



VANI

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*Lead us Mother ...
Towards True Freedom*

HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS!!



SR. SAILAJA



SR. ASHADEEP

**On the occasion of your
FIRST PROFESSION**



First Profession on 03.05.2021 at Holy Spirit Convent, Indore

**From Left: 1. Simran Xaxlo, 2. Rupa Jamra, 3. Rinki Thandi, 4. Alocias Mary,
5. Sailaja Kopuri, 6. Ravina Garwal, 7. Ashadeep Soreng**

Editorial...

As Indians born on the Indian soil, we are indeed happy and proud to observe the 75th Independence Day of our Nation. The call for celebration is to render homage to our ancestors who shed their blood and sacrificed their lives. Bal Gangadhar Tilak's call, "Freedom is my birthright and I will have it," inspired millions of Indians to join the freedom movement. The Constitution of independent India assures its citizens six fundamental freedoms: 1) Freedom of speech and expression 2) Freedom of assembly 3) Freedom to form associations 4) Freedom of movement 5) Freedom to reside and to settle, and 6) Freedom of profession, occupation, trade or business. These fundamental freedoms are restricted by Governments from time to time, and currently it has become the worst forms of infringement of freedoms, against that guaranteed by the Constitution of India. In the recent incidents of arrests for public speeches, prohibitions of public assemblies, snooping and intrusive e-media etc., where do we find the freedom and the liberty which every citizen has been granted? While the citizens of the nation are snared in the web of injustice, intolerance and economic instability, stripped off human dignity and worth, the question arises whether we are truly justifying the struggle and hard work of our freedom fighters today!



We have also witnessed the recent case of the late Rev. Fr. Stan Swamy who labored for the rights of the tribal and was made a victim of injustice and imprisonment, which ended in a sad and cruel death. Nonetheless, the champion of the tribal, from the prison transmitted a distinct message, "A caged bird can still sing," sending us a message of hope and new life.

Our freedom has further been disciplined by the existing pandemic that devastated the nation and took away lives and livelihood. Covid-19 has curtailed our freedom from breathing freely to wearing masks, moving liberally to restricting movements, from socializing to reducing entertainments, from office to WFH. The freedom to live a dignified life is confronted!

The feast of the Assumption of Mary reminds us that we have a powerful intercessor in Heaven who invites us to turn to her in faith in spite of the odds we face. We believe that Mary, so pure and immaculate, rightfully was taken into Heaven, from where she lovingly watches over us.

Dear Sisters, as we celebrate the Feast of Assumption and our Independence Day, I am happy to present to you, VANI August 2021. Herein, you will find a variety of articles bringing home to you, partly, what our SSps family has been up to during the lockdown times. It includes days of celebrations and observations, inspirational messages, SSps in action to the needy and embracing plans of bringing change in a Covid world. This issue, rich with content, from sisters and formees, will enrich us. I sincerely thank you for your valuable contributions of life experiences and reflections. Hope you enjoy its every page!

Wishing you Happy Feast of the Assumption and India's 75th Independence day!

Sr. Reena D'Souza, SSps
Deepalaya, Gulbarga

Provincial's message....

On 15 August, we celebrate the independence of our beloved country. Along with all the progress made, we know our country continues to experience many evil forces stifling our land from being truly free. The Indian society is witnessing erosion of moral and spiritual values, corrupt politics, injustice, violence, human rights violations, religious fundamentalism and more..

Gandhi with our great leaders, who won freedom for our country, laid the foundation for a united India with equal rights for every citizen, on the principles of truth and nonviolence. But the reality seems that we are still in bondage...bondage to our own selfish interests, politics of power and prejudices. '**Narrow domestic walls**' of our own making continue to divide and subdivide us. The imprisonment and death of Fr. Stan Swamy, who had to die for the cause of social justice, the latest example of bearing witness to truth, compassion and human dignity, must awaken and stir our inner being to understand the kind of bondage we are living in!

As consecrated women, heeding the call "to be a prophet to the nations," may the spirit of Father Stan Swamy, be a sign and hope in our efforts towards bringing freedom and liberation, inspiring and motivating us to renew our commitment to justice and human rights!

Happy Independence Day! Happy Feast of the Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary!

Sr. Lissy Thelekadan, SSps
Provincial Leader, INS



**"FOR TO BE FREE IS NOT MERELY
TO CAST OF ONE'S CHAINS,
BUT TO LIVE IN A WAY THAT RESPECTS
AND ENHANCES THE FREEDOM OF OTHERS"**

- Nelson Mandela

Gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost!

Every Christian is indeed blessed because we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit even before we can say “Mama” or “Papa.” And even before we can understand and walk around! A few days after our birth through our parents, we come in gratitude to the God of life who created and gave us the breath of life. Then, as members of God’s family, we continue to receive this gracious gift of the Holy Spirit each moment of our life.

The feast of Pentecost is a good day to deepen ourselves in the love of the Holy Spirit who guides, protects, encourages, comforts, sustains and draws us towards a continuous self-transformation every step of our journey until we reach our final destination.

The Greek word “Pentikostí” means fiftieth. It refers to the Jewish festival celebrated on the fiftieth day after First Fruits, also known as the “Feast of Weeks” and the “Feast of 50 days” in rabbinic tradition. The feast of Pentecost (coming of the Holy Spirit) renews everyone who believes in God as it takes us back to the overwhelming experiences of Mary and Disciples of Jesus in the upper room - of joy, hope, and courage.

To love the Holy Spirit is to pray to continuously – we can do it by walking in the spirit’s presence. It becomes so much more important for us because our congregation bears that name, “sister” plural ... “Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit.” So we attempt to live as if we have that sign (poster) in front of ourselves. When we believe, we experience the presence of this Spirit and we celebrate its abode inside us. Then the power of the Spirit can be the source of our actions at all times.

Pentecost re-energizes and motivates us to believe in a faithful and powerful God who has a plan for all humans. It takes away all that is doubtful, fragile, timid and lacking, and replaces it with boldness, strength and new understanding. We are given a new flow of life, light and comfort. We are stirred within and activated with a newness of life. “When He had said this, He breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”(John 20:22) In Acts 2:11 we read the outpouring of the Spirit on the apostles gathered in the upper room in Jerusalem.

On the day of Pentecost the Apostles were filled with a burst of new life and newness. Their old selves were changed and they became new persons. God thus used them and carried out His plans and purposes which He had intended for each one of them. They were out of their closed doors to open places, free from fear and anxiety. So also at Pentecost a new creation is taking place inside us and our belief in the Holy Spirit helps us to be transformed and to be used according to God’s plan and purpose.

Let us continuously thank God for the gift of the Holy Spirit in our lives. May we cooperate and become his instruments to create the transformation that God wants in our world.

Miss Priti Toppo
Helena Sadan, Pamboor

Fire, so Awesome!

There is a fire so disturbing,
Warm and extraordinarily cleansing!
Without equal and very special,
Paving way into hearts, making it well;
Though mine be soiled and sullied,
I find no cause to be worried,
For the fire purifies and clarifies,
As it spreads around and vivifies!

This fire is Godly,
It changes our personalities;
It dispels all darkness,
Enlightens too and greatly energizes!
It comes with burning desire to do the right;
Healing the human body, soul and mind;
It is the living flame,
That burns steadily in upright hearts.

Fire comes down on the people at prayer
Unmindful of their color – red, black, yellow or fair!
It's not the fire of Sodom and Gomorrah!
Nor of asteroids that shoot from high above!

This fire plummets from God's dwelling in the skies,
Transforming the life of the one that cries;
It's ready to make a dwelling therein,
Endearing, as much as scaring and daring!

Welcome Fire, you birthed the Church today,
Happy we are to celebrate your awesome birthday!

Miss Kunjolata Barla
II PUC, Helena Sadan,
Pamboor

Pentecost

FIRE





...And it was Pentecost!

Pentecost here!! As in the days of the first Pentecost, we the Sisters and Students of Kripalaya Convent, 21 in all, are altogether in one place, not from fear of the Jews but due to the pandemic crisis! While maintaining the norm of social distancing, we sense the Spirit's presence hovering over us amidst our fears, anxieties, our void and chaos, prompting us to weave our sacred stories through sharing of ourselves and creating a **Sacred Woven Cloth**.

What might have the followers/disciples of Jesus done in the upper room? Perhaps they shared with each other painful anxious moments, their personal stories, prayed and praised God as they remembered experiences of comfort and challenge lived with Jesus. They also recalled their roots, the memory of Jesus calling them and the journey covered with Him. We at Kripalaya felt inspired to do a similar process.

We come now to share our cultural stories. Our interculturality is an expression of the Spirit's many features. Multifaceted, the challenge is to have one heart-beat amidst our blessings and struggles.

We hail from Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha. Ethnically, a rich diversity exists amongst us! We have our own cultural identity - Bhils, Canara Konkans, Khadias, Kisans, Mundas, Malas and Oraons, to name a few. Truly, an intercultural and interconnected community in the service of God's mission! Living together now, not out of a personal choice, but because we are called by the same Spirit, and drink from the same source. "In our diversity, our life in the Triune God unites us in and for mission." (13th GC).

Bhils: We are an Indo-Aryan speaking ancient tribe of M.P. with unique identity and distinctive cultural bearing and values. The Bhil source of income is agriculture and animal husbandry. Our special features and dress code can easily be identified. Respect for elders marks our character. Covering the head in the presence of elders and in church is an indicator. Generosity and goodness of heart shines brightly in our midst. We are available and ready to share the good things of life. Music and dance form integral parts of our life. Simultaneously, there exists an ingrained cultural belief of clean and unclean foods among us. We are particular about the type of food we eat. Eating pork repels us. Gradually, the Spirit challenges us to accept that what God has created is for our good.

Canara Konkans: The residents along the Konkani belt and their descendants are called Konkans. This region is known for its natural beauty of lush greenery and coconut trees; hence, it's appreciated as Gift of Nature. We are a friendly and open-minded people. Celebrations are deeply rooted in our culture and find expression in the various festivals celebrated all through the year. Ours is essentially a coastal culture dependent on fishing and farming. So one can imagine our fondness for fish! Our diversity is reflected in the peaceful co-existence of people of different religions and languages. Hindus speak Tulu, Muslims - Urdu, Konkans - Konkani. Besides, we have our State language Kannada, National language Hindi and of course English. This is the local base culture of our community. The Spirit invites us to widen our circle of communion; to make space for others and include the cultural practices of the minority.

Khadias: Majority of us in our community are Khadias with our distinctive cultural identity. There are three groups of Khadias. 1. Pahadi (hill) Khadias 2. Dhelki Khadias 3. Dudh (milk) Khadias. We belong to the third group namely Dudh Khadias. Celebration of festivals and Poojas is an integral part of our culture. Din Tang Puja (purification of cattle shed) is a special feature. The cow is honored in a special way. We are close to nature and dependent on it for our livelihood. Our tribe is noted for its hospitality, friendliness and generosity, thus making room to accept and adapt to other cultures and learn new languages. As we imbibe the Gospel values, we feel challenged to let go of some of our purification taboos and food habits, especially, consuming beef.

Kisans: We Kisans are a tribal group from Odisha, West Bengal and Jharkhand. Traditionally, we are farmers and a food gathering people. We speak Kisan a dialect of Kurukh. The Kisan settlements are generally unclan and homogenous. We elect a leader who follows specific rules and regulations. The ceremonial washing of feet before entering the house after a long journey and welcoming guests are within our culture. Yearly, there is family togetherness with a prayer and traditional dance. We value the spirit of togetherness, cleanliness of the surrounding and spirituality. Unfortunately, this wealth of sound traditions and language is not imbibed by the younger generation. Living in intercultural communities, we find it hard to deal with misunderstandings. The Spirit calls us to remain open to the new.

Mundas: Our group is one of India's largest scheduled tribes who from nomadic hunters became farmers and got employed in basketwork and weaving. We are rich in music, art and have our own musical instruments. Mundas believe in the Sun God (Sing Bonga), who saves from all troubles. Generally Mundas have a priest who organizes various religious functions and celebrations. Some special ceremonies include birthing and naming during which the individual is initiated as a member of the tribe. During the Sarhul (flower) festival people thank God for all the blessings. The Sal tree is considered significant. Mundas live in mixed villages with other tribes. Participation is an integral part of Community life. Togetherness and team work is upheld and encouraged. Every culture and religion in our village is respected. Strong leadership qualities prevail amongst us. It is also equally difficult to step down from such a position. The Spirit invites us to bring into our intercultural communities our team spirit and togetherness.

Malas: We are a Dalit community of agricultural laborers in Andhra Pradesh, a vital part of the rural scene. Amidst the diverse religions, tribes, castes and dialects, the Telugu language keeps us united. The festivals in our State bring us together devoid of caste distinction. We are hospitable to visitors. Being courageous and open-minded, we adjust to

new situations. Our communion is sometimes disturbed by the prevailing caste system in the State, often related to the work one does for livelihood. As members of this multicultural community, the Spirit urges us to be open and ready for any work as an expression of our service in the Spirit.

Oraons: We are a Dravidian ethnic group inhabiting the Indian states of Odisha, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, and Jharkhand. The Oraon tribe is an umbrella for Minz, Kujur, Tirkey, Toppo, Ekka, Bara, Barwa, Lakra, Xaxa, Xaxlo etc. The Karam festival is a harvest festival dedicated to the worship of Karam Devta, (deity of power, youth and youthfulness). Special tribute is paid to Karam tree, symbol of fertility and prosperity. The branch of the tree is carried by young virgins who have prepared themselves through prayer and fasting. The Oraon tribe is very close to nature; their life-cycle praise God who is everything for them. However, when we join bigger groups, we tend to withdraw and play a secondary role. We feel the Spirit is care fronting us to come out of our hidden shells and share our gifts.

The Acts of the Apostles record a very dramatic Pentecost. "And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Our experience of Pentecost although not so dramatic, is real with some transformative effect on each of us. In our togetherness and sharing of stories, the Spirit kept on propelling us towards transformation. We were drawn towards:

1. **Sharing:** Not being able to go out for purchases, we pooled our resources, creativity, time, gifts and energies for the common good. We felt the Spirit's presence in our care and concern for one another. Shopkeepers, auto drivers and well wishers, offered us assistance risking their lives in sending provisions. Not wanting to expose our cook to danger, we requested her to stay home.
2. **Spirit of Prayer:** We slowed down from our workaholic tendencies and provided ourselves with leisure time. From activism we moved to serenity and rest. Quality time was spent for personal prayer, praying the Word of God, and for spiritual and motivational reading.
3. **Personal Transformation:** It was a movement

From

Fears, anxiety and panic
Focusing on negative thoughts
and feelings

Taking life and one another for
granted

To

Trust in God who says: Fear not; I am there.
Nurturing positive thoughts and images.

Gratitude for the breath of life;
appreciating the other.

On witnessing the proclamation of the Apostles, multicultural group that gathered at Jerusalem acclaimed: All of us hear them speaking in our own language the marvelous deeds of God. All those who are moved by the Spirit certainly speak a language that all can understand including intercultural groups for it is the language of the Spirit. The Lord has done great things for us; we are indeed glad (Ps.125). And this is the story of our Sacred Woven Cloth.

Sisters & Students,
Kripalaya Convent, PERNAL

Mother Most Blessed!

Every 15th August we celebrate the feast of Mary's Assumption into heaven; in celebrating this feast we hope that by obeying God's will and living as children of God, we too may enter our heavenly home one day. We trust that through God's grace we will join our Blessed Mother some day. The feast of Assumption tells us to follow Mary's simplicity and obedient nature, to walk in her footsteps and live her saintly life. It also reminds us to be pure in our thoughts, words and actions, because our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit. On the feast of Mary's Assumption I want to share just a few qualities of our heavenly mother which are beautiful and attractive.

Obedience without questioning: Mary's obedience to God went hand in hand with her faith and trust in God. It is almost a blind obedience which is positive and praiseworthy in God's sight. This was the path Mary chose throughout her life. It began with the announcement of the Angel Gabriel in her little home at Nazareth where she made her fiat, continued at the foot of the Cross in Calvary until she assumed into heaven. At the Presentation of Jesus in the temple the words of Simeon "and a sword will pierce your soul too" must have been painful but Mary pondered silently and was obedient. She extended her 'yes' little by little to the point of embracing everything it involved, even the Cross.

Unceasing Prayer: There were difficulties and painful times in her Mary's life. In all these moments Mary prayed constantly. The journey to and stay at Bethlehem was not easy, with experiences of rejections. They were deprived of the basic physical needs. Again, when Jesus was twelve years old, Mary and Joseph looked for him for three days. After finding Jesus, Mary received an answer why Jesus had stayed in the temple but she could not understand it. She kept these things in her heart and prayed without ceasing. Throughout the various trials Mary could be strong because there was a continuous prayer in her heart and on her lips. She did not use words, her whole life and her total acceptance of each trouble was her prayer. Her trust and faith in God too were forms of prayer. Today she continues to pray unceasingly for her children on earth.

Profound Humility: At the Annunciation Mary humbly calls herself the servant or the handmaid of the Lord. We read in the Gospel that Mary filled with the Holy Spirit rushes to help her cousin Elizabeth who is with child. Mary's spirit of service, love and humility is great. She is given the news that she will be the mother of Jesus. This does not make her proud but fills her with concern for her cousin. As an expectant mother she visits and serves Elizabeth for three months. In the Magnificat Mary praises God who has had regard for her humble self.

Patient and Pure: One of Mary's most inspiring virtues is her purity. Mary was sinless and holy. Mary is known as the Immaculate One because of her purity. In the litany we fittingly pray 'Mary Most Pure' because she has a soul that is pure. Mary had great patience. The many extraordinary travels she made – with Joseph to Judea (Bethlehem) for registration, flight into Egypt, return to Nazareth and the loss of Child Jesus in the temple, these and other trials during the passion of Jesus, all show that Mary was heroic in her patience and love.

Dear Mother Mary, pray for us, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Miss Emelda Kiro,
Pamboor

COME CLOSER TO NATURE... TO BE CLOSER TO GOD!

Gorgeous lady natures' call so amazing
 Born serene at Creators' eternal embracing!
 Due drops on green pastures mellowed
 Raindrops on my laps immersed
 The blissful sight of colourful flowers opened
 Bouquet blossomed the existence still in the Divine.
 I wish to sing and love to garland my nature hero, the creator!

I saw myself on the top hill
 Raised my eyes on hearing the one
 The scorching sun smiled, sole sound zenith
 Ice-cold, absorbed in God's Love infinite.
 I wish to sing and love to garland my nature hero, the creator!

Sr. Lalitha Rosali, SSps
 Anugraha, Mumbai

Launching Laudato Si Action Platform

We are very familiar with the Encyclical of Pope Francis Laudato Si on care for our common home that was signed on 24 May, 2015. On its 5th anniversary in 2020, the Pope invited us to observe **Laudato Si Year** from May 2020 to May 2021. After a year of reflection and action **Laudato Si Action Platform (LSAP)** was announced by the Pope, to be launched on 24 May, 2021.

Prompted by the Spirit, on the Feast of Pentecost, as a response to the Psalm we in the community sang, "Send forth your Spirit O Lord, and renew the face of the earth". The same Spirit surprised us the very next day, urging us in our community to do something concretely for our common home - Mother Earth. We decided to take time to reflect and launch **LSAP** in our community in our small ways.

Our first act in the morning after breakfast was to come together as a community of Sisters and students to discuss and arrive at a consensus on how to begin this journey. Since a few students were not sufficiently informed with the content of Laudato Si document, the Sisters briefly explained its 5 components as the five Cs, namely, Common, Challenges, Causes, Caring and Commitment; after which the excerpt of the CLT letter on **Launching Laudato Si Action Platform** was read and explained. The 7 goals that were highlighted were - response to the Cry of the Earth and the Poor, Ecological Economics, Education and Spirituality, Adoption of Simple life style and Emphasis on Community involvement and participatory action. Well, the goals were indeed heavy - as they seemed to go over our heads. To make the task lighter and

fruitful we split into seven groups and tried understanding them as best as we could; later we came up with one concrete action for each goal.

In the afternoon, we met once again in our garden. We had a short prayer service commencing with a hymn to the Creator who created the universe, followed by a reading from Genesis 1:11-13. This was followed by a short reflection and prayer from Laudato Si. We then articulated the following pledge.

Pledge: In response to the urgent call in Laudato Si, to protect our common earth, I pledge to:

- Pray for and with creation
- Live more simply
- Care and protect my environment

Our next step was the planting of a sapling. Each one also sowed cashew seed which would later be re-planted in our compound. Honoring the theme, we simultaneously cleared up a small area of land where we had previously discarded all the plastic wastes.

In the community meeting the next day we shared and decided on the concrete steps to implement these goals, which were as follows:

Action Plan

1. To pray with nature and for nature once a week; to take a walk in the compound and dialogue with nature
2. To conduct sessions on Laudato Si and Environmental Concerns
3. To use cloth bags and reduce the use of plastic as much as possible
4. To improve our kitchen garden by growing seasonal vegetables: to enrich the soil by preparing compost from the kitchen and garden waste.
5. To sow and plant more cashew trees in the compound and care for them.



These two days have been very enriching and we have learnt much. We realized that we have received the environment as a loan and it must be passed on to the next generation. We are grateful to the Spirit for her promptings to collaborate with her in the mission of renewing the face of the earth.

With guidance 1st PU Students
Kripalaya Convent

International Women's Day

EKAMBA

March 8th- Women's day celebration is a very special day for all us. We wanted to make this day very unique for the women of Ekamba Panchayat. The preparation began well in advance by calling for a meeting of all the SHG leaders where we discussed the need to celebrate Women's day and all that is involved in conducting a program. The women were enthusiastic. They agreed to take active part and decided to collaborate.



And then began the most difficult part of the preparation. One group of women decided that they would dance. I was extremely happy with their decision and the practice began in one of the homes. All of them are agricultural workers. They would be back by 6.30 p.m., refresh themselves and get ready for the practice. On the first day the practice was in one house. After the practice the husband fought with his wife. So, the next day she said: "Let us not have practice in my house." Then we went to another house; here there was hardly any place; saris were tied all around and the practice began, until the drunkard husband returned and told the wife to stop dancing. And we had to disperse. There was no practice for a few days. Prathiba and I literally had tears in our eyes. Every day the practice ended up with a fight with one or the other men. Even teaching some skit and dances to our adolescent girls was very tough. They would come one day and the next day they are not there citing different reasons. For almost three weeks we went through a very tough time. There were moments when we felt like cancelling the program. Yet something within kept telling us don't give up, look forward.

This reflects the situation of women and girls in our villages. There is very little freedom, encouragement and support for women to do what they like. They are meant to be working machines only. Men do not realize that women too need little joys of life. They hardly have a voice. Women realize their situation, but struggle to let go; societal norms bind them to do only the prescribed roles. They are afraid to break the chains that bind them because of its consequences, and life continues.

I realize empowerment is a long process. We need to be patient with ourselves and also with our women in the villages. My past two years of being with the women in the villages made me realize how much they struggle. Girls marry at the age of 15. No matter how you try to make the parents understand, they will say yes but do only what they think is right. Just last month an 18-year-old girl committed suicide. Prior to her death we had good rapport with her; yet even then, we could not save her. At such times you simply become helpless.

In spite of the ups and downs, we celebrated Women's day. For the first time we had a rally, shouting slogans in the village. A small number of women participated. They were shy and frightened. Two SHG women anchored the whole program. Women danced and sang. Guests spoke on the theme, "Women Power". The dances, skits, songs were all geared towards the theme. About 175 women participated.

We only hope that all our efforts will bear fruit in its own time.

Sr. Ida Lobo, SSps
Streevani, Ekamba

Empowered Women to an Empowered Society

The Karnataka Domestic Workers Union, Gulbarga jointly with Sevasangama Development Society and Don Bosco, Gulbarga celebrated the International Women's Day on 24th March 2021 at Mother Theresa Hall in Kalaburagi. Theme of the day: **"Empowered Women to an Empowered Society"**. The celebration was among the women Covid warriors from different fields who gathered in a big number keeping in mind the COVID Protocol. The guests of the day were women from different departments of Kalaburagi district and they were; Dr. Simi Mariam George, Superintendent of Police (SP), Kalaburagi, Ms. Praveena Priya, Department of KKRDB, Smt. Arathi Pujari, Labour Officer, Dr. Ivy Lobo, Dean of ESI Medical College Hospital, Ms. Shwetha Doddamani, President, Nandikoor Panchayat, Sr. Reena D'Souza, Chairperson, Child Welfare Committee, and the Resource Person of the day Smt. K. Neela, President, Janawadi Women, Kalaburagi.

In the short and well delivered speeches of all the guests the outstanding expression was that "Women are now equal to men in all the fields and are equally capable of contributing to the progress of the country efficiently provided they are well supported and respected by our society." On this occasion, women COVID warriors from different fields such as elected Panchayat Leaders, Civic staff, Police department, Teachers, Social workers, Health department etc. who gave their valuable service uninterruptedly risking their own lives during the pandemic were honored in a special way.



International Women's Day celebration with Domestic Workers in Kalaburagi on 24.03.2021



International Women's Day at Central Prison, Kalaburagi on 14/3/2021 and Celebration of Women's Day at Cathedral Parish, Gulbarga on 7/3/2021

Sr. Reena D'Souza, SSps
Streevani, Gulbarga

Health and Wellness (3)

Mindfulness in Covid times

When I talk about mindfulness I am sure all my novitiate companions will have a smile on their faces. As young and enthusiastic novices, we used to run up and down the staircase. Sr. Bernedisa would call and tell us to go up each step mindfully, walk mindfully. Today more than before I come to understand the importance of mindfulness for a healthy living.



Covid 19 has impacted our societies around the world and personal lives in a variety of ways. More importantly we are surrounded by loads of negative impacts, Covid deaths, increasing number of new cases, lock down, social and physical distancing, even emotional distancing, wearing masks (masking our smiles), schools and shops closed, we are afraid of the presence of the other, if we would be contaminated with the contagion and fall ill, we cannot seek out consolation, fun and happiness in the same way that we did before in the same way that we did before.

Don Mon the American writer and singer of Christian worship songs says that in the mid of all the negativity around us there is only one source of positivity, that is, the WORD OF GOD. Mind fully trusting God and believing all the positive assurances from the Word of God will help us to sail through this difficult time we are in.

Antony fauci American physician-scientist and immunologist says,

“Infectious outbreaks have occurred throughout the history, they are occurring now, and will continue to occur. We need to be prepared so that the lessons learned from this will help the future generation to be better prepared.

Yes this too will pass away. Let us be mindful of it, our lives, and the lives of those around, by keeping a balance, a positive attitude, nourishing our relationships and upholding it happy and alive.

During our busy and stressful lives our attention is all over the place, we leap from one thing to another like a monkey in a tree. A study by two Harvard professors in 2010 shows that we are not paying attention to what we are actually doing almost 47 % of the times. Maybe we can relate this to our normal mode of operation

Some search conclude that people are less happy when their minds are wondering even when the content of their thoughts are generally pleasant. We are more vulnerable to anxiety, stress and depression and we are likely to be triggered and respond in ways that are unhelpful and not very constructive.

Mindfulness is the act of paying attention on purpose, to all elements of our experience here and now with an attitude of open acceptance, non-judgment and compassion. It involves the conscious and deliberate direction of our attention. It helps us how to be disciplined with our focus.

Mindfulness helps us to reconnect to our basic ability to be fully present and stay cognizant of where we are and what we are doing. Essentially, it is focusing on what is going on in our mind, what are we talking to ourselves. It helps us not to be overly reactive and over whelmed by what is going around us.

With regular practice of paying conscious attention to what is going on in our minds, our thoughts, and thinking patterns, and how the happenings around us affect our minds, we can see the benefit that the present moment awareness bring to our lives.

Mindfulness allows us to become a detached observer of our senses, perceptions, our thoughts and our emotions. Becoming a watcher in this way, we can spend more time interrogating our experience and learn to take what happens in our bodies and minds less personally. Practice of mindfulness sharpens our focus. We are able to become more selective in what we pay attention to and how long we pay attention to it.

It helps us to notice and appreciate beauty and mystery, the complexity of life that surrounds us all the time.

The attitude with which we evaluate our experience really matters, conscious practice of mindfulness can alter our lives, it gives us guidance as how to channel our energies, who are and how we want to develop and take our lives forward.

Buddha says "While pain is inevitable, suffering is optional". Most of our suffering is caused by our reaction to a difficult situation.

Daily meditation of 15 to 20 minutes connecting ourselves consciously with our mind and body, patiently observing what is going on in our mind, with an attitude of non-judgmental and compassion will enhance our sense of Well-being. Focus our mind on what is good in the given situation for oneself and for the other, on daily blessings received and given, on developing an attitude of gratitude every moment of our lives

Let us cultivate daily practice of mindfulness for it enhances our sense of Well- being, improves our immunity, and reduces anxiety and frustration. Mindfulness leads us to a better behavior regulation and better health.

Dr. Sr. Mercy Kuriakose, SSps
St. Mary's Hopital, Periyapatna



**"TO KEEP THE BODY IN GOOD HEALTH IS A DUTY...
OTHERWISE WE SHALL NOT BE ABLE TO KEEP
THE MIND STRONG AND CLEAR" - Buddha**

UNSEEN HAND OF GOD

You created and placed me in this world
You shaped and filled my being with your life
You comforted and nourished and filled with energy
You opened my mouth to proclaim your divine praises.
You held me gently when I learnt the walk of my life



You taught me to run, jump and dance with the rhythm
You opened my ears to listen to the soothing sounds around
You filled my face with brightness and joy of your presence
You made eyes mirror your reflection;
Yes ... it is the Unseen hand of God,
That lead me to a different world of love and Kindness, Laughter and Peace.

I was lost in my world, my business filled my day
I failed to feel that Hand the lifted me
I lost the Light of my being
I fell hard in the pit of my making

All of a sudden, A Hand lifted me up from the Pit of darkness
A Voice Caught my ears
"Oh! My dear, Are you Hurt?
The Voice of my beloved filled me with Hope
In pain I gazed at Him and he was there with an outstretched **Hand**
Embracing me with love that had no bounds
Comforting me with his Peace he began collecting my Every Tear
To my surprise...I saw him knitting together the tear balls
Yes His **Hands** created a garland that was shining like the pearls
And gently put around my neck whispering his love forever

Sr Adrin Menezes, SSps
Kuchipudi



Reaching out the UNREACHED!

"A compassionate heart that goes out in service"

I was appointed to Gulbarga in May 2018 to work with Domestic Workers Union- Gulbarga, Yadgir and Bidar. As I started my ministry, I visited a few slums where I found poor and unhappy domestic workers. There was clear difference between North Karnataka and South Karnataka with the resources available and shared. In North Karnataka the land is dry and stony with less rainfall and less produce.



Many people eat one meal per day. Most of the domestic workers live in slums and their condition is pathetic with no proper houses to live in. They live in tin sheet houses which are often found half broken. They work hard in different houses and earn a little which is barely enough for their daily expenses. A few are daily wage workers and others construction workers.

The Domestic Workers whom we cater are uneducated and are unaware of Govt. Schemes and the benefits they can claim. Often they are cheated by the higher class people. Child marriages still continue and marriages are broken within two years, and most of the girls live a single and miserable life.

For the upliftment of these suffering and marginalized people, we started registration of domestic workers in the union and empowerment of domestic workers through various programmes such as monthly meetings, Tri-monthly meetings, Annual meetings, Protests, Press meets etc., encouraging them to fight for their own rights and have their own law for them; besides these, we are also providing them with Govt. schemes and necessary documents.

Many of the domestic workers have been empowered and standing on their own feet which is a good news. In April 2020 the Pandemic lockdown hit these poor people living in slums very badly and my heart went out in service for them. We distributed nearly 1500 food kits through the collaboration with other organizations.

We also introduced mother's meal program, to distribute food kits to the sick and elderly for one year. It gives me a lot of Joy and a sense of accomplishment as I look back and count the



blessings of God to the people of Gulbarga, Yadgir and Bidar the most backward districts of Karnataka. I thank my community for understanding me and cooperating with me in my efforts in reaching out to the neediest.

Sr. Antony Mary, SSps
Deepalaya, Gulbarga

Living the 2nd Wave of Lockdown!

We, Anima and Rajni, 1st PUC students, stay in Helena Sadan, Pamboor. The government declared a few weeks ago that 1st PUC students need not give examinations due to the Covid-19 pandemic and that they will all be promoted based on internal evaluation.

As we are in the time of the lockdown all of us have to stay inside and cannot move out. Before the lockdown we were preparing ourselves so that we could do well in our examinations. Now there are no exams, and we have much time on hand; so we will share how we are spending our days. We take one day at a time and we move forward.

Each day we have a 2-hour class on: outline of the Bible and Genesis, English (speaking, reading, grammar), sometimes on subjects related to our studies. During these classes we learn and receive information; we also come to know more about life, what is happening in our world – and lessons which help us.

As our spiritual food daily we have: one hour adoration, Divine Mercy Rosary (3 pm) and evening prayer or the rosary at 7 pm, during which we sang the decades of the rosary in Hindi, Telugu and prayed in Konkani besides English. We also came to know about different stories and titles of Mother Mary. We prayed for our sick world and for suffering people. Reading from the daily newspaper we brought the news items and prayed before the Blessed Sacrament. For three days before Pentecost we had an hour of praise and thanks, 2-3 pm, in honor of the Holy Spirit, besides our novena. On Pentecost day after supper there was a dance competition.

Assignment (on any PUC subject): We had to learn by heart and give the summary of a 10 marks question before the community. We took time and prepared ourselves for this homework. It was helpful because we remembered our lessons in this activity.

Other activities: During the days when we could attend Holy Mass in the parish, we took turns in starting the hymns in Konkani which we had learnt; we continue to learn English hymns, action songs and picnic songs. We know the Penguin and the Jerusalema dance; Manasa School has a big ground; we run 1 or 2 times around the school campus and play other games according to our time table. In the convent we have no cook; so we take turns to cook along with sisters and other students. In this activity we learnt how to make nirdosa, jackfruit dose, mutli, putt and so on; we planted seeds of lady fingers, beans, brinjal, spinach; for the past two months we are now enjoying these and others vegetables. We thank God for this blessing. It was because of Sr. Mary Beck (who tirelessly worked) that we used vegetables from our garden, except for unions, potatoes and tomatoes.

On different days we had Bible quiz competition, and competitions on Poetry recitation, drawing, and singing. Sometimes we watched videos and stories of saints which encouraged and inspired us.

In the end we would like to thank God for showing us so much goodness and for keeping us safe. Some of us in the community had common cold for a few days, but after a week we were fine.

Anima Dung Dung & Rajni Hasda (1st PUC)
Pamboor

That They May All Be One...

Some time ago reading the Book of Genesis, Noah's Ark caught my attention. I thought to myself we are somehow trapped in this lockdown period following the pandemic. Wasn't this what God expected of Noah, to stay put along with his family and other creatures in the huge Ark built by him? Many of us are following Noah's example; but perhaps many more are rushing out to give ourselves a break or reaching out to the needy that need help? Somebody has rightly said that Corona virus doesn't travel by itself, but it does so through persons and people who attend marriages, celebrations, prayer halls and spiritual gatherings.



However, witnessing the pandemic milieu in our world, and the uncertainty and fear following the virus, quite a section of Christians are drawn to think of the end times. Subsequently, there has been a move into the spiritual realm of our existence; many are even on their knees begging for a respite from this menace and are asking for forgiveness. Christian families have come together, setting aside time for the spiritual food that is served on line. Family members and relatives share that they are not free because they would be attending the on line adoration or Holy Mass. It is two years now the new norm is slowly shaping up.

In the New Testament, which many of us are more familiar with, Jesus' High Priestly prayer makes a request to the Father on behalf of Himself, the apostles and future believers. Though it is mainly directed for the inner circle of disciples it applies to us believers too who are led to faith in Jesus through the teachings of the disciples. Jesus extends the prayer to include all who approach Him in faith. His words confirm that what is 'in them' – the Father and the Son – might also be in us, his followers. He passionately prays, "**...that they may all be one** as you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us...I in them and you in me, that **they may become completely one.**" (Jn. 17-21) It's Jesus' best petition of all: "Father, I have made known to them your name and I will make it known, that the love with which you loved me might be in them..." (Jn. 17:26). It is an appeal to the Father from Jesus that we be filled with the Spirit which will enable us to love with the love with which the Father loves the Son.

How can we be one! In the existing world of many religions and the claim each group has that its religion alone is true, it becomes next to impossible to see eye to eye and to live peaceably. Let alone religion, the racial, caste, language and other barriers today exist more than at other times in the past because of the realities of migration, internal battles, refugees and employment realities and rapid travel means, though of course, the current pandemic situation has greatly reduced that. We have witnessed that the relocation movement of peoples around the world evoked feelings which have found expression in words like 'foreigners,' 'outsiders,' 'no right or what right?' 'depriving us' etc. Simultaneously, we honor and extol the countries that have opened their borders and accommodated the peoples who have fled their own warring state. The generosity of those countries have conveyed an attitude of 'what's mine is also yours.' God bless them for their good will and spirit of compassion!

When we sit down and reflect on what is it that welcomes goodness and universality into our being, we become aware that in reality it is not our Religion but our Spirituality. That spirituality truly matters, which can bring us together and make us one. What's spirituality then? Whoever takes time and interest comes to understand it. Through meditations and reflections, we have come to know that spirituality draws me to my centre, which ultimately shows me my true self. It tells me that I am not what I think myself to be. That, at the core I am a being/consciousness and so are the others – being/consciousness. If that be so, there cannot be many 'consciousnesses'. And if it is just one, I am embedded with the consciousness of everyone else. "Your life is a journey you must travel with a deep consciousness of God." (1 Peter 1:18). True Self brings us to ponder on the words, "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them," (Gen. 1:27) and to accept the powerful truth that all human beings are one. "In pure consciousness all divisions finally dissolve!" says Rajiv Agrawal. However, in the process of drifting from the altruistic path into the attitude of 'what's in it for me?' the human EGO has continued to revel and thrive on the externals such as fame, achievements, wealth, power etc., causing divisions in humanity.

As we all know, Religion on the other hand comprises of a set of beliefs, practices and rituals celebrated in the cycle of feasts and festivals which bring people together in groups or in families. The participation in these celebrations is sometimes conscious or at times unconscious owing to the fact that one is born into it. Growing up in a tradition of such beliefs, there is consequently a certain amount of fear to think differently or go beyond what we have come to accept and believe. We thence fall into the trap of a mediocrity not being able to think out of the old box. "You will know the truth and the truth will set you free." (Jn. 8:32) We are often reminded by sages that all are one at our depths. Spirituality acknowledges the Divine within every human being and invites us to reflect on our attitudes towards others and change accordingly. This is perhaps what Jesus was alluding to and inviting us to, when he tells the Samaritan woman: "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father... the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. For such the Father seeks to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." (Jn. 4:21-24). Jesus spoke of a new time when true believers will not go to any mountain, church, temple or mosque for worship but that it will be consistent living in the spirit of worship to the God of Truth. Currently looking at the world situation we can say that peoples of different religions are travelling in the same boat now, meaning, the lockdown has indirectly caused the families to make their homes a place of worship and prayer!

True spirituality makes our becoming in the likeness and image of God possible. Jesus said, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). To put it simply, we should be perfect like God. Nothing less! Unbelievable! We are habituated to think small; it's easier and more comfortable to believe that we are sinners than to think otherwise. God wants us to participate in that "all may be one," in acts of co-creating, transforming and saving. And Jesus who prays that all may be one says, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'move from here to there,' and it will move." (Matt. 17:20). To be able to possess that belief which signifies a new nature that cherishes what God cherishes! Nothing could be more perfect!

Sr. Molly Rego, SSPS
CHS Bangalore

The One adaptable to change, Survives!

The globe kept revolving displaying the massive drive of uncertainty and hardship... and then the airborne sight of the new skyline! The pandemic has had an enduring bearing on nursing education and practices, as most of the professional arenas tackled perseveringly, regardless of countries and continents, private and government, young an old, privileged and the less privileged and status and standard.



The pandemic know-hows' ever-textured tactics to lean on to one another re-stocking the gap differences, to lean on to technology for rejuvenating thoughts, emotions, decisions, learning and care, effectively enhanced the self, school, and community's 'get work done'.

Given the fact that we all are beneficiaries of change which everyone considered inconceivable, 'A Pandemic-Induced Change in Nursing Arena' is undeniably a welcome change!

The Government, universities, institutions, management, parents, faculty and students were in the limelight of technology, which indeed wasn't a piece of cake. Yet all stood with one heart and many voices, with one soul and many hands to reach out and touch lives.

Because nursing is the only profession that needs hands that caress! Such a field looks out, transmits knowledge through a hands-on experience.

The nursing fraternity globally decided to embrace new practices:

- to sustain,
- to keep pace and,
- to survive;
- to opt for more familiar ones and,
- to unlearn new innovative methods of teaching and learning;
- to amenably discuss the shreds of evidences, concept mapping, protocols;
- to be open to others' viewpoints
- to engage new practices, become a habit;
- to go beyond initial comfort zones and,
- to reinforce into practices.

Today the institutions and colleges are best suited for the current scenario with its challenges and initiatives. There is no other way! But to reinvent and Survive! Change grasps Change!

Sr. Lalitha Rosali, SSps
Anugraha, Mumbai



World Population DAY 2021

The theme of this year for World Population Day is -

'Rights and choices are the answer: Whether baby boom or bust, the solution to shifting fertility rates lies in prioritizing the reproductive health and rights of all people'.

As the world observes Population Day on July 11 every year, it reminds itself of the challenges faced globally due to overpopulation. The alarming trend shows that after hundreds of thousands of years the population reached 1 billion, and then in just another 200 years, it grew sevenfold, as per the estimates of the United Nations. The worldwide population reached the 7 billion mark in 2011, and today it has climbed to about 7.7 billion. It is expected to grow to nearly 8.5 billion in 2030, 9.7 billion in 2050, and 10.9 billion in 2100, the worrying UN trend shows.



History:

July 11 marks World Population Day when people remind themselves of the hazards of overpopulation and raise awareness about how overpopulation can harm ecosystems and hamper progress of humanity. The United Nations Development Programme's Governing Council created World Population Day in 1989. On July 11, 1987, the population day witnessed the Five Billion Day, or the estimated day when the world's population surged above five billion people. Further, the day was commemorated by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1990 with Resolution 45/26.

The topics of discussion on the day include family planning, poverty, sexual equality, maternal health, civil rights, among others. The theme this year for World Population Day- Rights and choices are the answer: Whether baby boom or bust, the solution to shifting fertility rates lies in prioritizing the reproductive health and rights of all people.

India has the world's second-largest population after China. While China contributes to 18.47 % of the world's share, India is not far behind with 17.70 % share of the global population. Following India, the United States has a share of 4.25 % of the entire world population, according to data by Worldometer.

Significance of World Population Day

On this special day, the world comes together with the goal of highlighting the difficulties created by overpopulation. It also raises awareness about how overpopulation may harm the ecosystem and the progress or growth of humanity. Currently, India has the world's second-largest population after China.

World Population Day: Celebration

It is an international event where various countries, organizations participate and draw attention to the major issues related to the population of the world. Activities organized on this day include seminar, discussion, educational sessions, public contest, slogans, workshops, debates, songs, etc. Not only this; even TV channels, news channels, radio broadcast various programs related to population, and the importance of family planning. So, the World population is observed worldwide every year on 11 July to draw the attention of the public towards the importance of population issues and the need to curb them.

Objective of Celebrations:

Some of the objectives of celebrating the world population day are:

- It is celebrated to protect and empower youths of both gender like girls and boys.
- To offer them detail knowledge about the sexuality and delay marriages till they they are able to understand their responsibilities.
- Educate youths to avoid unwanted pregnancies by using reasonable and youth friendly measures.
- Educate people to remove the gender stereotypes from society.
- Educate them about the pregnancy related illnesses to raise the public awareness about dangers of early childbirth.
- Educate them about STD (sexually transmitted diseases) so as to prevent them from various infections.
- Make sure about the access of equal primary education to both girls and boys.
- Make sure the easy access of reproductive health services everywhere as part the basic primary health for each couple.

Conclusion:

World Population Day is an annual event observed every year, which seeks to raise awareness of global population issues. World Population Day aims to increase people's awareness on various population issues such as the importance of family planning, gender equality, poverty, maternal health and human rights. World Population Day also aims at raising awareness regarding how to control and contain the rapidly increasing population. It is moral to be pro-life. But an ever-increasing population has innumerable irreversible consequences for the earth. Keeping that fact in mind, the matter of rising population should be duly addressed.

It is extremely urgent to keep the population count within the check. Several irrevocable damages are inflicted upon the environment and the atmosphere. A large number of people imply rapid and unjust depletion of environmental resources. Natural resources such as Land, Water, and Air are limited; they cannot be manually reproduced. The quick consumption of these resources leads to a tremendous loss. Besides environmental resources, valuable human resources are also wasted.

Sr. Vasantha Prathipati, SSpS

Pavitratma Nikethan,
Vijayawada.



Reaching Food kids to the needy during 2nd wave of COVID 19



Streevani, Gulbarga: Nearly 1400 Food Kits worth Rs.1000/- each and 25 Medical Kits worth Rs. 3000/- were distributed to the families of Domestic workers in Gulbarga, Bidar and Yadgir with the help of Azim Premji Foundation, Bangalore and Sevasangama / ORBIT Gulbarga Diocese.



Asha Deep, TALA: Distributed Nutritional kits to 400 families from 6 villages in collaboration with Diocese of Mumbai and Health Promotion Trust - HPT.



Streevani, Pune: 1650 Dry food materials were distributed to the Domestic Workers in Pune who were unemployed during the second wave of Covid 19.



Streevani, Ekamba: In collaboration with Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives Bangalore and ORBIT, Bidar 200 food kits were distributed to Widows and Handicapped persons in the villages.



Streevani, Patencheru: Food Kits worth Rs.1000/- each were distributed to 36 Domestic workers who are Widows, Single parents and Handicapped in Patencheru with the support of Montfort Social Institute (MSI) Hyderabad.



Recounting the Jubilee Blessings

On the joyful occasion of my Silver Jubilee as SSps, the editor of Vani set before me a series of interviewing questions relating to my life. Rather than responding to them directly, I choose to share the experience of my silver jubilee celebration at Kripalaya Convent on 31 January 2021, which is ever etched in my memory. It was indeed a very special and meaningful event; quite intimate with my parents, immediate family members, Parish Priest and our Pamboor and Pernal Community. Special joy was the presence of Sr. Lissy, our provincial leader. Eucharistic Celebration offered by my cousin Fr. Richard Saldanha OCD, was indeed a thanksgiving sacrifice. At different parts of the Mass I was invited to recall the different stages of my life, enfolding the entire life. What I am sharing below are the gleanings and sentiments expressed and celebrated by my community.



As is customary in our Congregation, after receiving the blessing from our elders, we proceeded to seek blessing from our Blessed Mother and Founding Generation. We prayed in the spirit of Magnificat: **Let Mary's soul be in us to glorify the Lord; let her spirit be in us that we may rejoice in God our Savior!** And in the words of Arnold Janssen: **May our hearts be like an altar with thanksgiving always ascending to God.**

As concrete expression of my life experience, I chose two Scripture texts for the Eucharist. The first one was from Isaiah: being **called by name**; being **precious in God's eyes**; and the second was from the Gospel of St. John, **the Vine and the Branches**. After 25 years, I experience an **inner call to remain in God's Love**.

During the **Introduction** of the Mass I was carried back in memory to my **Parental Home** as the narration went on. I am the second child of Mr. Alphonso Lewis and Celine Saldanha. My Father worked very hard as a mechanic. My mother is a gentle, devout, generous and loving home-maker. I was born in Mumbai and then later our family shifted to Pakshikere, Mangalore Diocese. As highlight it was said that from my family I have integrated the beautiful qualities of deep faith, simplicity, faithfulness and hard work and even my cooking skills. It was indeed a joy and privilege for me to have both of them present for the celebration. In thanksgiving for my beautiful parents and siblings who sowed and nurtured the seed of my vocation, the opening Hymn: **We gather together to sing the Lord's praises** was sung.

During the **Liturgy of the Word**, I was invited to bring to memory my years of **initial formation**. Yes, I joined after my XII studies. I lovingly remembered my vocation promoter and my formators who like good gardeners cultivated the seed that was sown in my heart by my family. These years were marked by intense living of rigorous work, adjustments, doubts and fears; at the same time graced with openness and docility to the Spirit to be shaped, however painful the process was. Perseverance at any cost was my goal as the reassuring Words of God filled my mind and being: **Do not be afraid; I am with you; I have called you by your name; you are precious in my eyes**. I whispered a prayer for my formators, companions and all those who have been part and parcel of my journey at this stage.

Then it was time for the **Renewal of Vows**. In spirit I was called to re-live the joy that filled my heart when I was formally accepted into the SSps Family at my **First and Perpetual Profession**. All is gift and grace is what my heart could proclaim. In loving and grateful remembrance of these beautiful moments, I renewed my vows.

At **Offertory**, my parents and my sister offered 25 roses and fruits. My family members were moved to joyful tears, when they heard the prayer: As we offer these flowers and fruits, we gratefully recall and thank God for the grace-filled parents of Sr. Thelma. Like good trees, they have produced good fruits and have offered their beautiful daughter to God's service. I had the opportunity to offer the footprints in gratitude for my missionary vocation. With my whole heart, together with the community, I sang: "**with all my hopes in times to come, this is my gift; this is my song my God**".

Doxology was yet another momentous experience when the community remembered and celebrated my **Fruitful Apostolic Life**. The narrator succinctly summarized my apostolic life in the following words. "Yes, immediately after her novitiate, in response to the need of the Province of India South, she generously offered herself for the mission among the mentally challenged children at Pamboor. She underwent a special training and served until her perpetual vows. However, at her final profession she was assigned to India Northeast. After her perpetual vows, she still worked at Manasa for another year. She then completed B.Com. in Vijayawada and joined the mission in India Northeast and worked as a treasurer in Halflong Holy Spirit Hospital. After a period of 3 years, she faced a major health hazard and had to return to Mumbai for medical treatment. Consequently she was re-transferred to India South. Without reserve she served again at Manasa institute, for another 5 years. This was the test of faith for her. She questioned God, why at a very young age she has to face all these health hazards. Gradually she realized that there is no sense in asking God questions and all that God asks of her is her total surrender. Divine grace flowed into her soul and she recovered fully and currently with gratitude serves as formator and treasurer at Kripalaya convent, Pernal". At this moment, God was glorified and honored through a beautiful Arthi offered by the students.

After the Holy Communion, there was a special moment of **Thanksgiving**. I was given an opportunity to count the blessings of my life one by one and give praise to the Lord. Indeed the Lord has done marvels in my life. It was also a moment for me to thank my parents and family members. I was also immensely grateful to my community who prepared such meaningful liturgy to help me celebrate the joy of my Jubilee Year and also for the meal that would follow. With hearts overflowing with joy, we sang the **Magnificat** – I will magnify your name O Lord.

Indeed, this has been a unique experience of community living and celebration for me. Each person is valued, recognized and appreciated for what she is and what she does. I have grown immensely in my spiritual life as well as how I carry out my ministry. In this my jubilee year, I specially pray for our communities that we do not take each other for granted, that we learn to recognize the goodness, giftedness as well as the limitations of each person and provide space to give expression to them in our ministries.

Sr. Thelma Lewis, SSps
Kripalaya, Pernal

Recalling the Journey with Gratitude

On the request of Vani here I am to share a little about my life – family, vocation, aspirations passion etc.

I was born in Pakshikere village in South Kanara on the 4th of November, 1971. My parents were late Gilbert Miranda and late Dulcin Miranda. In the absence of my parents Seethakka my caretaker took care of me.

In the family we are 8 siblings, 5 girls and 3 boys. I used to go to school with my sister and brother, who are just older to me. It was unique experience since I was not yet enrolled in the school; and it was a happy memory because I received sweets from the classmates of my siblings.

After completing P.U.C. I had a desire to join a congregation, though I didn't have much idea about mission. Sr. Jennet Rego who hails from the same parish, inspired me to join the SSps congregation. I gained more confidence when I heard that Sr. Thelma (who is from the same parish,) also wished to join our Congregation.

The time as a postulant in Mumbai helped me because I was for the first time exposed to new things that widened my outlook.

Prayer is what keeps me going in life. It is what draws me to God. More than my own prayer, I have felt the power of my mother's prayer in my life. Recalling my past I can say without hesitation that many miracles have taken place in my life. Maybe I was totally unaware of them at the time of its occurrence. Nevertheless, God has been very generous to me showering on me all that I have desired, even material gifts. At times there is some regret due to limitations and the tendency to compare. But deep down I am aware that God has his own purpose for my life and will fulfill them through me.

Teaching is my mission and there often are challenges connected with it from students, parents, superiors and coping up with extra work. Yet being with children gives me sense of fulfilment and purpose.

My mission in Romania was a turning point in my life. It was like starting a new life. It was altogether a new experience with culture, language, people and food etc. I grew interiorly as I learnt many things. There were challenges and as these came my way they taught me something new for my growth. I worked in the SSps day-care Centre as well as in the one run by the Don Calabria congregation. Many children were from a gypsy background and to them I taught English. Gypsies still remain backward in the Romanian society. This is an opportune mission taken up by our SSps sisters, as well as by many congregations. Apart from this I was involved in pastoral work, where we collaborate with the parish. The congregations give prime importance to pastoral work as there is a fear of losing children or teenagers.

Life-turning or defining moments in my life? There are many moments when I wait or expect for one thing but something else happens. However, each and every experience has helped me to change within. Challenges do come - in life, in work, in relationships. Often sisters or others were there to support and to help; I believe there are also times of "aloneness" in everyone's life and we learn to live and to continue our journey. Life also teaches me to do my best in whatever, to be happy and to expect nothing. Positivity brings hope and is life giving. Negativity can put us off and make us passive. But the challenge is not to be heartbroken



from those comments but to have the courage to move on. There is a conscience in us that help us to judge ourselves and boosts us up to go ahead when we are faced with different challenges.

My mission in Manasa - a school for Special Children was rewarding and a satisfying experience. It was here that I understood what being intellectually challenged means - the difficulties of special children and the parents' sorrow and times of deep stress. I owe my training in patience and understanding to the special children in Manasa. It is normal that I do complain of not having enough or not being as gifted and talented as the next one. In such moments the special children are a source of inspiration and a reminder to me to count my personal blessings from our God. They remind me to be happy with who I am and what I have.

My message to the readers? Well I would say let's place ourselves in the hands of the Almighty God and live our life happily. Pope Francis says "I want to say one word to you and this word is joy. Wherever consecrated people are there is always joy!" That's a very encouraging statement. Let's spread that joy around wherever we are placed. I also like the quote from Bhagwat Gita: Do not work for the reward but do your duty wholeheartedly. As John 6:27 also puts it, "Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that lasts for eternal life..."

Sr. Jovita Miranda, SSps
Shikaripur

Celebrating the Silver Years

On completing 25 years of my religious life, VANI requested that I share something of my life, family, vocation, formative years, spirituality and passion and mission.

Born on 23rd May in Cheekalkodur village, of Andhra Pradesh, I was all of 4 kilograms at birth. I was a wish come true to my parents, Madanu and Sharamma, after the birth of their two sons. When still a child, my mother put anklets on my feet - the sound of which felt like the footsteps of an elephant, as she would tease me fondly.

I grew up with 3 boys and 3 girls. As of now we are just five, since my younger sister passed away when she was little. I recall an incident when my brother used to have a good helping of the curd cream which my mother would keep on the shelf beyond our reach. Every time when she asked who had eaten the curd cream, we denied and put the blame on the cat. One day she unexpectedly entered the kitchen and caught my brother in the act of eating. The cat was out of the bag! The following day the curd cream 'flew' higher up, beyond the reach of any of us! We learnt our lesson.

After SSLC, the call to serve others was strong. It initiated because of my parents, grandmother and the SVD priests in the parish. Velvarthy happens to be my grandmother's native land, so she influenced me to join the SSps, as she had witnessed the mission work of our sisters there. I happily chose to be an SSps, even though I knew the Salesian Congregation



where I spent my school years. As an SSps, the intercultural living, Sisters' mission activities, and St. Mother Teresa of Kolkata often spurred me on. I cherish the memories of my formative years - living together as an intercultural and international family. There was so much fun and joy too. These, and my student years were the happiest times.

We need props to keep us going and for me it was 'Prayer'. On the spiritual level I gradually discovered my inner self and my focus was to keep walking with Christ. A positive attitude helped me to keep my values. I do believe that without God's knowledge nothing happens to me, whether joyful or unpleasant. Faith in God reinforced me to serve the needy.

Serving in different ministries, I came to believe that we are just instruments in God's hands. My first mission appointment after first vows was in Kuchipudi, where I taught catechism and Bible stories in the substations. I was just a beginner trying to understand God's ways in religious life. One day the parishioners brought a woman who was possessed with an evil spirit, to be prayed over. A few persons and I prayed together in the church. The woman was very violent, restless, and had a possessed look. Very frightened, I thought to myself, 'Will the possessed spirit leave her and attack me?' The moment of doubt faded as I surrendered my fears to the Lord. After much prayers, the evil spirit left her; and the woman was normal again. A miracle indeed! The incident taught me to surrender totally to God and allow God to work miracles in our life.

Another profound experience was that of helping Tsunami victims in devastating situations and caring for the HIV/AIDS patients. At Jeevithasha Centre, I personally experienced God's healing touch through this ministry of caring for HIV/AIDS patients. The people here touched my life in different ways. Even now I feel, this is what Jesus would also have done if He lived among them. He would have gone to them - the socially discriminated, vulnerable, poor and the sick. I had the privilege of rendering outreach services like counselling, conducting health camps, home based care and providing a dignified death, to the abandoned and rejected due to the social stigma. My nursing skill came in handy in caring with compassion. It was a unique experience of encountering God in and through them; There was a feeling of fulfilment and contentment. All these experiences nourished my soul.

Having discovered and experienced who Christ is for me, life taught me to live with my gifts and weaknesses. Defining the moments of transition in my life's journey:

1. Keep faith in God
2. Be cheerful
3. Make time for everything
4. Maintain good relationships.

My passion in life: Doing good and being integrated - balancing life circumstances.

Knowing that I am the author of my life story, I hold these close to my heart in order that I can be passionate in life:

- Trust in God
- Discover my strengths, know my limitations
- Be positive, assertive
- Identify the recurring patterns
- Have fun, just be myself
- Listen to my heart

- Take risks, trust what drives me
- Read books

Trust in God, personal prayer and a change in my attitude helped me to ride over the challenging moments in life. It is my belief that heaven has four gates. If one is closed there are other open gates. So to be open always to find a solution.

Many people in today's world think life is a race and you must excel in everything. The moment we achieve something, the race for the next begins. Rarely do people spare a minute to sit back, relax, and be grateful for all they have achieved. When ambition becomes a greed, the 'other-centeredness' is closed. As a religious, I would say do the best you can, discover your inner self, try not to satisfy the ego with prestige and position. It is also beneficial - to transform that which disturbs constantly; to look for ways to be happy and contented; to be inclusive too which adds joy to life. In the final analysis we have one life, one mission, one family! Hence the need live life to the full. And people who are satisfied with what they have are contented, happy and have peace of mind. This contentment promotes happiness.

Everything will pass away, nothing is permanent, so we move forward. We look for the brightness in our life and in others...

The life that I cherish and nourish in the community is the happiest when I am able to relate in friendliness, when I let go my ego, when I appreciate others.

I am grateful to VANI for the privilege of sharing my experiences and reflections of the past 25 years. Sincere thanks to you!

Sr. Nirmala Madanu, SSps
Mumbai

"Mission" sent for...

As I write about my life and mission, I glance at the years before I joined the convent. I was an athlete, in pursuit of success and all the material trappings that went with it, believing it to be the way to attain fulfilment; yet the harder I worked and achieved the thirst for meaning in life, the more restless it left me. Material possessions, name and fame did not bring inner joy. I was looking for something that was beyond. To a purposeful life! The emptiness within, led me to listen closely to my heart, which asked me to leave behind the world of sports and to seek something more meaningful. Honestly, I had no plan or desire to be a Sister but to become a missionary. At that young age my heart was all set for mission. But out of the blue, "AMMA," (a local magazine) came as an answer, driving away my confusion. It was about our "Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit" Congregation. The words 'Missionary' and 'Holy Spirit' caught my attention. I still went through a struggle; on the one hand, it was opposition from the family, and on the other, the lure of a good lucrative job. Today, looking back, I am grateful to God for blessing me with courage and determination to make the right choice.



One of the most tangible God experiences I had in the mission was in 2006, at the time of the civil war between the east and the west. That was the first time I experienced real hunger. The only solution, considering the emergency, was to buy rice illegally from the Indonesia borders at night, which cost five times more than the usual price. Though it involved risks, it was by far a better choice than listening to the cry of hungry children.

During this period, I had malaria, kidney stone and urinal infection. There were no good hospitals in the vicinity. My health got worse and there was no conveyance to transfer me to another place. I experienced God in the form of a Cuban doctor, who not only vacated his room and shifted me from the hospital, but also appointed a Cuban nurse to care for me. It was a touching experience to witness his faith and commitment; he kept awake all night reading the Bible and attending to my need. I had thought he was a communist but he confessed that was a secret believer. He said, "Madere," meaning mother, "you have come to the country to give life to the people, so it's our responsibility to give life to you so that you can continue giving life to the poor." These words inspired and filled me with new determination to persevere, whatever the challenges. The foreign SSPS sisters had left the country due to different reasons. Each time I went through tough times, within and outside, an inner voice whispered, 'Timor still needs you'. Looking back, I am indeed grateful for the opportunities and freedom given me by the authorities to implement the mission according to the peoples' needs, which helped me to be a missionary, in word and in deed.

I feel it's important, not just going to a mission land but living out the mission, which enriches and makes our committed missionary religious life meaningful. My experiences taught me to live with peoples of different culture, customs, food habits and beliefs. Living on unfamiliar shores trained me to accept differences for our common mission.

The risen Lord goes before us to prepare a way for us to do His mission with Him. Often I think that I have not yet given my very best. Surrendering to the will of God, I allow my divine potter to shape, remold and transform me to continue to respond to His call in whatever form or way it is.

Sr Jessie Joseph, SSPS
Pilathara

Kindly Note:

Next issue of VANI will be published on 25th December. Send your articles, write ups, poems and news reports with photos to

vaninewslettersouth@gmail.com by 5th December 2021.

For further information you may contact the VANI Team:

Sr. Reena D'Souza, SSPS

Sr. Molly Rego, SSPS

Sr. Lalita Rosali, SSPS

Sr. Rose Thomas, SSPS

Sr. Vasantha, SSPS

Thank you

Lost in Inculturation!!

To begin with, just a few questions!

Have you seen the breadfruit tree? And the jackfruit? How coconuts grow and how they are plucked? Do you know how long is a sari? How is a text in Hindi read? Can you distinguish Telugu from Malayalam or Kannada? Did you eat masala dosa? And mango pickle?

Imagine the person who responds "NO" to all these questions that refer to the everyday life of an average Indian. It is so, with me, Sr. Edita, from the Ukrainian province of the Immaculate Heart of Mary! It is already more than three months now, that I am here in Bangalore in our Provincial house, where I feel heartily welcomed by our sisters from the start. I am enjoying life here. I also know very well what it means to be new to the culture. Sometimes I have the feeling of being a baby: What is this? And what is that? How does it work? How long will the rainy season continue to be? Cockroaches can fly! Really! What is this strange tree with big heavy punch balls hanging from the crowns? How do you put your sari on? ... and so on and so on.

I wonder what is the human capacity to accept new things? It is good that mine has not crossed the limit yet. It makes me happy because there will be many other new things to experience in your beautiful country. So I am looking forward to discovering it through my study, community life, common prayers, celebrations, work, meeting different people, visiting places, etc. Though it is not every time about happy feelings and emotions and, not without some struggles, I believe in God's care and providence for this time!

Sr. Edita Maria Ulman, SSps

Junior Sister (Ukraine)

CHRIST University, Media and Communication (2nd year)



Vaccination Drive

– A Spiritual Drive for the Holy Spirit

Every life is precious. Safeguarding the life is one's duty as well as a huge responsibility. At the same time saving life is a greater mission one can involve in. During this present pandemic everyone, I believe, has realized the value of life. This is very much seen and felt by the personnel working in the health care sector. The pain and anxiety of the people during this pandemic will remain in the mind for long.

Covid-19 hit us like a tornado or call it by any name. It caught us unawares. We never dreamt that this invisible virus could cause such a great havoc. In a blink of an eye there were dead bodies around us, in the hospitals, on the roads and floating in the water. The worst part was that people ran away from their own dear and near ones at their death. But the ray of hope for them was the hospitals. Here also I would like to stress that not all the hospitals were a ray of hope for them! Here too, only some hospitals treated patients with compassion and selfless motive. While for others it was an opportunity to make profit at the patient's expense.



In this regard Holy Spirit hospital stands apart. On par with its mission, Holy Spirit geared up strongly helping the covid patients. When the Government announced vaccination drive Holy spirit treated it as its spiritual drive to make the people flock in to the hospital for vaccination.

For the sisters at the Holy spirit, the vaccination drive was a real challenge. It was a challenge because of the huge number of people rushing into the hospital for vaccination. We could read in the newspapers and get to know from the social media the confusion and chaos created at vaccination centers. Selfish individuals trying to make money by selling the freely provided vaccine was indeed heart breaking. Here at Holy Spirit we had to make all the anxious people feel comfortable. Specially taking care of elderly people was a huge responsibility on our shoulder.

But as usual Holy Spirit found an opportunity here to serve the people with dignity and concern. The arrangement made for vaccination drive was such that as soon as the people came in to the campus, the way they were welcomed made their fear and anxiety vanish. From the gate to the site, the arrangement made the people feel at home. From the security guard to the doctors, everyone tried to pitch in to render their service to the needy. Volunteers and staff nurses were very soft and kind towards the people. Specially the way in which the elderly people were taken care of was really praiseworthy. The time we spent with them during the vaccination drive will definitely push us further to render selfless service at Holy Spirit.

We all know that Covid has no cure. One should protect oneself from it. Wear mask and get vaccinated. The sooner every person in the country is vaccinated, the safer we will be.

Sr Vasanthi Varghese, SSps
Holy Spirit Hospital, Mumbai

A God Who Cares!

A moment of fear gripped me and I felt alone. In the present scenario I became a stranger to all, afraid and confused as to what I must do.

I experienced this trauma, on missing my 10.30-night train at Bangalore station that fateful day. In spite of the fact of arriving early, I missed out reading the train timings and to worsen it, didn't pay heed to the announcements too, taking it for granted that the train is perhaps delayed. A few minutes had passed when I realized that I did indeed miss it.



Unable to control the tears that fell, and hoping against hope, I approached one or two persons to inquire. They told me that it was five minutes already since the train took off.

In moments of great need one feels helpless and alone, in spite of one's circle of friends and family. However, my inner strength came to my rescue. With a shaky voice I called my superior and explained to her. She comforted, assured me and told me to find other possibilities. This enabled me to think clearly and to decide my next step.

I had to choose between spending the night on the platform and catching a cab to the next station. I chose the latter. Walking out of the platform and repeating the name of Jesus, I approached a taxi. By then the train was on its way to Yashvanthpur junction. Two taxis rejected. Finally, a Muslim guy said, "Madam I'll help you to catch up with your train. Trust me." I trusted completely because of my need. The traffic was heavy and I was tempted to lose hope. Time was slipping and the web showed that the train was stationed already at Yashvanthpur station. A couple of minutes' drive left to reach the station. As the taxi came to a halt at the station, I offered the driver more than what he asked. It was a symbol of my gratitude and respect to him who displayed not only kindness but also the mark of a gentleman who can be trusted at night.

I ran to the platform. It was as if the train waited for me to jump in, which I did and it took off. That night sitting in my reserved coach, with the cool breeze blowing across my face, I embraced my God in prayer, for he had taught me to fight each trial with a prayer. I firmly believe after every red signal there is definitely a green signal. I need to wait patiently and God will never let us down.

Sr Nirmala Mendonca, SSsP
Periyapatna



Mother Teresa Certificate of Honour



- Holy Spirit Hospital, Andheri awarded the Harmony Foundation's Mother Teresa Certificate of Honour at the hands of Governor of Maharashtra. We Congratulate the Holy Spirit Hospital Administration and the staff for their untiring selfless services to the neediest.

Heartfelt Thanks!



**"A Big Thank You
Sr. Cynthia for
your contribution
as editor
in VANI's Journey"**

Fr. Stan Swamy

*Light, Hope,
Love - The New Order*

Light overpowering darkness
Hope replacing despair
Love winning over hate
Is the Message of Jesus risen

darkness, despair, descended on me
at lower court declaring me complicity
of waging war against the State
A such not deserving bail

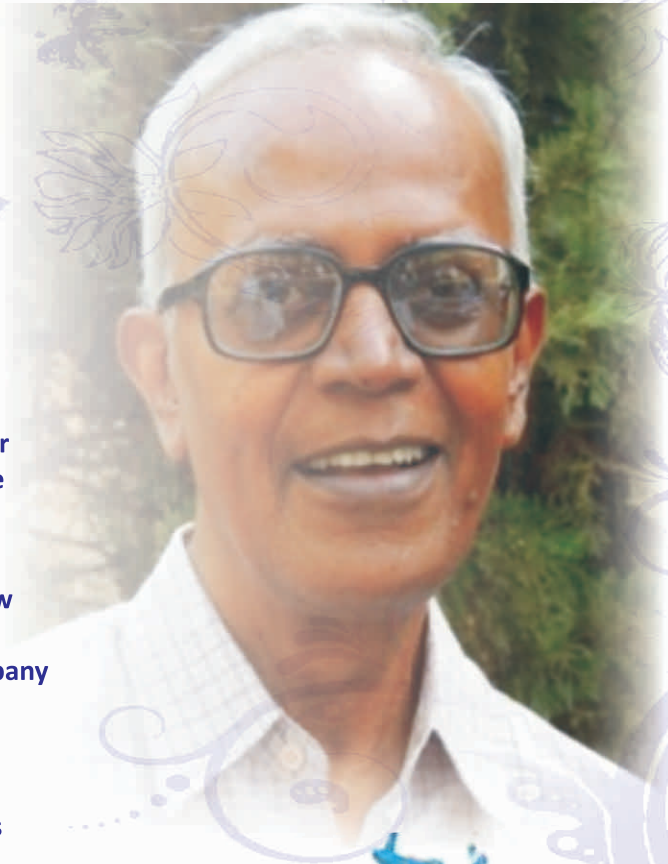
And what was the evidence ?
Some documents planted in my computer
Which were supposedly addressed to me
Something I myself was not in the know

My co-accused colleagues
Assured me this accusation is nothing new
They too have been accused similarly
I was thus consoled to be in their good company

But fight we will till the end
Not so much just to save our skin
But to speak truth to power
Counting all the while you all are with us
in mind and heart

- Fr Stan Swamy

(The poem return by Fr. Stan Swamy, from Taloja Prison)



A Prophet and a Martyr of our times!

You have indeed fought the good fight,
You have finished the race,
You have kept the faith.
We salute you!



HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS!!

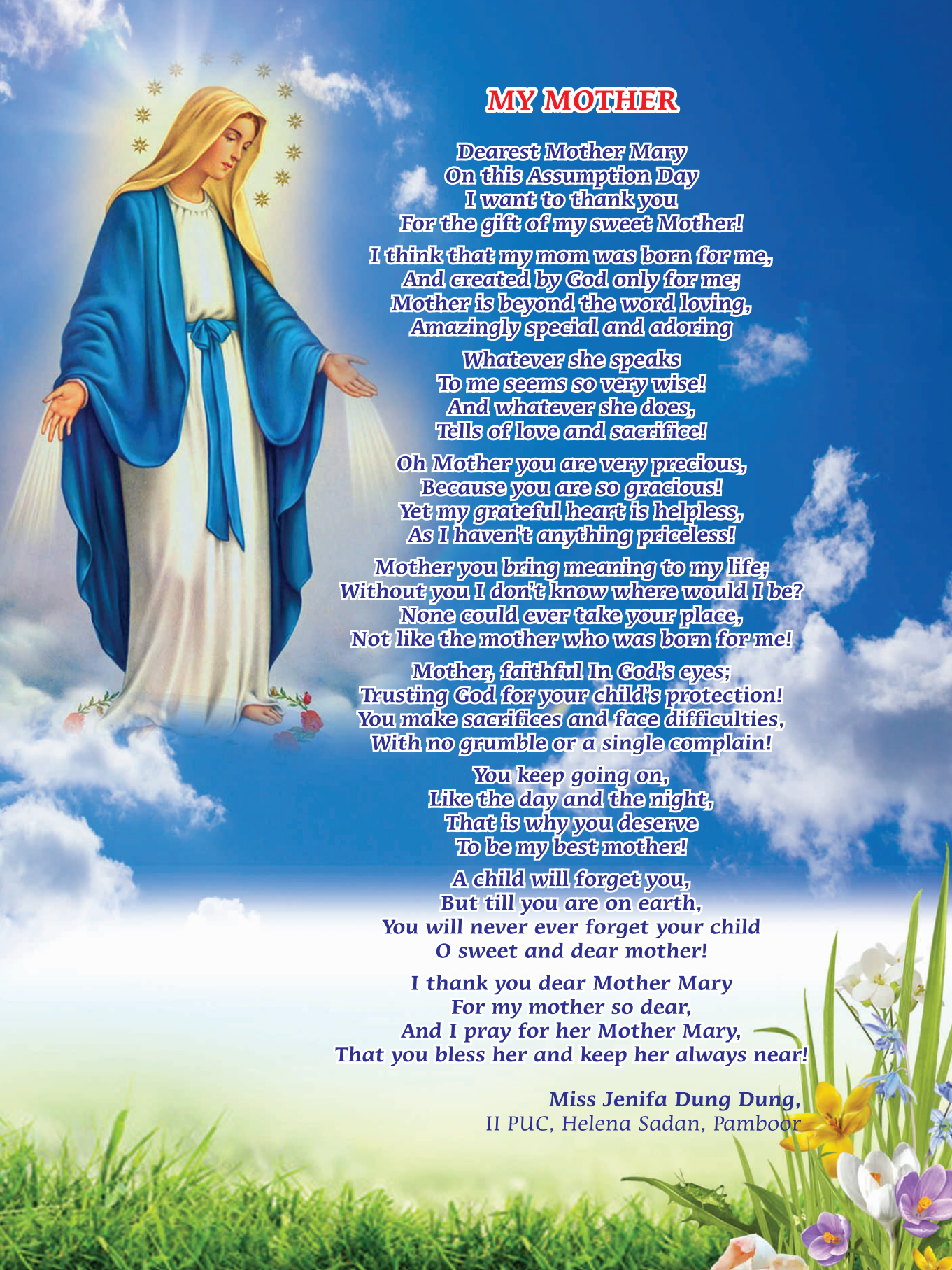


ON THE OCCASION OF YOUR SILVER JUBILEE



Silver Jubilee celebration on 25.07.2021 at Convent of the Holy Spirit, Bangalore

From left: 1. Sr. Shila M.J., 2. Sr. Suchita Jojo, 3. Sr. Vasanthi Paripurnam,
4. Sr. Jovita Miranda, 4. Sr. Kavita Paulose, 5. Sr. Thelma Lewis,
6. Sr. Nirmala Madanu



MY MOTHER

Dearest Mother Mary
On this Assumption Day
I want to thank you
For the gift of my sweet Mother!

I think that my mom was born for me,
And created by God only for me;
Mother is beyond the word loving,
Amazingly special and adoring

Whatever she speaks
To me seems so very wise!
And whatever she does,
Tells of love and sacrifice!

Oh Mother you are very precious,
Because you are so gracious!
Yet my grateful heart is helpless,
As I haven't anything priceless!

Mother you bring meaning to my life;
Without you I don't know where would I be?
None could ever take your place,
Not like the mother who was born for me!

Mother, faithful In God's eyes;
Trusting God for your child's protection!
You make sacrifices and face difficulties,
With no grumble or a single complain!

You keep going on,
Like the day and the night,
That is why you deserve
To be my best mother!

A child will forget you,
But till you are on earth,
You will never ever forget your child
O sweet and dear mother!

I thank you dear Mother Mary
For my mother so dear,
And I pray for her Mother Mary,
That you bless her and keep her always near!

Miss Jenifa Dung Dung,
II PUC, Helena Sadan, Pamboor