addressing the gathering at Jagruti Sadan. S. Philomena, a social worker and an advocate, began working in this slum area since 2004.

She made uneducated poor women into courageous leaders who can now stand on their feet. She trained the illiterate women with practical training that enabled them to be independent and earn their own living. She attained this by empowering the slum dwellers with literacy classes. Study centers were opened for students to prevent school dropouts. Upon the request of women many *Anganwadis* were opened for the

education of their children. As a result of these efforts launched by S. Philomena, most of the youth are educated and well employed.

She created awareness among the people by conducting programmes on various occasions like Independence day, Republic day, Youth day, Women’s day, etc. All these were organized purely with people’s effort and money. She is truly an inspiration in influencing and empowering around 300,000 people in 42 slums; having 500 self-help group and 23 social workers.



MCF- Micro Credit Finance was introduced to help the women save their money. The women borrowed money from MCF whenever they were in financial need. In place of shanty huts they now own decent homes. The people were made aware of various government schemes which benefited them. Niraha Yojana (those who have nowhere to go) helped the widows with pension of ₹ 1000/-. Through the awareness created, the handicapped and the elderly secured their allowance. People had access to clean drinking water and electricity.



“I am educated but I did not get out of my house and had no knowledge of how to progress in life; through the empowerment given by sister I got a government job in Anganwadi,” said Anita Nagpure, an anganwadi teacher.

As the group visited families they came across few other empowered women among whom was

Sangeeta Nikhare a widow. She earned her living by tailoring ; taking bulk orders from the company. For each piece of bangali [a long shirt for men] she is paid ₹.25/- . Though a widow, she now looks confident, contented and cheerful. Kamala Lanjewar is another empowered woman who contributes to the family income through tailoring, despite her illiteracy.

“If you educate a woman, you educate a family, if you educate a girl you educate the future.” This is truly what S.Philomena accomplished in these slums. All development began only after making the women literate.

Long years of dedicated service of S. Philo, brought much development in the area. Sister is currently the Provincial Superior of Nagpur Province but she continues to render her service to the people of Wanjari Nagar.

Sr. Justin & Group



NIOS - NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF OPEN SCHOOLING

I have been in the teaching ministry since the 1960s..... Teaching, as well as helping poor children who were unable to attend tuition classes.

On entering the Congregation of the sisters of St Joseph, I continued being a teacher in different schools. After my retirement, I served in various communities caring for the sick and elderly.

Three years ago I was asked to take over the NIOS to help school drop-outs. As the regular curriculum does not enable a child to complete her schooling, due to adverse reasons, she is compelled to discontinue her studies. NIOS helps such children to go ahead with their education as they have a vast choice of subjects at their disposal to choose from. After completing NIOS X Board exam, they pursue further studies. For the last three years it was a joint venture of both boys and girls. Classes were held in Our Lady of Perpetual Succour School, Chembur, Mumbai.

Each year had its own problems and difficulties.

Each year the girls had to be taken to the convent premises a few months prior to final exams to help them concentrate their studies. This did benefit them and they all passed with a good

percentage. This year after consulting the authorities, a decision was taken, after much prayer and discernment, to hold classes ONLY FOR GIRLS at St Joseph's Convent premises. This has indeed proved to be a blessing in disguise! At present there are about 25 girls.

The girls who come to attend classes are from different backgrounds:

- They suffer from emotional hurts. The stigma, that they are not fit for studies, forces them to leave school.

- Most of them come from dysfunctional families, single-parent families, feel rejected because she is a girl child, unwanted, orphaned; still others are financially poor, undernourished; others are physically weak.

The main concern when they are registered for the NIOS Exams, is to instil within them virtues of HOPE, COURAGE AND LOVE. To help them experience a God who loves them no matter what their drawbacks are! They unconsciously learn Christian values and see for themselves the work been done by a Sister of St Joseph.

A deep faith and trust in themselves is of prime importance to succeed in life. It is a challenge to make a difference in the lives of these girls.

This is what exactly Pope Francis exhorts us to "tend the lost sheep." If not, they will be part of news reports we read daily, and we will be partly responsible for it. May the Light of Christ illumine my path to rediscover the essence of commitment in my missionary endeavours.



S. Barbara Marie D'Silva
Province of Nagpur



Browsing @ Miriam

“So many of our dreams at first seem impossible, then they seem improbable, and then, when we summon the will, they soon become inevitable.” – Christopher Reeve

Words fail to express my immense gratitude for the gift of life when we, a group of trainees for communication for mission visited the Miriam School where the Sisters commit themselves totally day and night in rehabilitating, caring and educating the mentally challenged children. It was a learning experience for each of us that a small band of dedicated sisters with passion and zeal work tirelessly for this challenging mission. Miriam school for the mentally challenged was one of the dreams of late Archbishop Rev. Dr. Eugene D’Souza. It was his farsightedness that bore a unique flavour in calling the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry to shoulder this mission. On 1st March 1988, this dream came true and was officially recognized as a separate society for the mentally challenged. The human spirit is one of ability, perseverance and courage that no disability can steal. Jacob, now 57 years of age, was the first inmate to begin with. Currently, this mission has grown from a mustard seed into a gigantic tree. Under its shade, thousands of students have taken shelter having the Sisters as their guardians over the years.

At a glance, we could see every student is well cared for and trained according to his/her mental and physical ability. *“Believe you can and you’re halfway there.”* said Theodore Roosevelt. Children are trained in curricular and co-curricular activities like skating, music, sports, dance, gymnastics, etc. All those who enter this special home are amazed at the cleanliness and orderliness of the house. Being the Parents -Teachers meet, we had the opportunity to interact with a few parents. *“The normal children at home will not even keep their bed room clean rather need to learn from the children here how to keep things in order and clean.”* said one of the parents.” Though their IQ level is less than the normal kids, their achievements are greater. They have participated at state and national levels as well as in Para-Olympics and won gold, silver and bronze medals. In November 2017 they secured three gold medals, two silver and two bronze at the Special Olympics hand ball competition. The thing about living with any disability is that you adapt; you do what works for you.

S. Christopher Wheelan is the pioneer of this mission. *“There is a plan and a purpose, a value to every life, no matter what its location, age, gender or disability”* says Sharron Angle. Many people have generously contributed to this mission. Sister believed in ‘giving the best’ to differently abled children and was very honest and transparent in utilizing every penny that came for this cause. S. Christopher said, *‘I will live and die here. I have given my life to these children.’*

S. Sheela, the Principal of the school, said that the mission is very challenging, but still loves to give her best because these are also God’s children. She also mentioned that they love to stay here rather than go home because at home they are locked up in the room and given some things to play with. Here they feel cared for, loved and understood. So *“Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.”* — Helen Keller

It was indeed a passionate journey into the life of the disabled to really find tools for that person to thrive and find what their true passions are, because the rest will follow.



Sisters Neha, Pranita, Harshita, Victoria, Ayesha.



MISSION OF THE SISTERS IN THE HINDI MEDIUM SCHOOL, BILASPUR

St. Joseph's Convent Higher Secondary School - Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh (CG) India, is owned and administered by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry, Nirmala Province. "This Hindi medium school, began in 1954, with the sole purpose of educating the poor children of Bilaspur, and it continues the same mission till today," said S. Helen, the principal.

It was like a tiny seed with nine students and now it has flourished to 1024 students, mostly girls. S. Helen

also informed, "Every year 20 to 25 students are given concession, and free education to some. Mid-day meals and text books are provided by the government of Chhattisgarh." The school is aided by the CG Government but from the 52 staff members only 20 are paid by the government. "Since the yearly fee of the students is very little, the managing committee finds it difficult to pay proper salaries to the teachers," said S. Smita Kujur, the headmistress.



and support;

I feel very happy because of the sisters' love, care and S. Peter Mary along with other sisters solved my personal and family problems whenever I shared it with them," said Mrs. Leela, a teacher. "As we step into the school premises, we experience peace and serenity forgetting all the tensions of the family," said Mrs. Joyce, another teacher. The teachers find fulfillment, in watching the students grow in discipline, imbibing values taught in the school. "Virtue alone Ennobles" being the motto of the school, character formation of every student is given importance. While giving opportunities to every student, the school gives special attention and importance to the weaker ones.

Bhavani Koushal, a student said "I love the environment of the school. Two years ago, I was studying in another school and used to skip school very often, but now, I do not like to miss any class. I am very much touched and inspired by S. Kiran, who teaches us Maths and Value Education. After I go home, I find myself talking about her. I am a Hindu, but after seeing S.Kiran, I am inspired to consider becoming a nun."

Sneha, a student of class 11 said, "I love to be in the school. This is my sixth year here. Our Principal, S. Helen understands us and whenever we make mistakes she corrects us with love."



An atmosphere of respect and dignity is created in the school which enables the support staff to work sincerely and joyfully, according to Mr. Ved and Pawan, two support staff. Mr. Pawan emphasized, "I have experienced help and assistance from the sisters in time of need. Being with the sisters, I have learned to be responsible and faithful to my daily duty."

Thus sisters are doing a tremendous service in moulding the life of students and guiding the teachers to be effective persons for the family as well as for Society.

Sisters Bibiana, Helen, Harshita, Manjushree



50 YEARS OF JEHANGIRABAD- A RETROSPECT

“The purpose of human life is to serve, to show compassion and the will to help others,” said Albert Schweitzer.

It was in 1967, His Grace, Most Rev. Dr. Eugene D’Souza, Archbishop of Bhopal, in accordance with the Episcopal Motto, *“To Preach the Good News to the Poor”*, invited the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry to undertake social development programmes for the benefit of the predominantly Muslim population of Jehangirabad.

This invitation gave birth to the existing social service centre at Jehangirabad. S. Francis James, the then Provincial Superior, in response to the invitation of the Archbishop, sent S.Tarcisius and S. Ann Felicie to venture into this mission to uplift the poor, especially the economically backward women; to conduct job-oriented courses for the youth, to educate school drop-outs, and to hold Adult Literacy Programmes on the corridors of the Cathedral Church. Later two more sisters namely S. Ann Margaret Emmanuel and S. Karuna beck joined the community.

The Sisters set out to work enthusiastically, to bring the good news to the poor and to set the down trodden free; they faced great difficulties with unshakeable faith. The immediate target-group was the poor Muslim women and children. Mrs. Barker was the first benefactor of the Centre, who helped the Sisters with a few yards of wool and cloth. This was indeed a very humble and hidden beginning, true to our Charism. The women began with needle work, Art, craft, and embroidery. Gradually it developed. As time went by, many sisters contributed their mite to this noble cause. Currently, S.Rajini and S.Borgia reach out to hundreds of women from far and near in the city of Bhopal. The hard work of the sisters brought significant improvement in the lives of people around and enabled them to stand on their own feet, besides improving their standard of living. One of the women said, *“I was a trainee here and now am a staff of this centre since 30 years; I built my own house.”* As the days and years went on, the demand for tailoring declined due to many reasons, both social and political. The sisters reach out to the people irrespective of age, caste, creed, rich and poor alike.

Mother St. Clare well understood the quote by Les Brown *“Help others to achieve their dreams and you will achieve yours.”* It was the felt need to empower the youth who were economically backward. So began a vocational training programme such as typing, steno, short hand, DCA, PGDC, DTP, Office management, data entry and Tally courses, in the year 1995. Currently, this institution is one of the leading computer training institutions that provide training to get placement in government, public and private sector. In 2011 due to the tireless effort of Sister Smitha and the community, the Amala Institute has been affiliated to Makhanlal Chaturvedi National University of Journalism and Communication. There are Diploma Courses held annually together with the short Term courses like Hindi and English Stenography, Hindi and English Computer Typing, Accounting Courses, Designing Programmes, Office Management Programmes, spoken English classes, etc.

The sisters involve themselves in many other activities like pastoral work, teaching catechism, host making, and kindergarten, etc. Preparatory classes are held for the Tiny Tots to get admission to the Kindergarten Schools in the locality.

Through the intervention of a French couple, Mr. Jimmy and Nadine the LEJ Project from France extends financial help to educate the economically under-privileged children of the place, sponsoring their School Fees and Books.

We truly thank the Almighty for His benevolence towards his people which is expressed through many sisters past and present, in sharing and caring and expressing solidarity with the poor through this Centre for the past 50 years at Jehangirabad.

Sisters Vandana, Archana, Pratibha, Jaya Sudha, Asha & Rina Kujur. Pachmarhi



FORMATION TODAY

The very mission and purpose of religious life depends upon the quality of the formation program, because ultimately the formees, sooner or later, are the ones to be the leaders of the Congregation, dynamically to take forward the charism and spirituality handed down by our Founder and Foundresses. So the work of formation is an investment of the Congregation for better quality, for greater fruitfulness, in living and missioning.

Forming young minds for the future leaders of the congregation is not an easy task to be taken for granted. It requires resources, a well set up Novitiate, and dedicated and committed Formators, using best of their abilities in moulding young minds in such a manner, that they would stand out as the models of the charism and spirituality in this age.

We live in a generation in which young people who join the congregation are gifted, talented, technologically advanced, energetic as compared to the previous generations; they are modernized and come from a world to which they are widely exposed, yet they seem to lack focus and direction as they are surrounded with violence, corruption, division, conflicts, brokenness, injustice which deeply affect them psychologically, spiritually and physically. Their brokenness is not caused due to their own faults rather, it is the environment in which they live. They are clouded by these problems, hence they deserve our love, respect and recognition for who they are. Our work is to help them discover their true worth *“as good, beautiful and precious children of God”* and also their undiscovered potential which they would in turn cherish and thus utilize for the service of God’s kingdom.

Coming from a world of consumerism, individualism, envious competition has shaken the very foundation of their Christian faith to the roots. Thus they are to be transplanted and nurtured with the Catechism of the Church to strengthen their faith.

Those who are psychologically affected due to broken and disturbed families need to be healed, reconciled and rebuild their lives, so that, they in turn become an asset to the congregation.



The formation process is an on-going search. Thus, it cannot be fixed and rigid. It requires us to be open and flexible according to the individual’s need for being updated with current day realities. We are living in an age of rapid change, which demand constant updating. Thus our formation programme too requires upgrading just like any other professional field.

In a fast changing world, formation is not a bed of roses, as the present is unpredictable and complex. It is difficult to be sure of anything, thus one cannot decide a fixed syllabus and rigidly stick to it, neither can old methods of

formation be repeated as if they are the best and most valid methods. To form a formee today, the Formator needs to enter into the feelings of the formee and thus give personal attention that would mould and shape them into the person they ought to be. For this, we search and try new ways to make formation relevant for our times.

S.Namita (Novice Directress) Nirmala Province





BLESSING & INAUGURATION OF THE CONVENT OF SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH OF CHAMBERY, BADNERA, AMRAVATI.

12 April, 2018 was an historic day in the annals of MSFS, Badnera Mission, as the MSFS Fathers and Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry partnered once again for Christ's Mission, at Badnera. Rt. Rev. Elias Gonsalves, the Bishop of Amravati, blessed the renovated Convent building and officiated in the thanksgiving Eucharistic Celebration in the presence of Rev. Fr. John Britto Muthuswamy, Provincial Superior of MSFS Nagpur Province, Rev S. Philomena Pichappilly, Provincial Superior of Sisters of St. Joseph, Province of Nagpur, and several religious men and women from surrounding areas.



Parishoners, Staff and well-wishers were present and graced the occasion. S. Philomena Pichappilly, Srs. Joseph Mary, Kanti Kujur and Ritika Michael who cut the ribbon and inaugurated the building also thanked the Bishop, Fr. Muthuswamy, Fathers, Sisters and the community members for their role in making the convent building a reality.

S. Joseph Mary, csj
Badnera





EXPOSURE ... an experience of igniting young minds

From 26th to 28th May, 2018, as part of the Summer Programme of the Temporary Professed Sisters of Tanmaya Province, S. Dorothy Beck arranged for an exposure programme to the nearby slums of Bhopal; this was done in collaboration with Samman Society run by SVD Fathers and Uday Society run by the Holy Spirit Sisters, working specially for migrants and women. During these three days we had very enriching and heart-stirring experiences, while encountering the marginalized migrants who were deprived of their human rights and basic needs.

On May 26th Fr. James SVD, the Manager of Samman Society shared their vision and mission, using a short documentary film exposing the challenges they face while trying to uplift the rag pickers of the ten slums they have adopted. We were taken to one of these slums and what we encountered was - innocent eyes of children with happy faces looking at us, at ease in their surroundings, while busy collecting waste materials from the dumping ground... feeling at home in the world of dirt! Neither their parents nor the children themselves showed any interest when the subject of education came up. Rs 20/- is what they earn from selling waste each day and with it they happily fill their stomachs. Education has no importance to them- rather it is a far fetched dream! Some children do go to school, but their desire still remains to collect the waste materials they find on the way, so they carry empty sacks along with them.



It was disturbing to see the condition of children, living in houses without proper sanitation, lacking safety and electricity. Through many awareness programmes and the hard work of Samman Staff, they are slowly realizing the need to improve their lives and the worth of education. There is some hope of development and improvement.

Our next visit was to Dholak Basti under the guidance of S. Lizy Thomas SSPS. The people here are Muslim migrants from Bihar who depend on making and selling dholaks (a musical instrument) for their livelihood. It seems they have accepted poverty and illiteracy as their lot, and they do not believe in education for their children. They have no dreams for their children's future. These people were evacuated five times and their fear is when will they be evacuated next. The village opposite Dholak Basti is occupied by Hindu migrants from West Bengal. They were helped and guided by SSPS sisters to get this place from the government. They have begun to earn their livelihood and are gradually coming up in life. They secure loans for their Self-Help Groups, with which they run their own petty shops, selling different articles and manage their livelihood very happily. These Self-Help Groups are formally recognized and managed mostly by women.

Another situation they face in the village is that many women have no freedom. They face persecution and sexual harassment. Some women shared their painful experiences of domestic violence and sexual abuse in their own families and in the village. Since they started fighting for their rights they are happy and their children too avail of education. They have begun a Women's Cell and also formed a Balak Sangh for children. It runs very successfully. They get timely guidance from the Sisters and their staff who have also appointed a lawyer to support them and fight for their rights.

We are extremely happy and enlightened because of this exposure. The people we have met and the issues they face have opened our eyes and ignited our minds and hearts to take up these challenges in our ministries and contribute our mite in the transformation of society.

Temporary Professed Sisters, Tanmaya Province



VILLAGE EXPOSURE AT KHARIBAHAR

On 21 May, 2018, we, temporary professed sisters, along with S. Philomena Pichapilly, our Provincial superior and S. Deepa, arrived in Kharibahar Community. S. Asrita and sisters of the community welcomed us with the gesture of washing of hands, and greeted us with a floral bouquet. The next day we began the session, by Fr. Pancratius Toppo SJ, on spirituality of rural living and learning experience. He motivated, inspired and oriented us, beginning with our



vocation stories and through that he highlighted the main topic of our rural life, that we have to live at grassroot level that is, to know the people of the village. At the end of the day, he made us write 3 learning points so that we could live it.

“Entering through people’s door and getting out through our own door” was the spirituality that we could experience in depth. The input sessions were on stages of self awakening..... there are 7 stages to be

aware of ourselves and follow with practical rural exposure. Power point presentations were projected so that we could also get some ideas and learn from them. We were divided into 5 groups of 3 members each to 5 different villages, where we could live among families and experience rural life.

On May 24th evening we went to our respective villages where we were warmly welcomed with washing of our feet. During the 6 days of experience we went to visit the families, listen to them, pray and work with them. They were open, generous, simple and loving. We experienced openness with the people, learned to adjust and be satisfied with what we have. We also saw some of the rituals they followed like-



Chatti (Naming of the child), Gami (Months mind mass), Lotapani (engagement), and Marriage, etc. It was a new learning for each of us. We were privileged to be with them and enjoyed our stay. On May 30th we returned to the community with joy and enthusiasm. S. Charmaine, S. Olinda, S. Deepa welcome us back home (community). On our return, we freely shared our village

experiences and had an evaluation. Fr. Pancratius then led us into "spirituality in action" stressing the 3 core values of Integrity, Responsibility and Respect, with its qualities and consequences.

The session and the exposure experience led us to prepare ourselves for our retreat. We thank our Provincial team, S. Deepa and Kharibahar community for giving us this opportunity and for catering to all our needs.



Temporary Professed sisters, Province of Nagpur



The Triumph of Humanity over Natural Calamity

What an alarming month it was! It all began on India's Independence Day; the waters had been steadily rising much before and the rivers had begun flowing into spaces. The state had received 42 percent excess rainfall since the beginning of June. And since the beginning of August, the excess had been 164 percent even as the coastal state received close to 2.350 mm rain by 19 August. Coupled with the opening of as many as 35 dams out of some 45-odd dams in the wake of the rain, the devastation was unparalleled in the state's history.

Nearly 400 people lost their lives and over 14.50 lakh people were rescued and moved to relief camps. Tens of thousands of houses have collapsed. Roads and bridges were damaged and destroyed. Kerala has suffered an estimate loss of around 20,000 Crore, now found to be far more. Various Ministers of Central and State Governments, Officials, Businessmen, Celebrities, Church authorities and people from various walks of life have contributed money and other requirements to provide relief to the Kerala flood victims.

We Josephites of St. Joseph's Convent School, Pulluvazhy, were also among the Samaritans who moved into action. We collected money, clothes and food items from the students and teachers. Our focus was to reach out to the maximum number of people. Sisters from the community visited the people in the nearby camps and listened to their pitiable and chilling experiences.

Our
Gothuruth was
week. Sisters
Sophie were
pastoral Centre of
Diocese in a small
co-workers, two
sisters spent 3 full
convent in

Words
feeling of pain and
at the rooms of the
slush, soiled books



smashed furnitures, damaged equipments, overturned refrigerator, so on and so forth.

We witnessed the sad and pathetic situation of many people; heaps of household items, electronic equipments, puffed up food bags and many more, dumped in front of every home, shops and on roadside. In our interactions we found out that the people were in need of mats and bed sheets which no one supplied other than food items and clothes. Therefore, we purchased 1000 mats, 500 bed sheets and other necessary food items and handed them to St. Sebastian's Church, Gothuruth, which was distributed to the needy, regardless of their Caste and Creed with the help of the Family Unit Members.

With deep faith in the providence of God, sheer determination, hard work and courage of all keralites over the globe, and the support and collaboration of many other generous people, Kerala will recover and we are confident of getting back to normal life soon.

Sr. Molly Manicatt (Tanmaya Province)



The great deluge I saw - I experienced

Several parts of Kerala was reeling under flash floods; the monsoon just out raging with nature's fury beyond control. On August 16th morning during Mass, the parish priest announced about the deluge at midnight and how the incessant rain had capsized the boats, flooded houses, causing such havoc leading to an indefinite power cut. Rescue operations and relief



efforts were in action. Women's college was taken over by the Parish for the accumulation and storage of goods. Since women's college had one helipad they made two more for helicopters to transport materials. Five of my family members decided to go and help out. The entire course of action was well organized, with rooms full of items. Vehicles brought in things like basic necessities, clothes, water bottles, and biscuits, all that was necessary for survival.. People from all walks of life extended their hands to sort out things, packages made, organizing themselves for the things to be reached to the helicopter. Hindu, Muslim, Christian, priest, religious, business man, officers, young/old, all students, volunteers were ready with sleeves rolled up.

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Everybody generously helped out with one mind and heart during this situation....on level of 'humanity'. What hard work, co-operation and collaboration. Calamities were enormous and without thinking twice, all present, went into action. No one thought of government's agendas in this time of crisis. My home became a prayer house. Neighbours even Hindus were joining at our home for prayers. My sister and family reached home after an extra 8 hours, after facing a lot of problems almost swimming with luggage on their heads. My sister said "*if those poor rowdy type youngsters were not there the water would have engulfed us. The respectable middle class and rich had no courage to do the things those youngsters did for us*". Simple people had shown tremendous strength in the face of such adversity.

A day filled with tension but still we were in the storage place helping out in silence and anxiety within. The situation at Chalakudy, Muringoor was shocking. Every one standing still in their homes with deep sighs. Houses, schools, diesel pumps, toll gates, shops, temples, churches, deep in water all along near Chalakudy. Volunteers worked overtime during the entire holidays to compile and dispatch relief packages, cleaning the houses together with others. Senior citizens were brought in cooking utensils (big dekchies) crossing the rivers. It was heart piercing to watch human nature soon to its noblest pitch. Even strangers came together for this collective and noble action.



There was unprecedented destruction to both private and public property. Relief camps were held at many houses and schools. My family members expressed their attitude of exhibiting monumental strength to bounce back from this tragedy and give life. In such a situation we continued praying to Almighty God to remove our fears and anxieties. All these experiences brought before our minds and eyes the power of peoples' solidarity and fraternity .

S. Anjana Therattil , Pachmarhi Province



*"Let your love be communicative,
requiring you to give yourself to God
without reserve,
so that you may say in the words
of the spouse in the canticle,
"I belong to my Beloved,
and my Beloved belongs to me"*



October 6th.



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