



VANI

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**EMMANUEL,
GOD WITH US!**



FROM THE PROVINCIAL...

A Christmas of Covid -19: Sharing with the poor and the sick...

The atmosphere of Christmas this year appear to be very sober one, far from bustling; everyone is worried by the effect of Covid-19 pandemic, which seems to overwhelm the entire world. Yet it is a fact that every stage of life comes and passes by; every facet of life is born and slowly fades; every delightful or difficult moments are destined to become a memory - true nature of our earthly life. While every hope dims and every possibility turns to futility, the birth of Christ coming into the world, becomes real in the life of those preparing for Christ in their hearts!



In the midst of all turmoil and chaos in our country and in all corners of our world, we once again wait for Christ Jesus to deliver us from the darkness of arrogance, egoism, narrow mindedness, and from a world in chains, wounded and disfigured by wars, poverty, pandemic, economic crisis... "O come, Emmanuel, and save us." "Come, O prince of peace, our savior."

As we prepare ourselves to celebrate the birth of the child Jesus, we pray, may the 'Emmanuel' truly be born in our hearts; teach us to look into ourselves with gratitude for all that we are blessed with and grow in the attitude of sharing what we have, with those who have less...in our routine, may we find baby Jesus in swaddling clothes looking for a smile, a comforting word and a gesture of love! How are we to respond to such invitation, this Christmas season?

May the Infant Babe born in our hearts hold us together in love for one another and dwell in our hearts. May Christ be the Star that will light and guide our path ahead, enabling us to be a blessing for others as we enter into the New Year 2021! May the New Year be filled with hope, peace, harmony and the light of Jesus!

Wishing you a meaningful Christmas and a Grace-filled & Hope-filled New Year 2021,

Sr. Lissy Thelekadan SSsP
Provincial, India South



Merry Christmas

Editorial

CHRISTMAS – A CALL TO BE BORDERLESS

Christmas is round the corner. We feel 'EMMANUEL' knocking at our doors. God is no more distant but very close, not indifferent but compassionate, not a distant God but a merciful Father who gets involved in the lives of the people. The significance of this 'sacred historic event' is that we are gifted with a borderless God who lives not only in Heaven and on Earth but also in the heart of everyone. The messiah who showed himself in Bethlehem to the lowly shepherds of the regions continued to reveal himself to the rich kings of different nations who came in hurriedly to pay their homage. It is here that Jesus truly becomes a borderless God and universal Savior. His birth signifies that we belong to one common home being freed from human made institutions of caste, class, creed, culture, tradition, language and country.



The love that brought by the babe of Bethlehem blessed humanity by extending the frontiers of human existence. It is about this profound love Pope Francis speaks in his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*. Here Pope dreams of a fraternity that knows no borders. He gently invites all to nurture a love that transcends the barriers of geography and distance. He says that all of us being children of one same earth are called dream of a single family who share the same flesh, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, and each of us with his or her own voice, becoming truly the brothers and sisters all people.

As we celebrate the birth of this BOARDERLESS Jesus who dwells inside of us, may we break the barrier we create for ourselves and others and promote PEACE and LOVE for all. May Jesus Bless us. Wishing you all a blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year 2020

Sr Cynthia Dsouza SSpS
Atmadhara, Pune

Preparing for Jesus' Coming...

Every year the church gives us time to prepare ourselves for the birth of Jesus. We, students at Helena Sadan, found joy in making the advent wreath as part of our Christmas preparation. We cut leaves from the Christmas tree and made it circular in shape. Here is a little information about the advent wreath.



- The Wreath is circular to symbolize eternity.
- The four candles (3 purple and one white) are placed on the advent wreath during the four weeks before Christmas. Sometimes a fifth white candle is placed on 25th December as a symbol of purity of Jesus who is born.
- In the first week we light one purple candle. It is called the PROPHET'S candle. It represents Hope – in remembrance of Prophet Isaiah who foretold the birth of Jesus. "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Is 7:14) HOPE is waiting in expectation for the Messiah's coming.
- In the second week we light another purple candle, called the BETHLEHEM candle. The theme is LOVE symbolizing Christ's manger. "And this shall be a sign unto you; you shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." Luke 2:12
- The third week of advent is called Gaudete Sunday and it represents JOY to symbolize the joy of the shepherds. On this day the white candle, known as the SHEPHERD'S candle is lit. (And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ... Luke 2:8-11) It is a rejoicing Sunday telling us of the nearness of Jesus' coming.
- On the 4th Sunday we light the white candle called the ANGEL'S candle. The theme of this week is PEACE. "Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." Luke 2:13-14)



Before Christmas, we not only prepare the outside but also our interior by spiritual practices. The time helps us to keep our hearts clean, to pray for Christmas friends, to be kind, and we forgive each other through personal prayers. When our heart is clean we feel good and happy, and are ready to receive Baby Jesus. The novena days also encourage us to be our best. Through our practices we make room for Jesus in our Hearts.

Priti, (Student),

Helena Seva Sadan, Pamboor

AT THE BABE'S COMING!

One winter's day when a baby is born,
Then the animals come around!
O what a joy; such a homely sight!
Angel voices sound from the heavens;
They sing Gloria.... Gloria!
And the world is dressed with Gladness.

In the morning the flowers smile,
Sensing the Presence of the new-born Babe!
River dances with joy at the Babe's coming;
Mountains & Hills sing their joy to the little Child!



Breeze moves coolly, gentle is her sway;
Stars in the night twinkle merrily;
Come Silent Night! Come Loving Night!
Come Peaceful Night! Bring our Savior in!



All awake! Your King is here!
O kind Sun, make this Earth a Heaven,
Then can the Earth sing Heaven's glory!
Come, dear Emmanuel, fill us with Peace!
Come Healer, Come Covid's Destroyer!
Let our world again wear her gown of Gladness!

Jenifa Dung Dung (Student)

Helena Seva Sadan, Pamboor



BEFRIENDING YOURSELF

2021 - YEAR TO BEFRIEND OURSELVES

Apparently Miss 2020 has outstayed her time, in view of the historic pandemic across our world. So, naturally it was a longer wait for 2021's arrival! Nonetheless, our joy could be short lived, as Covid-19 continues to linger around making home with earthlings.

Like its precursor, 2021 continues to beckon us to a homecoming; conceivably, to a relentless pursuit of a changed heart and mind and a return to our true selves. Most people have learnt the art of staying home, working from home, being creative and innovative during the lockdown. Sure, it's been a time of reflection too. The pace was set last year and we stepped in to the tune of a leisurely beat; as a consequence we have learnt to be mindful of everything and everybody around us; perchance in some cases, not so, by those who have been endangering the lives of others through irresponsible and undisciplined actions. It's no thanks to Corona that we frequently looked forward and dreamt of 2021, connecting to its womb as it were in an inviting gesture. Trustingly, our common adversity will enable us to bond with self and others in the right spirit in the days and months to follow. So let's give 2021 a warm hug, make a fresh start and open a new story beginning with the self.

In its youth the human race invent, discover, build and create incredibly, touching every sphere of reality, thereby bringing into existence a new world that's globally connected, good, beautiful and diverse. Performing amazingly well, esthetically, intelligently, physically they feel fulfilled and satisfied. There's no stopping them after the initial feat. There's always more to do and more to gain. Life becomes that opportune playground, stage, laboratory or whatever for a display. And there's no dearth of genius, master minds and whiz kids in our world. We can enjoy all the marvels we see, hear and experience and give thanks to God for such a brilliant and spectacular creation. Simultaneously, the trend of newness coming in with its independent and group ideologies, values and beliefs is rather baffling; and it invites us to seek honest, ethical and just responses to the grave concerns of our day. The movement started is inwards in search of answers to every reality - human and the recurring natural perils. Coming back to this topic then, let's make it a personal year for ourselves! Let's say 'Hi' to our two friends 'Doing' and 'Being.' Perhaps we are closer to Miss Doing and pass over Miss Being. Shall we begin befriending ourselves even as we live amidst difficult and trying times of world economy crisis and threats of every kind?

It's a common experience that as we grow older our goals or desires change as per needs. There is none of that yearning or craving to be in the centre of anything, could be action, people, event or attention. It's equally true that there comes a desirable change within the self in the area

of valuing and caring. Whatever one touches, there is a need to elevate, a gentleness born of care as if participating in a co-creative piece of art. Seemingly, the performing and becoming go hand in hand; put it to slowing down as we get older! Time stepping in signals and guides us into the path of consciousness.

How do I befriend my past unhappy experiences? Sean Buranahiran tells us that when a bowl is broken in Japan it is put back together with the cracks being filled with gold, thus creating a beautiful lining. This is to emphasize the beauty in something that was once broken. It goes with the belief that when something has suffered damage and has a story, it is made more beautiful. He says that the same goes for human beings; every tragedy and trial one goes through doesn't make one's life uglier; although it is experienced as such at that time. So let's befriend past hurts and paint them one by one with golden touches making them beautiful. No one is broken beyond repair and one can pick up, learn, and become the wiser and better for it. When others feel inspired by you the pain was truly worth it.

Actor Leonardo DiCaprio says: "Every next level of your life will demand a different you." Painting the scars with gold would necessarily mean getting in touch with them, holding them and letting compassion flow all over from the head to the toes. This turning inwards with compassion and caring, in one sweeping moment is a constructive action of the mind as opposed to moving outward and striking when hurt. Often in life it happens that we strike back; a snake strikes back on being hurt or frightened. It isn't very pleasant yet it's instinctive when we are young and on the go. 2021 will befriend us as we have become less hurried and our resolve will be a lot easier to practice. Perhaps we may not have had tragic experiences or maybe we have overcome them. However, we could still look at ourselves as of now, and see our picture as revealed to us. Besides other criterion, an honest introspection and caring of self will include, that I,

- Grow in self-awareness: am conscious of what is happening inside me
- give myself the right touch: neither too soft nor harsh / following the golden middle,
- create myself anew: expand my thinking / have a recreational hobby
- converse lively, diverse, universal / enthusiastic about life, keep moving
- am living in a big varied world, connected outside my own sphere of involvement

"Know thyself and then you will know the universe and God," says Pythagoras. The process of befriendng brings greater self-awareness. Young boys join the Buddhist monks from the age of seven in Tibet, Myanmar, and Thailand for whatever reason. Their training years help them to bear the fruit of self-awareness. The highly 'self-aware' individual evaluates objectively, handles emotions, and matches behavior with values. The new inner joy, freedom and composure help to approach others with the same sensitivity and sense of care. It loses passion to boss over, to prove superiority and will overlook/condone flaws. Deciding to walk the path of empathy, it seeks peace yet not with the desire to compromise on issues rather because that's important now. Condonng no evil it believes actions are done through ignorance; it prizes being non-judgmental; it isn't interested in making comparisons, is a better listener, knows no loneliness or accepts it amicably, and considers solitude a boon. Remember the parable of the

lost coin and the lost sheep! Joy and peace comes in finding and befriending. Taking time off away from the usual hustle and bustle is a sure way to befriend.

Decades ago a student shared that whilst she was in a ‘thoughtless’ meditation she would see the third eye. Having given it a try you come to feel that it is a help. One becomes aware of the body sensations; the soft and sharp touches and feelings, caused by our thought processes; these soft and harsh touches correspond to the good and unpleasant thoughts. Consciousness of these touches brings changes. Undeniably, human weakness follows all through life as we cannot escape our ego. In actuality the ego does get subdued and can no longer hold out in the end. The gain of thoughtless meditation is a fruit to be experienced leisurely.

Jesus tells us the Kingdom of God is within you. We know that the grain of wheat is not something outside of us but inside which bears fruit. Encountering our insides makes miracles happen. Our responses change. Jesus went through the most gruesome and frightening passion. Abba’s will? Sure, yet He was human too! Pain is what any normal person shies away from, shuns. Jesus was hurt most painfully in those passion hours. I want to believe that as He felt outwardly abandoned by God and rejected by the whole crowd, He turned inwards with compassion only to find God and Goodness. His compassion overflowed, embracing and forgiving everyone in one sweetest moment of pure love.

Someone said there is a sweet fragrance inside each one just that we need to get nearer to be able to sniff of its sweetness. Befriending self would do the trick of getting a whiff of that perfume. It would make the saying Charity begins at home come true! And since our trip on earth is too short we couldn’t but do it sooner. As we celebrate our Lord’s birth and the birth of 2021 let us take on newness too. This would be accepting the challenge of Bob Dylan who has sung “He who is not busy being born is busy dying.” Only then can we convincingly say that the end is as exciting as any other part of our journey.

Sr. Molly Rego, SSpS

Helena Seva Sadan, Pamboor

CHRISTMAS IS ALWAYS SPECIAL!

Christmas celebration back at home was a great family reunion - with my uncles, aunts, cousins and of course all my siblings.

Before the great day, we had much to do – house cleaning, crib making, decorations and last but not the least – preparing sweets and snacks. Looking back, I realized there was more excitement and fun in the days of the preparations than the actual day of Christmas. The thought of Christmas and joyful working together brought a nice kindred feeling.



On Christmas Eve we went for the vigil Mass. My parents and youngest sibling used to go for the morning mass while the rest of us along with neighbors and friends preferred to enjoy the Christmas spirit which was high, at night. Every year before mass, the Youth of the parish used to perform a skit on the Christmas theme. All youngsters enjoyed listening to the music and to the songs. When we walked home after Mass, we would sing Christmas songs all along the way. It was such a joyful time.

The day after Christmas, was a family day. The family members sat together while our parents related interesting and funny anecdotes. I treasured those moments together as a family. Afterwards we chatted with friends, relatives and neighbors. Later we visited families and exchanged news, shared happiness and distributed sweets and snacks. Some of us remained at home to receive visitors. In the evening all youngsters went around the village taking sweets. We visited homes of Hindus and Christians and spent time with them. At night all of us enjoyed the specially prepared delicious meal by our mother. On the 27th we joined the carol singers. We sang and danced in front of homes. In the evening the group members would open their snacks and eat what was brought.

My first Christmas celebration in the convent was in Convent of the Holy Spirit Bangalore. Here I experienced a new and special joy in having a Christmas friend and praying for her. I looked forward to the Christmas novena. It has a beautiful melody. On Christmas day there is shared responsibility by the liturgy, catering and the entertaining groups. On Christmas day we go to church, listen carefully to the Readings and are attentive at Mass. Here I became aware that Jesus who is God takes the form of a human being and comes to our earth. With such an experience I return home happily with baby Jesus in my heart. The day passes chatting and talking with everyone and sharing our joy with all. The best part is in the evening when the secret is out and we know our Christmas friends and exchange gifts with them. There is fun and laughter. After supper we sing carols in different languages for half an hour. We end our carols with a meaningful prayer and the Marian anthem.



Today, Christmas, Jesus' birth, means much more than I used to understand at home. Yet joy is always present, both at home and here today. Looking back to the Christmas times spent so far, Christmas is always special, wherever I celebrated it. The actual reason for this celebration is Jesus; and Jesus is the same now and forever!

Emelda Kiro (Student)
Helena Seva Sadan, Pamboor

A Spark of Hope!



On that very special starry night when whole world drifted off into deep slumber, a spark of hope appeared in the universe which filled the lives of people with the Good News of a Babe's birth. His arrival opened the doors for newness, embracing all the living. Simple, peaceful, filled with love and humility, He knocked at the door of humanity. Yes, God entered our world with emptiness to enrich us with unconditional joy which the world could never give.

He came to brighten lives of the rich and the poor with His love. On bended knees we cherish the memory of His Presence. We are grateful that we have learned to allow him to live within us. May He fill our heart with inner peace and profoundly influence the quality of our lives and those around us!

Sr. Adrin, SSpS

Holy Spirit Convent, Kuchipudi

MERCY- LOVE IN ACTION

Christmas 2004! Before the life-giving high tide of Christmas came down, there arose massive life-taking waves in the form of Tsunami. Years have passed, lives have changed, and memories have failed to teach after the visit of those killer waves. The situations remain the same for thousands, as today's killer waves visit those lives in different forms. The echo of similar painful stories is heard in every nook and corner, and at times I wonder whether I welcome the birth or the death?

The selfie society focuses on oneself. The culture of comfort and conveniences deadens us; we are thrilled to get offers for our new purchases and have forgotten how to weep, how to suffer with others, and how to experience mercy. Baby Jesus in the manger is a babe of deep feelings and sensitivity. His merciful heart enters the chaos of another. MERCY in other words, is love in action. Throughout the Bible, we are told how the Lord is compassionate, gracious; slow to anger and full of mercy. However, when it comes to being merciful like the Father, it's tough enough. Yet the image of the helpless little Babe in the manger would help in recalling how merciful God has been to us through the Word made flesh.

Indeed mercy brings happiness. Doing acts of mercy takes us out of ourselves and away from our own problems. Remember the story of the Good Samaritan? Taking the wounded traveller to the local inn and paying his bill was a simple act. That is mercy - love in action.

One day in Calcutta, St. Theresa of Kolkata took a woman off the street. The woman's body was a mess of open sores, infected with bugs. Our saint cleaned and dressed her sores while the

woman never stopped shrieking and even using offensive words and insults. The Saint Mother only smiled at her. Finally the woman asked the mother why she was doing that. Not everyone was like her. Kissing the woman on her forehead St. Theresa of Kolkata said, "My God taught me, you know my God? My God is called love and mercy."

Christmas celebration illustrates God's Mercy. It's a clear sign that God never gets tired of human beings. His love in action brought Baby Jesus to us. Today this Babe's merciful heart suffers along with the entire humanity. The distracted minds of the youth, disturbed souls in the families and the superficial world around us need our merciful acts - love in action. Am I sensitive enough to recognize Him in them?

Rabindranath Tagore, Indian poet and mystic, reminds us where our God is:

*"Open your eyes and see your God is not before you
He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground
And where the path maker is breaking stones
He is with them in sun and in shower
And his garment is covered with dust.
Put off the holy mantle and even like him
Come down on the dusty soil".*

Sr. Nirmala Mendonca, SSpS
Maria Sadan Convent, Periyapatna

Health and Wellness - 2

At a causal talk on Health and Disease I was confronted with one comment that chronic diseases like thyroid dysfunction, Diabetes, cancer etc are more among the women religious than among the male religious. I have no statistical evidence to this comment but maybe I need to think seriously about this remark. There may be some truth and it may be good to give it a thought.

What takes us to chronic diseases? Definitely it is not any pathogen from outside, but what is happening to our internal environment, and there may be a derangement in our **vital force**.

Dr. Hahnemann in his Organon of **homeopathic** medicine describes vital force: "as a **dynamic, immaterial, spirit-like force** that embodies the essence of life and all of its metabolic and functional activities. The **Vital Force** is a very important organizing force of life that directs your evolution towards reaching your full potential." In physiological terms it is termed as Homeostasis, a constant maintenance of balance, harmony within the internal and external environment (inside & outside the cells) where the cells of our



body can function to the optimum level. According to Dr. Hahnemann, all chronic diseases are the result of a derangement of the Vital Force. Let us see what deranges our vital force, what gets us to Dis-ease.

The Science of Neurolinguistic study shows what exactly occurs in the human brain when we speak, listen, perceive complex stimuli and in general engage in complex mental activity; in brief, how our thoughts affect our body. In the last edition of Vani we communicated about 7 realms: Body, lifestyle, emotions, society, spirit, behavior and environment and how it affects our health and wellness.

Let us talk to ourselves: is there a disharmony within us? Do we have enough inner freedom and harmony to take us to a healthier life and to a sense of wellbeing?

The key to wellness, happiness is:

- **Gratitude:** Expressing gratitude to GOD, for the things, events, people and all the good things in our lives, developing an attitude of gratitude. At the end of the day make a list of everything that we are grateful for.
- **Kindness:** Increasing our acts of kindness;
- **Forgiveness:** Extending forgiveness to oneself and others, no matter how hard;
- **Social connection:** Making social connections with others, acquaintances, alongside scheduling time for the people in your life.
- **Exercise:** Increasing your physical exercise to at least 30 minutes daily.
- **Sleep :** Making sure you sleep at least 7 hours at night
- **Signature – Strength:** Using your top character strength in new ways.
- **Savoring:** Taking time to savor the things you enjoy.

Christmas is around the corner with the message of peace, harmony, integrity, patience and forgiveness. May the Peace of Jesus Christ reign in our hearts!

Dr. Sr. Mercy Kuriakose, SSpS
Maria Sadan Convent, Periyapatna

“Peace on earth will come to stay, When we live Christmas every day.”

– Helen Steiner Rice

“Stretch Forth Your Hand to the Poor”

The Holy Father, Pope Francis chose the above mentioned theme for the 4th World Day of the Poor, celebrated on November 15, 2020. The theme is an age-old wisdom taken from the Book of Sirach 7:32. Inspired by the Pope's message we, PUC students in Pernal reflected how best we could stretch our hands that were bound by the pandemic situation, lockdown reality and our incapacity even to make regular family visits in our parish. In a flash we remembered our last Christmas visit to a senior citizen in our neighborhood, who was 69 years with an appearance of near eighties.

His was a very pathetic reality!

- Though blessed with material wealth, the fruit of his 30 and odd years' labor in India and abroad, he was experiencing an inner poverty now.
- He is married, with wife and 4 settled children, yet lives alone and friendless.

He recalls happy times when

- he helped people with jobs abroad, and also to settle in life; today, there is nobody around to help him out of his helplessness.
- he built a beautiful, comfortable house; feels distressed now that he cannot maintain it.
- he was energetic, working hard and reaching out to others; today he is unable to care even for his personal needs out of sheer weakness.
- he used to be courageous ready to face anything; he has become fearful and will not let anyone enter his house to put it in order, fearing threat to his life.

On various occasions Sisters Pauline and Thelma visited him; gained his confidence and identified this person to whom we would reach out to foster care and support. Gradually, his trust and confidence came through and he opened his house to us.

Sisters and students joined hands for this venture. We were rather taken aback on seeing the rooms. The air was polluted as there was no flow of fresh air, cobwebs, dust, soiled clothes and things lay all around. The kitchen floor was wet and the refrigerator contained stuff which had seen too many days. Feeling a little disturbed in our hearts seeing the pitiable condition, we had the same question in mind: where should we begin? After whispering a prayer, we plunged into the work entering different rooms: living room, bedrooms, drawing room, storeroom, kitchen and the storage area. Advised by our sisters we were aware of the need to respect his sentiments.



Sr. Pauline always checked with him to determine if he was at ease with what we were doing. When he observed that we were doing it joyfully with respect for his person, he began to relax and smile. He began to shower appreciation in Hindi saying we were wonderful, hardworking, cheerful girls. He regretted that he had nothing to offer us. After three hours of work, we took a break for lunch, rest and resumed the cleaning after an early tea. It was a stretching forth of 13 pairs of hands for nearly 6 hours.

He was extremely grateful. He exclaimed “today, I can sleep in a clean house”. At the same time we understood that he longed for a visit from his family. In appreciation, he wanted to repay us. We told him that we did it happily as part of our mission. The next day the sisters helped him to activate his washing machine, sell old newspapers and other recycling items. The following Sunday, he surprised the community with ice-cream. We were delighted that we brought him much joy.

Coincidentally, as we gathered for our faith sharing the Gospel theme was: ***whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers...*** As a consequence of this incident we had deeper awareness of the plight of many a senior citizen. Some insights we gained:

- Material possessions cannot satisfy the longing for a relationship.
- Having Catholics around us mean everything when the Good Samaritan's heart is present.
- God calls us to reach out to others.
- A lot of good is accomplished by stretching our hands.
- Although the beginning may be difficult, the end brings joy and satisfaction.
- It brought awareness and concern about the future of our parents.

Christmas is all about preparing our hearts and homes for the birth of Christ, inviting us to go beyond and become neighbors to others, overcoming our prejudices, personal interests and cultural barriers.

Students - Femina, Jyotsna & Geetanjali
Kripalaya Convent, Pernal

"Christmas gives us an opportunity to pause and reflect
on the important things around us."

- David Cameron

Pragati... A platform for Growth

You may wonder what Pragathi is all about. It is a Whatsapp group of 12 junior sisters in the South Province. My experience of Pragati is wonderful and life giving especially during this pandemic times. Since past six months we have been reading and reflecting on St. Matthew's Gospel. Sr. Pauline our guide has been journeying with us through her prayers, reflections, reviews and phone calls. That was a moment of sharing my joys and experiences.

Reading and Reflections

As the spread of Covid-19 continued we were invited to do contemplative reading of the chapters followed by assignments. At present we have completed 13 chapters. In preparation for the chapters Sr. Pauline would send few reflections and guidelines too. I would wait eagerly to receive the reflections. This has helped me to reflect, accept the current situations and trust in the Lord.

Assignments....

I share with you the first assignment which is fresh in my memory from where I drew insight and strength. JESUS is born and he is called EMMANUEL- God with us. In these pandemic times I have grown in the awareness of God – Emmanuel with me.

It's true, in life we face many difficulties and joys which make our hearts strong inspiring us to hold on the journey of life with a positive attitude. In the midst of uncertainty and helplessness the Emmanuel with me, helps me to gaze at him in Hope and find means and ways to discover the star among my community members, people around me and mission reality. It has also drawn my attention towards the migrants and daily wage earners who struggle to make both ends meet. Reflecting on them, I am challenged to pay less attention to my difficulties.

Mae Futter Stein in her poem, "God loves me" writes, "if you have troubles anywhere, God wants to hear from you in prayer. Just ask of him what you must do, for He is love and God loves you". Experiencing the present times God calls me to join hands in prayer for the suffering humanity and listen to the voice of the Father, calling me beloved especially when I am entangled with negativity.

Review and Introspection

At the end of chapter - 4 we were invited to introspect on temptations in our life. As Jesus was tempted, he overcomes with the help of the Word of God. Here I was able to look at myself, how I fall into temptations and also found ways to overcome them. I conclude with a quote from Proverbs 4: 20-22: "My child, listen carefully to my words, do not let them out of your sight, and keep them deep in your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to all humanity."

Sr. Sangeeta Toppo, SSps
Holy Spirit Convent, Pilathara

REACHING OUT IN NEED

“Reaching out is the beginning of a journey.” The COVID-19 has brought in lots of changes in the lives of people, during which many of our domestic workers lost their jobs and were left with nothing; they struggled to maintain their families; their cry was loud, asking for help. Feeling helpless we continued to pray and were able to give them a little hope just by availing ourselves and listening to them. Pavitratma Social Service Centre was instrumental in reaching out to them.



In collaboration with the Montfort Social Institute, Hyderabad, we started a 6-month livelihood program (income generation). In the first phase 15 domestic workers received the loan; in the second phase 10 women received loan from Patancheru and Ramachandrapuram. They were given Rs.3,500/- and had to pay back Rs.1,500/-. We were able to select 25 most needy women who could make use of the loan and sustain their families. The domestic workers have already started their small business of selling soda water, tailoring, putting up small shops and are happy for the help they have received. I thank Montfort Social Institute and other donors for their generosity and kindness to the needy.

“Kindness is love in action, not just feeling emotions or thoughts of empathy. Kindness is doing.”

Sr. Rashmi Prathibha, SSps

Pavitratma Sadan, Patancheru

MOTHER'S MEAL



'Mother's Meal' is a food support program, a project in memory of Bright Kannanthanam introduced by Claretian Fathers, Bangalore.

The idea behind this project is to feed the hungry. Just like a mother who would feed her children by doing everything that is possible, we too assume the role of a mother to feed the hungry world. It is said, “By the end of 2020 about 12,000 people per day could die from hunger linked to Covid-19, potentially more than the disease itself.

On 28th July 2020 this program was launched in Gulbarga. We had the joy of feeding the families of ten domestic workers, for a period of 6 months. Zoom meetings were organized to distribute food kits for the most deserving 10 families. Bishop Michael Miranda, Parish priest and Asst. parish priest were present for the program. Today, Mother's Meal program is launched all over India, feeding more than 3000 families.

Sr. Antony Mary, SSps

Deepalaya, Kalaburgi

GOD'S WAYS ARE MYSTERIOUS!



Today the world is desperately seeking answers for the global pandemic so called covid-19. There are number of inhibitions and questions that arise in the minds of the people. Does God really exist? If God exists then why does he allow this pandemic to happen?.

We can still be confident in God's direction. We see people encourage one another to put away the cacophony of voices that rile dissension amidst this pandemic and think of lending a helping hand to those affected by corona virus. The world is changing before our eyes. God is working in a paramount way to draw us near to him. He endows people the assurance of hope that there is a better world tomorrow. He is working in us to strengthen our hope that we remain strong in every circumstance, and a sure hope that to be in union with him at the end.

God has been working tirelessly in restoring people's life from the critical state. It is a time where people have understood the value of life, a time of family reunion, a time of extending support and developing a sense of understanding to one another. God is working in the form of doctors, nurses and with the scientists to find out the vaccine in order to combat the sickness. He is working in a mysterious way that can't be explained because He is beyond the human comprehension. I conclude with the words of St. Anselm, "I believe in order to understand ". Therefore let's believe that God is working in each and every moment of our life.

Sr. Premshila Kerketta SSps

Kripalaya Convent, Pernal

Lockdown - A Time of Search ...

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone has found.” (Mt 13: 44)

The day the lockdown was declared, we sisters of Pilathara community moved to the field, to find treasure in our land. The time of lockdown was a golden opportunity to search and utilize our strength and energy creatively, to plant and nurture Mother Earth. It was a rewarding experience participating in the clearing of the whole campus, tilling the ground for vegetables, and planting tapioca, turmeric, ginger, beans, ladies finger, Chinese potato etc.

A land that once seemed barren now produced fruit. This led us to reflect, on how we think and act. The initiative, time, hard work and effort we put in as a team without great expectations produced fresh vegetables for our needs and our neighbors' as well. Our joy overflowed finding such a treasure in our land.

The Gospel(Mt. 13:44) makes it clear that we need to search and work hard in order to find fruitfulness within the self, the community, the society and in Creation. Jesus constantly challenged people to search, and see in order to understand a new.

Let us keep searching without losing hope. May we move beyond the walls of comfort and work hard to enjoy the fruits of peace, and share with others too!

Sr. Sangeeta, SSpS

Holy Spirit Convent, Pilathara

WHEN GRATEFUL HEART SPEAKS...



Although I find it difficult to believe that I made my First Vows fifty years ago, I cannot help but accept it as a fact. These many years have passed as in a dream.

From each step of life, I have learnt a lot. Some of these learnings came through pleasant experiences like meeting new people from all different continents and coming to feel very close to them. At times, they came through difficult experiences of life. From all these, I have come to realize that every situation can become a learning experience – as long as we are open to it.

The teaching profession has helped me to appreciate each and every student – though, at times, not very responsive or pleasant to handle. Formation ministry has taught me that every person is precious and holds immense capacities. Some of the important lessons I have learnt from life are the following.

1. God is the only Absolute; all else is relative.
2. No experience is a waste or a loss – if I learn to look at it on a deeper level.
3. When someone acts in a particular way (which may not seem appropriate to me), it is because, according to their thinking, that is the best option in the context.
4. Never go by first impressions – especially when they are negative.
5. People who hurt others have been hurt themselves.

These and many more.

The uppermost sentiment that rises in my heart at this moment is gratitude: first of all to God who has walked with me all these years and worked wonders in my life. My own family of origin has been very loving and supportive in all my endeavors. I am truly grateful to the SSps family which has nurtured and nourished me all these 50 years and six more years before that. I count myself graced by God to have been a part of this world-wide family. Today I realize that my superiors and formators were the wise women led by the Spirit, although, at times, it didn't seem that way to me, at that time. I have been blessed with so many wonderful and life-giving friends within and outside the Congregation – in India as well as in other parts of the world – who have been a great support along the way. I thank each and every one of you whom I had a chance to meet and work with, somewhere along the way. I can truly say that God's hand has been guiding me all through these years in such a marvelous way!



**Golden
Jubilee**

Sr. Sheela Joseph, SSps,

Convent of the Holy Spirit, Bangalore

"God never gives someone a gift they are not capable of receiving. If He gives us the gift of Christmas, it is because we all have the ability to understand and receive it."

- Pope Francis

Celebrating the Silver Years - Sr. Suchita Jojo, SSpS

Sr. SuchitaJojo, SSpS was born on 14th June 1973 in Rourkela, Orissa, to a devout couple, Mr. Daniel and Mrs. Bernadette (Anita) Jojo. She made her first vows in the year 1995. As she celebrates the journey of 25 years of her religious life, we appreciate and cherish her loving service and dedicated commitment. (On this special occasion Vani had the privilege of interviewing Sr. Suchita Jojo and here is an account of her inspiring life)



- Vani : Sister, tell us about your siblings. Narrate an interesting story of your schooling with them.
- Sr. Suchita : I have five younger brothers. My brothers and I went to school by rickshaw daily. We used to reach early so we would run to help our sisters, priests and teachers who taught us. Greeting them and talking to them gave us joy. Back at home, we sat together in one room for our studies in the evenings and had a competition of reading aloud. Whenever there was power cut, all of us including my parents sat together in the candle light and shared about our future dreams. My parents used to motivate us with their life experiences. I enjoyed and learnt many things about life from them and from brothers in my childhood. It continues as and when I am home for holidays or even over the phone.
- Vani : What is your favorite subject? Was there anyone whom you looked up to as a teenager?
- Sr. Suchita : My favorite subject is English. In school I was inspired by the prayerful, disciplined life and loving heart of my Headmistress Sr. Bibianna Majhi and my English Teacher Sr. Anastasia Sanga.
- Vani : Narrate to us your Vocation story. What is the happiest thing that you cherish from your initial formative years?
- Sr. Suchita : I had a great desire to be a religious from childhood. I studied in the school run by Daughters of the Cross congregation and I liked them. The loving service of Mother Teresa also motivated me. I often told my parents about my desire to become a sister. When I completed SSC, my parents asked me whether I wanted to continue my college studies or join a congregation. I took time to think and finally expressed my desire to join a congregation. My parents are very fond of priests and religious and knew about different congregations, so they guided me to join our congregation.

Sr. Carmel Rose SSpS, Late Sisters Julia Guria, SSpS and Gloria Dung Dung, SSpS visited my family before I joined our congregation. I was so much

inspired by their simplicity and loving approach. I joined the community in Gomardih before proceeding to Bangalore for candidacy. It was a joy to meeting many of our sisters in Gomardih as well as in C.H.S, Bangalore. Sr. Agnes SSpS and the Late Sr. Genevieve, SSpS were my candidate directresses who guided me in formation. I got adjusted with my companions in the group and to our way of life. The year passed very quickly and it was time for us to enter the next stage of formation. Each of us met our directresses and was told about our next stage of life. When my turn came, the directresses expressed their opinion that I remain at home and complete my studies. It made me think that I wasn't eligible for religious life. Yet it didn't dishearten me.

My parents had great understanding towards me. They always encouraged me. I was happy to continue my studies from home and wished either to work in an office like my father or take up teaching like my mother. There were other funny desires too with regard to choosing a career. It never struck me that I could rejoin our congregation after completing my studies. A letter from Late Sr. Julia Guria to my parents explained clearly the decision of our congregation about me which kindled a ray of hope in me and encouraged me to visit our sisters during my holidays. Thus I nurtured my belongingness to our congregation. This little incident cheered me and my family and became a pathway to where I am today in my religious life.

Vani : What accomplishments are you proud of?

Sr. Suchita : I believe that accomplishments don't necessarily need to entail productivity, promotion, profits etc. Sometimes the most fulfilling things we do in this world bring little recognition, yield no monetary results and come without fanfare. And yet, they still can mean so much and feel so completely satisfying. In a fast-paced, competitive world, where it's easy to feel we're never doing enough, it's gratifying to recognize just how much we do to honor the people and things that matter to us.

With this in mind, I share something about me that I may sometimes overlook. I am proud of being able to respond calmly to tough situation, to keep a small issue from escalating into something much bigger, in offering a random act of kindness to someone without being noticed and without expecting anything in return; above all, being grateful to God, family, congregation, friends, relatives etc.

Vani : What are the main lessons you have learnt in life? Narrate some experiences.

Sr. Suchita : Always trust in the providence of God and be grateful for everything. Life is precious. None of us can cause our lives to begin, nor can we choose that our lives be prolonged. We are awed by life's beginning and the mystery of its end. It is within our very nature to nurture life, to protect it and to respect it. Life is a gift we all receive and travel for a certain span of years. Let us be respectful of

each life and protective of each person. This was a lesson I learnt after my road accident in 2010, the enduring physical and mental pain, experiencing love and care from sisters, my family, relatives, friends and neighbors told me much about the preciousness of life. I am really grateful to God for the gift of life and for each and every person in my life.

Vani : What do you admire most in the SSpS family?

Sr. Suchita : Our internationality and interculturality.

Vani : What is your definition of happiness? Give your suggestions for living a cheerful religious life.

Sr. Suchita : Happiness is enjoying the little things in life. To be contented with the little we have because there are some people with nothing who still manage to smile.

“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” - Colossians 3:17.

Interviewed By: Vasantha Pratipati, SSpS, Vijayawada

ATTENTION PLEASE...

The next VANI will be published in August 2021. Please forward your Articles, Poems, News, Views, Reflections and Experiences to vaninewslettersouth@gmail.com.

For further information you may contact the Vani Team

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RECALLING THE SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATION.....

“To you, LORD, be the Honor and Glory forever and ever Amen.”



25 years of God's faithfulness

25 years of commitment

25 years of attraction

25 years of sacrifice

25 years of challenge

25 years of faithfulness to the one who called me.

Every celebration is an experience, a joy-filled and festive experience. And when it's a surprise celebration of your milestone it can make you feel pretty important! December 21, 2019 was such a day in my life; it has been an unforgettable experience to be cherished for the rest of my life - the celebration of a milestone - 25 years of my religious life! The external is gradually fading away, but the internal yearning lives on and echoes in the depth of my heart.

As I recall my jubilee celebration in the school, the feeling that surfaced was I am the luckiest and the happiest person. Honestly, before the jubilee thought occurred to me, it had secretly entered the door steps of our school. I was totally unaware that a beautiful celebration was being meticulously planned, secretly!

The highlight of the day was the presence of my dear family members, my sister-in-law and nieces. They were contacted and invited without my knowledge, and all arrangements were made to bring them to Bangalore. One of our staff members, Ms. Molly Pais, warmly housed them at her home and made them very comfortable! Later they were escorted for the celebration.

The gifts presented were in the form of an exciting Treasure hunt. I was made to run from pillar to post in search of the treasure, supported by interesting clues! It all culminated with the biggest treasure, hidden away safely in the Computer Lab – my Family members in person! As the door to the Computer Lab opened, the principal in me took the back seat and like a little girl who has seen an ice cream, I jumped with ecstasy and embraced the persons closest to my heart! I still get goose bumps recalling those moments! It was the best thing to have happened to me. My heart is full of gratitude to everyone involved in this planning. Who knew that a life given in service would have such beautiful surprises along the way! I will always treasure this day.

To me this celebration was one of its rarest kinds! Words of gratitude aren't adequate to express my feelings. It was indeed very special - that I am cared for and loved. This is enough to remember and to cherish for a life time. Someone said, “Life's journey is always easier when you hear a friend's footsteps beside you.” You are all truly a blessing from God to me! God Bless You All!

Sr. Shila M.J., SSpS
CHS, Bangalore

Celebrating the JOURNEY!!

My heart overwhelms with joy and gratitude to God who called me 25 years back to be a religious sister in the congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Spirit. (SSPS). It is worth and deserving to glance at each step and moment of my religious commitment that I have made to God which is ongoing. However, it is an appropriate time for me personally evaluate, refresh and carry on the goodness of the one who called me to share with others with opened mind and renewed spirit.



I am ever grateful to the Almighty God for choosing me as religious sister. He has been leading me with His unconditional love. At this moment of my life I am reminded by the verse from the Gospel of Matthew (28:20), "I will be with you always till the end time". This verse is true in my life; He has never abandoned me in good and bad times, ups and downs. He has been faithful to me. I feel convinced very much that my religious life-journey began when I was a candidate to be formed as a religious sister.

I remember an incident that took place in my initial stage of formation. We were having English classes; the mistress wished very much that we all learn English well. She used to give vocabularies for us to look in the dictionary their meanings and usages in the language. Surprisingly, even I did not know how to look for meaning of the words in the dictionary! Whereas, my other companions outsmarted me in finding meanings. A few times, it happened and one day I busted in tears!!! All wondered, what has happened to me? With feeble voice and embarrassment I said "I did not know how to look for meaning of words in the dictionary". Just because I never referred an English dictionary, since my initial studies were in regional language. Yes, like these and very many similar things, I didn't know how to go about. I was encouraged by the call of prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah.

"I have called you by name, you are mine"(Is 43:1). God wants the weak and humble to partake in His mission.

God has chosen me for His mission and I am favoured of my Beloved Master in spite of my emptiness. He has formed me and continues to form me. He is my Formator, Companion, Co-sister, faithful Friend, who has been moulding me with new challenges and experiences.

Not to forget, I am grateful to all my dear sisters and friends for their love, help and assistance to me for what I am today.

I cherish my experiences as a junior sister in Orissa, Pallahara Community. Over there, I had the opportunity to go to villages at least once in a month and stay with them, have prayers with them up to Sunday. I remember, people gave the best to make us comfortable with little they had. I realized as religious young sister, that God gives always the best to His chosen ones in any situation.

I also had many opportunities to listen our sisters coming from overseas missions. A spark of desire popped up within me to go to the Overseas missions. However, I also felt that, going outside mission is not for me, just because I was not specially talented. But for my surprise, I received my first mission appointment and I remember like other my companions, shedding tears. Days have passed, years are rolled on, I feel happy and find satisfaction in my ministry in India, Togo and Ghana as a formator and nurse in the clinic, and through these ministries I have experienced God's living presence. He has showered special favours on me.

These Twenty Five years as religious, had not been always easy, but God has been there to lift me up. He has brought me to celebrate 25 years and recommit as religious. He made me to do very simple and little things in His vineyard.

I have received more from God than me giving to Him as SSPS sister.

Today, I boldly say that I am very happy as religious as an SSPS. I know that, God who has called me is the one to continue to be with me in my life as religious. I ask and pray to bless you all for being part of me in my 25 years religious journey. I pray for you all and pray for me as well as I continue my journey, I seek God's grace, blessings and strength to remain faithful to the one who is always faithful.

Sr. Vasanthi Arokiadass SSPS

Kripalaya Convent, Pernal

COUNTING THE BLESSINGS!!

ATMADHARA - THE FLOW OF THE SPIRIT

Atmadhara Convent celebrates 25 years of its existence in Pune. It is with Joy we remember its journey of shaping personalities, educating hearts and broadening visions for tomorrow.





The Beginning...

It was in 1991, we, Missionary Sisters, Servants of Holy Spirit started working in Streevani - an organization begun by Fr. E. Zeitler, SVD and Dr. Frances Yasas, a former official from the US. The sisters stayed in Ishvani Kendra, an institute run by the SVDs and initiated the process of conscientization, in particular, for the women religious who were one of the least empowered groups in the Indian Church. A year later the province decided to build a convent-cum-hostel for SSps and Sisters from other Congregations, respectively. The proposal of a

hostel for women was indeed a step further in our commitment towards Women's promotion & financial self-reliance.

Hence, Atmadhara "Flow of the Spirit" was blessed and inaugurated on 20th April 1995, by Bishop Valerian, the then Bishop of Pune, with a vision that adequate and systematic theological training was needed for religious sisters especially for juniors in formation.

ATMADHARA - A House of Formation

Thereafter at JDV's request, Atmadhara accommodated the religious sisters from various congregations for 22 years and played an important role in their religious formation. Student-sisters belonging to different congregations, culture, traditions and languages lived together sharing and exchanging their richness and uniqueness. In the year 2017, JDV withdrew its contract with Atmadhara hostel as it established a women's hostel in the college premises. Taking the opportunity in 2018, Atmadhara opened its portals to young women students of Christ College, Pune, with a view to build their confidence, provide skills, and above all make them potential contributors of peace in the world. Today Atmadhara serves the vibrant youth from all over India and abroad who live and learn together.



STREEVANI

Through Streevani, a registered Trust under the Bombay Public Trust Act 1950, Vide no. F 19227 and under Society's Registration Act Vide no. MAH/804/2003/Pune, the Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit at Atmadhara reach out to 62 areas of Pune city, empowering the women domestic workers by organizing them into 80 Self-Help Groups, educating them through various training programs, building leadership through workshops and making them financially empowered through self-employment.

To build the aptitude and competence of the women religious, Streevani conducts workshops at national level for women religious.

In 2006, Streevani set up a full-fledged Legal Cell for Women and it still continues its legal intervention for women in the court of law. Thereafter, Streevani initiated work with Women Domestic Workers and is currently involved in the formation of Domestic workers movement in Pune, Maharashtra. As a member of the Forum of Religious for Justice and Peace, Streevani has been actively working for justice and peace down the years.

Going Eco-Friendly.....

What happens a hundred years from now depends on the steps we undertake today! In its action plan Atmadhara has adopted measures like waste management, utilization of solar energy, bio gas plant, rainwater harvesting, planting and preservation of plants & trees, production and practice of using eco-friendly bags to encourage and conscientize the need of caring for the Earth for future generations.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS...EXPERIENCES SHARED

When I think of Atmadhara I feel a sense of gratitude and contentment for having known and lived with many young women, both religious and lay, who had come together seeking knowledge, wisdom, guidance and growth. It is a place where women from all walks of life live together with diversity of cultures, experiences, religious values, age differences and professional studies. It is a place of grace and blessings of the Spirit, who enables the inmates to adjust to the hostel way of life away from their beloved ones and to become persons of values and convictions, as well as God-conscious with a personal and social responsibility and accountability while pursuing their studies.



Sr. Elsy Mathew, SSpS

Anugraha, Mumbai

From the bottom of the Heart.....

The experience is that streams of grace flow from Atmadhara to all who comes under her care. Sharing life with sisters of various congregations, I cherish my call to the intercultural living in the Missionary Congregation. Feeling nostalgia towards Atmadhara, I consider it a home to return to....

Sr. Sheela, SSpS

St Raphael's Convent, Indore



December - 2020

VANI



With the apprehensions of moving to a new city to start an important phase called college years in my life, I came to Atmadhara Convent. But this place has given me the fondest memories I have ever had. The relationships that I developed during my stay at Atmadhara will be something that I will cherish forever. The warden, other sisters and staff have been very caring and helpful and looked out for all of us. Thank you so much Sisters and staff for providing us a safe, clean and happy home away from home.

Dona Chacko, Student
Dubai

I relish my stay at Atmadhara! I was enriched by the hospitality, generous love and care of the sisters at Atmadhara. I never felt that I was an outsider belonging to another congregation, for, the Holy Spirit sisters considered me as their own. I never missed my congregation sisters. "Love one another as I have loved you". This is what I experienced here. Truly we were united in Christ!!



Sr. Dona Maria, SABS
Rajkot

When I walk down the memory lane, Atmadhara leaves me with an image of a comfortable home, surrounded by lush green garden and peaceful surroundings. It is a conducive place for study, reflection and relaxation after a day's work. I have lived in Atmadhara for nearly a decade and half and I am privileged to continue my association with Atmadhara till date. It is a powerhouse of knowledge with students brimming with life, earlier it was religious women and now it is the young and vibrant college students.



Atmadhara has evidenced that sisterhood among sisters belonging to various congregations is possible when student sisters from different congregations stayed together under one roof along with the community forming a family of friends. For me personally a short walk down memory lane reminds me of my beginnings as a legal activist and it helps me appreciate what I am today. I wish that Atmadhara continue to be a home for many students and may they all experience happiness and contentment in their lives.

Sr. Julie George, SSpS
Anugraha, Mumbai

I feel privileged to be a part Atmadhara in this Silver Jubilee year. Truly the institution has empowered many young consecrated and lay women while studying, working and staying in and around Pune. It's totally a different experience to be with the ambitious young women who are at the cross roads of life, having to make a best choice for their future. The calm and quiet nature with which I am engaged does energize me.

Sr. Metilda George, SSps
Atmadhara



Hostel life itself is the best experience anyone can have in life. I stayed in Atmadhara hostel for two years and collected endless number of memories. One funny incident that I recall is the birthday celebration of my friend. We decorated her room. When she entered, we switched on the fan at a low speed and she received a shower of slippers! It was a hilarious moment. Yes of course the cake was not forgotten. She did cut it amidst the wishing and we thoroughly enjoyed it. Our friend was overwhelmed with the whole experience even though we were reprimanded just a little.

It's here, we learnt and grew, spent time with each other when in need. We learnt how to find solutions to problems. We laughed together, cried together, made fun of each other and what not. I made friends for life during my hostel life. My experience was good because I met the best team of people and loving sisters.

Love you Atmadhara and the staff!

Sanyukta Patil, Student,
Nasik, Maharashtra

I am so glad and excited to know that Atmadhara is celebrating its silver jubilee year. Hearty Congratulations! I was in Atmadhara for one year doing my certificate course at JDV. It was an enjoyable and fruitful time being with the community. Truly Atmadhara is the home of wisdom, knowledge, understanding and learning. A Biblical quote comes to my mind: 'A House is built by wisdom and it is established by understanding; by knowledge the rooms are filled with every precious and beautiful treasure'. (Proverbs 24:3-4)

With many Best Wishes for the future!



Sr. Ganga Rawat, SSps
India Central Province



As I look back to my days in Atmadhara (2011-12), I feel it was a homecoming experience for me. It was an intercultural experience being with the SSpS, sisters of other Congregations, as well as the students and the staff. I cherish memories of my stay and the love and care I received from my Sisters. I recall my parents' short visit and acknowledge with deep gratitude the care shown to them during their stay at Atmadhara. They too reminisce the happy times spent there.

Sr. Ancy Job, SSpS,

Holy Spirit Convent, Guwahati

I was in Atmadhara during the years 2016 to 2019. This was the crucial time of the changeover of our ministry from accommodating religious sisters to admitting college students of Christ College. It was a time of reflecting and making decision to continue the Atmadhara ministry without deviating from the purpose for which it was built. It was indeed a courageous leap forward to visualize, plan and make our home available for young and energetic adolescent girls. I feel it was a time of grace and I came to believe that everything is possible by the supremacy and grace of God.



Sr. Merlyn, SSpS

Tala, Maharashtra



The grace of the Spirit flows into the hearts of every member of this home, Atmadhara. A home filled with the grace of the Spirit! The beauty of the home lies within the multi-cultural, multi-regional and multi-linguistic nature which welcomed and sheltered young and older women, giving them space to bloom with their wisdom and knowledge and empowering them to grow.

I still cherish the sweet memories of Atmadhara when I recall 8th of December. It is an occasion to go beyond the boundaries of culture, language and region and to forget the differences of age, profession, position while embracing everyone together with sisterly love and care. Women of Atmadhara joyfully participate in every activity of the day sharing talents, exchanging their smiles, spending their energy for one another. I uphold the memories of Atmadhara and acknowledge the presence and participation of every sister belonging to different congregation with much love and gratitude!

Sr. Reena D'Souza, SSpS

Deepalaya, Gulbarga

It's true, gratitude makes sense of our past. It gives us a sense of fulfillment as we recount the blessings many have received through this HOME. Truly our presence in Pune is a Blessing to thousands. We pray and wish that our presence here continues to bear fruit in abundance empowering the women and the needy. Long Live Atmadhara!

Sr. Cynthia D'Souza, SSpS

Atmadhara

The Golden Jubilee of Convent of the Holy Spirit

The celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the Convent of the Holy Spirit has been a wonderful occasion to recall, with much love and gratitude, our great predecessors who took great care and gave their best, so that we have this wonderful HOME that is CHS. Most of us have been sheltered and nourished especially during the early years of our formation in this place.

In preparation for this celebration, we searched through the history of its development and found ourselves too in the process of its growth. The different items in the evening program we had (of about four hours' duration) depicted the history, the mission and the apostolates of the growing community over the years in its varied colours as well the changes that took place in the field of Formation especially emphasizing the paradigm shift that came as a result of the decisions of the Second Vatican Council as well as of our General Chapter thrust over the years. All of these, interspersed with beautiful, colourful prayerful as well as cultural dances by our young members, were truly entertaining as well as enriching. One thing unique about this program was that it involved everyone in the community – old and young – and each one's unique contribution was acknowledged and celebrated.

We recalled, with gratitude, the different provincial leaders who also contributed to the Province in their own unique ways. The main celebrations hosted here over the past 50 years of its existence – whether they be local, national or international events – were recalled and relished by all of us. The epitome of the celebration was the recalling, with much gratitude, the great SSpS who after having given their best, have gone home to the Father, ahead of us and to whom, we owe an eternal debt of gratitude.

At this celebration of the Golden Jubilee of CHS, some of my very dear friends, who thought that it was my Jubilee also (a truly happy mistake!), had contacted me personally and that too, gave me much joy. I am happy to say that my Jubilee will be celebrated on the 28th of November, the birthday of Mother Maria. My humble request is a small prayer on that day.

Through all these, I come to realize that everyone and everything has been a gift which, God in his great love, has been lavishing upon us and that we too, in turn, are to be gifts for others. I am grateful to all who have, in some way or the other, touched my life and which has helped me to grow into the person I am today. May God reward you all abundantly!

Sr. Sheela Joseph

CHS

CHS: Caring Home of SSpS

Memories roll back to the decade of the Nineties
Visualize them with smiles evoking my thoughts
A Home that embraced me with warmth and happiness
As I stepped in with the budding dream

I smell the soil that nurtured me long
Cherish the laughter with companions
Taste the food that nourished me all along
And recall lessons that empowered me

I gaze at heavy walls that sheltered me in winter
Wonder at the peace experienced in the chapel
And broad homely corridors that comforted
I marvel at the shady trees standing tall and still

Nostalgia arises for those days at the Mother House
A home flowing with many sisters all around
The Family feasts- so precious and memorable
The joy-fun until the aftermath of gifts & prizes

Am grateful for the oversees missionaries
Who formed and trained us to be the visionaries
My heartfelt gratitude for the blessings of the elderly
sisters
Experienced at every stage of our formation years
CHS is a Caring Home of the SSpS
Mother home where each feels at home
Be it young or old Home that welcomes everyone
Embraces the sisters with loving care until they are gone

Today I count the blessings in gratitude
Received through elderly sisters and formators
Blessings in disguise sustained over the years
Enabling to spread the wings and live the dreams!

Sr. Reena D'Souza, SSpS
Deepalaya, Kalaburagi



Recalling the Journey!!



The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step! As we celebrate, the Golden Jubilee of Convent of the Holy Spirit, the entire SSps family of India feels grateful for the origin and gradual development of that which shaped the lives of the sisters who walked in the portals of CHS. Being a MOTHER HOUSE the contribution of the Convent of the Holy Spirit is substantial to the World and the Church at large. We remain ever grateful for task accomplished, the sweat and blood of our ancestors that shaped the vision of the Indian provinces, the zeal and confidence of our sisters that supported the missions.



THE MILESTONES...

The Beginning : Having received permission from the Generalate in Rome Sr. Michael, together with Sisters Hilariona Schlotmann and Walfrida Lissner, left Indore for Bangalore on June 22nd 1967.

Blessing of the Regional House : The solemn Dedication of the Regional and Novitiate House at Bangalore took place on Saturday, 5th June 1971.

Construction of the Grotto : In May 1972, a beautiful grotto was erected near the entrance of Convent of the Holy Spirit and an attractive, life-size statue of Our Lady, donated by Sr. Michael's brother in the United States, was enthroned.

The construction of the Annex wing Care for the Elderly: In 1973 to accommodate the retired and ailing sisters with sufficient comfort and facilities the construction of the Annex wing connecting to the first building began. This new wing provided a homely atmosphere for the senior sisters.

Activities of the Regional House: At Convent of the Holy Spirit, weekly sewing classes were conducted for women and girls. A health center took care of the sick; a crèche was set up on the convent grounds for the children of working mothers. An ambulance made it possible to reach out to a larger area. Older children were given basic literacy classes several boys learnt driving; others were trained to become painters, welders or masons.

Charismatic Renewal: In the 1970s, the Catholic Church in India witnessed a new spiritual revival in the form of Charismatic Renewal. Holy Spirit Sisters were one of the first ones to welcome this movement. In May 1977, two charismatic retreats were held at Convent of the Holy Spirit for 55 sisters from different Congregations.

In 1978, we celebrated the first Golden Jubilee at CHS, of Sr. Frederica, one of the four pioneering Sisters who came to India, and at the same time also the Silver Jubilee of our first Indian Sisters – Srs. Marion and Emilian.



In 1979, the first mission mandate of Indian sisters to be missioned abroad, Ghana, in the persons of Srs. Sheela and Yvonne was announced. This was an indication for us that India had come of age when we could send out missionaries rather than being just receivers.

In 1983, on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the arrival of the pioneers to India, the Indian Region was raised to the status of a Province – with the name 'Spirit of Divine Love Province' and Sr. Aliciann became the first Provincial.





This house continued to be the provincial house for the entire SSpS family in India, until 1995 when the other 2 Regions were raised to the status of province after having been Regions since 1992. This was another important milestone in the history of SSpS in India.

CHS has also been the main formation centre for different stages of formation - candidacy, aspirancy, postulancy, novitiate, juniorate and tertiate.

From 1969 to 2019, 50 batches of novices have had their formation in this house, and made their commitment as SSpS and are missioned in different parts of the world.

Different Ministries in the Campus...

Holy Spirit School, Bangalore (2002): The new Holy Spirit English medium school at CHS, was started on 6th June with 9 children.

Holy Spirit Children's Home 2006: The blessing and inauguration of Holy Spirit Children's Home took place on July 26th 2006. 10 little girls began their schooling in Holy Spirit school.

Holy Spirit Homeopathic clinic - October 02, 2008: The Holy Spirit Homeopathy clinic was established on October 2nd 2008. Dr. Sr. Mercy was appointed for the ministry.

Holy Spirit Association: January 15, 2014 the Holy Spirit association was started on the Feast of St. Arnold Janssen, with 15 members from the surrounding area, marking the 125th anniversary of our Congregation. Today it is vibrant with hundred and more membership.

Ministry to/with the Migrants: November 23rd 2014: the first core committee meeting on 'National consultation on Migration' was conducted in CHS, followed by a workshop organized by VIVAT on 20th March 2015, at ISI, in which our sisters were involved in organizing and actively participated. Ministry with the migrants at CHS is in response to this workshop.

To mark the Golden Jubilee year, we have gathered the experiences of different sisters who walked on the corridors of CHS. I am sure you will re-live your experience of being in CHS as you read the writes ups.



CHS - The Cradle of My Religious Life!

The memory of CHS will always remain alive in me. Thank you for this opportunity to express how deeply I am grateful and appreciate my experiences in CHS. When I entered CHS at the age of 16, it was, for me a **“Tower of Babel”** experience. It was filled with formees of different stages with whom I could hardly converse in English. Many times smile was the only communication and it was great!



It was heartwarming to see sisters working hard the whole day. I am reminded of Sr. Maureena who used to work cheerfully in the garden. For the first time I saw someone so happily working in the garden. What I witnessed has touched me with an unforgettable lesson that, **“Everything you do in the convent is MISSION and all types of work in this Congregation is equal.”**

Our aspirancy was a **Pentecostal Experience**; all of us understood each other in our own way. Our Religious missionary life took shape in the hands of skillful and dedicated formators: Sisters Aliciann, Michael and senior sisters present there. The Holy Eucharist, scripture classes and spiritual direction by Jesuit Fathers were commendable. It was painful that out of 36 candidates just 16 of us stepped into CHS. And six months later 14 entered the Pre-novitiate and 10 of us made our first profession. Our relatives who witnessed our profession were touched by the hospitality of our sisters who attended them with great love. Even today I see that it is the hallmark of CHS.

The **Chapel** in CHS has witnessed our fears and tears. Fear of the training, learning and reaching the day when we would kneel down and profess our vows. Tears rolled down not because it was tough but that we did not follow English fully. I remember fainting during the Holy Mass just trying to understand the prayers.

I enjoyed events like the family feasts (throw ball match with Sisters), games, common recreations and celebrations almost every second month. We received training in cooking, cycling, typing, visiting homes, housekeeping, dancing, playing the instruments, working in the garden and in academic studies, theology, scripture etc. Every now and then sisters from the Indian missions came to CHS for retreats, seminars, and meetings, and once in a while even from abroad. It was an overwhelming joy and a happy time to see so many sisters together. We did not speak much but our feeling of belongingness to this big family was immense.



CHS was **the Oasis** of social action for the surrounding villages. Under the leadership of Sr. Rosmina, we provided medical care in the dispensary. Through social development

programs provisions and job facilities were ensured. The workers were respected and their families cared for.

31st May 1975 was the happiest day, when along with my 9 companions: Srs. Preethi Thomas, Stella Varghese, Agnes Ignatius, Maria, Manju, Lilly, Marita Kurian, Shalini Matthew, late Sr. Gloria, and I professed my first vows. CHS the **River of Life** gave shape and strength for the years to come.

While I did my Nurse's training in Shrirampur (Maharashtra), I longed for holidays. It was really a **homecoming** then as we received love and nourishment in every way. Sr. Bernadisa, Sr. Marion (Junior Dir.) and the CHS sisters gave us special attention whenever we came from the hostel.

After my Formator's training in the USA, I was appointed as the Novice directress. It was like re-living my novitiate. I felt so unworthy yet trusted in God who can make straight lines in my life too. It was the best years lived in my Religious life. I like to call it the golden years of my life in CHS.



CHS let me reside in its cool shades with an even greater responsibility as Provincial leader for 6 years. I took it as my gratitude to the Congregation. All I learned was from the opportunity given to me through PLT in our Congregation. As mentioned above I came as a raw potato but later I saw myself as a well-grown plant providing tasty food for the growth of the Congregation. Times were hard but it was my privilege to take care. The Chapel with the presence of our Lord never failed to strengthen my days. The team members, along with Srs. Bercharia, Mary Celine, Lucyann, Agnes Rose, Theresa Rebello, Ida

Lobo, Pushpa Thekkan, Irene Lasrado, Annie, Julie George, Pulcharia Minj, Shanthi Chandy, Vinny Gonzalves, sisters in the community and in the province were truly great in their cooperation.

CHS is like a **mother** who saw the birth and growth of the Indian provinces and even now a **home** to return to with pleasant memories. May the history be told and retold by all who live and move on. May God hold this holy place with His abundant blessings!

Sr. Alphonse Mary, SSps

India North East Province



DELIGHTFUL MEMORIES OF INDIAN MOTHER HOUSE OF SSpS

It is very often said, “First impression is the best and lasting impression”. It is true for me when I think of CHS, the first SSpS house where I stepped in, on July 07, 1987. Everything was exciting on that day as the sisters welcomed us with love, care and hospitality. On the first day we went around enjoying the beautiful garden, fruit trees, beautiful flowers, cows, pigs, chicken farm etc. I moved around with wonder and awe. Later on the guava garden became the place of attraction for the formees.



As a candidate my first duty was housekeeping with Sr. Bercharia. Initially we communicated only with language of love; however in time I learnt discipline, hard work, perfect way of doing things and above all praying faithfully the quarter hour prayer with her. It was a joy to witness our elderly sisters in the annex, who had given their life for the mission and were spending their last days in CHS.

Sr. Bosco who could hardly walk steadily because of age asked me to teach her Kannada, so that she could talk to the workers. What a missionary spirit! She truly inspired me.

The house was almost full with about 100 members including candidates, novices and sisters. Coming together for news, singing practice, Mahabharata serial on Sundays, common recreation and Sunday outing to the elephant rock etc. were really beautiful experiences I used to look forward to. These are not only pleasant memories but they brought so much happiness and growth in my life.

I cannot forget Christmas night. We were asked to go to bed by 9p.m. At 10p.m. a group of sisters came to our dormitory singing 'Silent Night'. We were so excited, jumped out of our beds and ran out. Everything was a surprise and wonder for us as candidates. Before the midnight Mass, the Baby Jesus was taken from heaven (the common classroom was decorated to give it a heavenly touch) to the chapel. After Holy Mass, Santa gave us a Bible as a Christmas gift.

Yet another transition as SSpS which I witnessed in CHS was changing from religious habit to the Indian sari in 1988. It was an exciting moment for some sisters, while others were still discerning. However, it was a daring and proactive step taken by the then Provincial team.

Down the years there have been many changes in and around CHS. But the first impression was the best which cannot be forgotten and has made a lasting impact in my life. I have sincere love, gratitude and appreciation for all our sisters who have worked hard and given their lives over the years to make CHS a real HOME for everyone.

Hearty Congratulations, dear Sr. Lissy, and all the sisters in INS province! May God continue to shower abundance of blessings upon our sisters, CHS and all its endeavors!

Sr. Vilma Noronha, SSpS

India East Province

Formation Memories at CHS!

Convent of the Holy Spirit, Bangalore has a tremendous significance for me. I grew up there physically, spiritually, mentally and inter-culturally. There I made a major decision for my life. The life-experiences cannot be expressed in words; it's beyond any form of expression. My companions and many sisters would certainly agree with me. Who I am today is from the formation there. What I have learnt, is the basic guideline for all motives in my mission today. Our formators were instrumental in helping us to find the treasure within.



As novices we took turns to fast from a fruit daily at lunch. This custom was present when I entered the novitiate. One who had dining room duty did the posting of letters and she also carried Tiffin for an elderly woman – Gautama, who was unable to walk. Gautama had no relatives. A family in the village cared for her. To support this family we helped out with the noon meal.

On Sundays afternoons we were free. Some of us used to visit Gautama. I remember cutting her hair because of the lice in it and as it was not a perfect cut we used to laugh at ourselves. Several times we gave her a thorough bath. Some of my companions went to see her regularly. We wanted to keep Gautama clean as much as we could. These were opportunities to do something for the needy elderly. Gardening on Wednesdays was great fun and learning. After adoration the novices marched in different groups to the garden with buckets, and other tools, some with medicinal powder to fill the rat holes that sprung up near the borders of our property.

As a pre-novice I had sewing room duty and my heart was not in it. Sr. Brigitta was in charge of the sewing room and house-keeping. She was an all-rounder and master of everything. Oh, she tried her best to teach me! But there wasn't much improvement; she would then give me some clothes to open up which needed to be redone. I did some errors. She would smile and I would also look at her smile to say I am okay; we didn't talk as we are not supposed to talk during work; we would pray the quarter hour prayer and other prayers regularly. The pious novices reminded us (pre-novices) to be silent, to pray and to do our work. I improved and learnt much from sewing duty which greatly helped me in my mission and it continues even now. Since Sr. Brigitta trained me well, I am able to use it now. In my memory I see her smile and wink at me.

My sewing experience continued when as a junior sister after my studies I was appointed to work in the slums of Rourkela where we had a Sewing Center, of course with a Teacher. Many students initially like me did not have 'sewing' hands. The secret tips received from Sr. Brigitta proved useful. It got some girls interested they learnt many things in the Centre for few months, completed their course and left with certificates. Often they used to ask where I had learnt sewing. Fondly remembering Sr. Brigitta, I answered their question with much pride.

I am not done with sewing yet. My next appointment was in Rajkot; here too we ran the Sewing Center, recognized by the Government Technical Board. We offered Certificate and Diploma to students who completed the course. My predecessor and in-charge of the Sewing Room was Sr. Roseline Mascarenhas, who is a perfect seamstress. So naturally there was fear and anxiety as I reached the place. Sr. Roseline quite simply introduced me to many people. Later these were my great support. They even helped me to raise the Sewing Center to a PG in sewing and to make our centre as an Examination Center. Here too in the discussions with the teachers, student's fashion designers and officials of technical board I used the tips Sr. Brigitta passed on to me about our mission and women empowerment. They believed I was the better informed and no one asked where I learnt sewing.

On Children's day, November 14th, SSpS novices and Jesuit novices in a joint venture planned a programme for the village children. We conducted sports, cooked meals, managed and supervised the children; disciplining them was a tough task yet a rewarding experience; we worked together also on the feast of St. Stanislaus, patron of novices.

My memory of Sr. Michael, our Novice directress, is associated with a rosary in her hands. She was always praying for the whole world. As she prayed and moved the beads we would hear its sound. I remember telling sister that when she prayed the rosary in the chapel her metal rosary used to make a sound. She told me in her simple way: when you hear that sound you must think that I am praying for you. Whenever I see someone praying the rosary I warmly recall Sr. Michael thanking her for her prayers. Sr. Bernadisa was our regional superior when we were pre-novices. Simpletons that we were we didn't know the meaning of psychology. Since sister was a psychologist the news spread in our group that she knows everything about us. So when sister came one way some of us used to avoid her. But in our 2nd year novitiate when she became our directress we enjoyed her company and had lot of fun. What she taught me very specifically is to be a cheerful giver than receiver and to be gentle as an SSpS missionary. At the CHS celebrations I remember Sr. Therese Regine cutting the pork and chicken. She showed us postulants how to cut the pieces. Many sisters would join us in the cutting and they remained until we finished.

Often in the past and especially today I am grateful to God for the formation I had in CHS, believing it to be the best that my companions and I had.

Sr. Rosily Panjikaran, SSpS

ShradhaSadan, Udaipur (INC)



CHS – My Home



CHS brings to my mind some of the most nostalgic memories of life. Other than the 4 years of formation novitiate, juniorate and tertianship, I had the joy of being in CHS for 12 years at a stretch 1991 to 2003. After my Final Vows I was asked to work at Chintana our Social Center then. I was full of spirit, energy and life to take up the challenge.

After the intensive formative experience as a tertian I was put into active mission life at the Chintana Center. Transition was difficult. I went through great crisis. I found everything meaningless especially the spiritual exercises, external practices, except Mass; I skipped all the other community prayers, and resisted saying vocal prayers. My community kept observing me, but nobody questioned me. One fine day the provincial called me and inquired as to what was happening. I shared whatever I was experiencing; she did not judge me rather guided me, trusted me and gave me time and space that I was in need of. Even though it took time for me to come back, I can clearly say that the provincial and the community allowed me to grow and that made a whole lot of difference to my life.

Our work with the people in the villages was very intense. Our meetings went on in the nights; and I returned to CHS sometimes late at night. There was always one or the other person waiting for me to open the door, to see that I had something hot to eat and drink. Small acts of love and concern when one is tired and stressed brought joy and tears as well. I have experienced such trust, confidence and freedom from some of my superiors and sisters at CHS, which has sustained my vocation. The strong foundation laid during my formation years will go a long way.

For me CHS is a treasure house with such depth and spirituality; there is life everywhere. When I entered first as a candidate the corridors were dark tunnels. Yet at the end of the tunnel there is light always. Yes CHS has brought light to my life; it has brought meaning to my existence. Let all the young who pass through the corridors of CHS in the coming 50 years' experience fullness of life.

Sr. Ida, SSpS

Holy Spirit Convent, Ekamba

"A good conscience is a continual Christmas."

- Benjamin Franklin

WAYS OF BEING IN MISSION

“I am among you as one who serves” (Luke 22:27)



The life of missionary service called me for availability within the community for mission. I reached Bangalore from Madras (Tamil Nadu) in 1970 after my community development study. Due to ill health, I was asked to join the CHS community and entrusted with the work of making new pattern of habits; here I served my sisters for 18 years in the same house.

I communicated God's love for each person in the community by being available, meeting the needs of the sisters in the community and province through stitching new habits, attending visitors, helping the elderly and even extending my hand in the kitchen whenever the sister in-charge was absent. My talent for singing was recognized and I was asked to help others.

I'm thankful and grateful for all the people who had been part of my life. Mostly under the guidance of Sr. Bernadisa, I contributed in simple and meaningful ways in the community. It was fun and a daily learning experience for me as I found meaning of reaching out in little ways and showing hospitality to those who visited our home.

Though I wished to be connected with the people directly, the mission inside necessitated that I be available for the community. In 1988, I was relieved from stitching habits since we changed over from habit to sari. I still remember the words of Sr. Bernadette, “Go and enjoy the mission outside”. That's because she knew I was placed for many years in the same place doing the same activity for our sisters. Hence she expressed in this way when she freed me from this responsibility.

Ultimately I realize that our God wants our lives to overflow with mercy, love, and compassion be it in the community or outside the people whom we serve. It is our utmost duty to appreciate that each sister works depending on her gifts, health and ability. Therefore let us find joy in whatever we do for the kingdom of God.

Sr. Carmel Rose, SSps

INDIA EAST, Odisha

From the Album of LIFE!

Yes I was among the pioneers in CHS though my stay there was not for long. I left around January 1969, as postulant with Sr. Walfrida and other companions of the group of Sr. Doris. I entered the First group of Novices and the Second for Profession with Margaret who is no more with us.

My memories in CHS: Prayer, hard work and lot of fun. Yes prayer was a priority, yet there too fun set in. Work for me in the Novitiate was painting - oil painting of windows, doors, some walls, entrance designed work and white-dress filled with paint; then the washing of clothes at the open well and putting them on the lines to dry! On one occasion Dolores and self were holding the corners of the bed sheet, swaying it in the breeze and singing to our hearts' content "...the heavens are blue," our voices so loud that it invited the presence of Sr. Bernadisa. "You are supposed to be in silence." Dear me! If she only knew our daily routine with washing! Again, while cooking for supper, as amateurs with the new pressure cooker there was a loud bang! The cooker burst open. All the meat ran up to the ceiling and curry splashed like a fountain. We didn't know what to feel - sad or laugh? It was naturally the latter; there was Sr. Bernadisa again, with Srs. Aliciann and Michael.

Once while returning from our Juniorate course in SUDEEP, our jeep had a problem and the only way to bring us back was our tractor used for carrying rubbish, cow dung etc. It was thoroughly cleaned under supervision of Srs. Michael and Rosmina. And there in the peak time of Bangalore traffic around 5p.m., seven SSps, (Sr. Doris, group and I) got ready to get into the tractor, laughing, trying to hide our faces, being welcomed by Sr. Rosmina with her ready camera! Believe it or not, sometime later I was shown this photograph in Steyl in a mission magazine.

Once after night prayer Sr. Gabriel Mary who had the liturgy erred in starting the Marian hymn; a group of us burst into laughter; a few tried to restart, finally I said, 'Ok I will start;' lo and behold instead of singing the laughter again! Sr. Bernadisa once more! The next day expecting a blast from her, I still went in to apologize; this time she herself laughed heartily.



Preparing for the first vows of Srs. Sheela and Jyoti, there was a need for extra bed sheets, so along with others we were frantically hemming the sheets, when bang, the needle went right through my right index finger and stuck onto machine board. I screamed with pain. Sr. Aliciann came running, and was agitated on seeing what happened; feeling faint, I kept murmuring, 'I am going.' I could hear Aliciann asking 'Where?' Plonk!! Next, I remembered waking up in the sick room the needle out after sedation. It was a painful episode and became a tease with everyone asking me, "Where are you going?"

In connection with the first profession, while polishing the chapel floor the polishing machine went off. What was to be done! Innovative as we were, Sr. Doris was asked to sit on a sack cloth and a few of us pulled the sack around the floor, till we got the desired result; of course, with perspirations and laughter intertwined!

Until I switched over to Central Province at their request for 'foreign missionaries,' I always enjoyed times in CHS whenever I went there. Fond memories of times and persons linger; among them my very beloved friend Sr. Gabriel Mary with whom I always enjoyed.

Sr. Yvonne Pereira, SSpS

India North East

MEMORIES LINGER ON.....

"Give thanks to the Lord for His presence abides with us."



Rewinding the clock, I found myself flying over the Arabian Sea; its blue waters refreshing my memories as I landed in the city of Bangalore and Bannerghatta road. The construction of a new building was in progress - the future Provincial House of the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit.

All around were Green pines, silver oak, and coconut and palm trees in its variety of shades, shapes and sizes. It was a tangible and visible sign of the 'Author of Beauty'. The gentle cool breeze, the sunrise and sunset were breathtaking! At short distances we would find water bodies clear and sparkling.

The building itself was surrounded by tall and short grass, shrubs and high ant hills – the abode of snakes. An open well with steps reaching down was the source of water for cleaning, washing and for household purposes. Drinking water had to be fetched from our kind and generous neighbors – the Jesuits! Every morning our working boys would carry barrels, tubs and wheel barrow and a sister would drive back with the jeep of water, bringing it home.

Inside the house, the ground floor was roughly ready for use for different purposes - such as prayer room, class room, dining room, kitchen, laundry and sewing room. Transportation was nil so to say as we were out of the city. The urgency of work and delay did not dampen our spirit!

Portable Laundry: Every Monday the soiled clothes of the community were brought to the open well. Walking through the grass and shrubs we carried big tubs for soaking and washing, and a bucket for fetching water. And while the clothes were getting soaked in the soap water, the sisters lined up on every second step of the well to carry up the much needed water. Rubbing off the dirt of soiled clothes and the first rinsing turned the clock to ten. We would hurry back to the house and gobble down bread and peanut butter that tasted most delicious and appetizing to our smiling stomachs. Hurrying up to continue the daring adventure of collecting water, rinsing and wringing the clothes brought the time to our noon prayer. We would carry back the clothes and hang it on the lines to dry in the sun.

Sometimes when we peeped in the well we didn't give a welcome smile to the cobra who would be sitting on the steps with its hood up; luckily it wasn't on our washing day. The sister who put on and put off the pump would happily or unhappily encounter a snake or cobra.

Expert & Perfect Folders: During the week we would iron and fold the clothes to its perfect shape with the cardboard measurement given to us. Our hands collaborated well in this activity.

Creative Painters: Painting was a necessary aspect for the whole house. We tried our hand painting the window frames. Since we could not see the rear side of the frame we carried a small mirror in our apron pocket and when the rear part had to be painted we would hold the mirror in one hand and the brush in the other and complete the painting. Innovative and unique, it surely was!

Artistic Masons: The entrance of the house needed a facelift and somebody popped up the idea of a terrace garden. Each afternoon after lunch we would carry four small boulders, the initial move in the making of the Rock garden. As artistic masons we began our work of building the side and step placing the wave-like side of rocks outwards, and the rough-edgy sides inwards towards the mud, and cementing each stone to the other. Once it was completed the carpet grass was laid matching to its green surrounding. It was further adorned with small multicolored flower plants, shrubs and variety of cactus giving a welcome touch to those who entered our house.

Human Polishing Machine: The chapel had to be ready for the first vows – a historic first ever in the Convent of the Holy Spirit, Bangalore. Professional polishers had to be brought in from the city. When they arrived the electricity would play the game of hide and seek. And it continued to remain hidden for days even after frequent complaints. Our team would then venture on an innovative method instead of depending on the polishing machine. We got engaged in the preliminary work of cleaning up the floor so that the polishing could start right away without loss of time. The heaviest person would sit on the sack and be pulled from one end of the floor to the other. I am sure many of you haven't heard of this one! Well, it certainly added to our moments of humor besides recalling our childhood games.

Beauty Parlor for Monkeys: While we were busy in our own world carrying out our individual responsibilities, we noticed that our soaps, mirror, toothpaste would just disappear until we discovered that our friends - the monkeys in the vicinity, had converted our dormitory into their beauty parlor without prior permission. We watched them quietly and it was truly entertaining. They would take a mirror from the drawer, look at their reflection then remove lice from their head and eat it. Toothpaste, soap and whatever was appealing to them were carried away without payment, and without as much as a 'thank you!'

Initiation into Spiritual Life: Days of reflection, desert experience outside the house in the lap of nature re-energized us for the path ahead. This was a treat besides our daily spiritual exercises. And I must add here that our efforts in intoning the Benedictus and the Magnificat led us to compete with famous singers!

Elephant Rock: We used to take Sunday evening walks to our famous Elephanta Rock. It was fun climbing but not without risk, for one slip and fall could cause us injuries yet we were always protected. The huge rock in the shape of an elephant gave us enough space to sit around, bite on snacks and enjoy each other's company with a wonderful sunset before us.

Flight to Bombay: I mean a train to Bombay. After the work was completed here, there was an opportunity to visit Bombay again a place we were familiar with because of our candidacy there. We replaced the candidates who went for home holidays. The journey kept us occupied for two days. It was always a long halt at Guntakal station because of the connecting train. Most of the time the trains were late for hours. In the intervening time we went to the comfort room two by two, had a shower that freshened and cheered us up from the heat after leaving the coolness of Bangalore.

Flexible & adjustable Theologians: In our blue habits and white veils we would travel to 'Sudeep' daily. After Holy Mass and breakfast the jeep would leave immediately and drop us at Dharmaram bus stop. Most of us would munch our slice of remaining bread in the corridor before reaching the jeep. From Dharmaram we had to take a bus to Sudeep and in the evening the same procedure followed. The timing of the bus was unreliable. Once when we were returning we managed to get a bus quite late. On reaching Dharmaram we realized that the one bus had already left. There was no way out than to ring up and find out, what we should do? We were told to wait and after an hour, an awesome sight met our eyes! Sister arrived with our CHS tractor. As young ones we were thoroughly amused and bit embarrassed too for some onlookers were staring at us. We giggled and conversed at random. It was only when we were asked to pray the rosary that we were reminded of the time for silence.

Being so much with the rewind, it took me some time coming back to the present moment.

Hearty Congrats, and God's choicest blessings and fruitful growth for our Province as we cross the half century! God Bless Us All!

Sr. Ranita Baretto, SSpS
Anugraha, Mumbai

Speaking Stones!



I walked the corridors of the new stone building in the 1970s. While touching the hard stone walls I said to myself 'these very stones will speak out'. True enough, it has laid a solid foundation. The tree has grown, stretched out its branches, giving out the message of Christ. Although the journey was hazardous and weary, I enjoyed being with my friends and listening to its growth stories. May CHS continue to grow strong and bear much fruit!

Sr. Tresa Abraham, SSpS
St. Raphael's, Indore

A Heavenly Experience

As a Candidate, when I first stepped into the Convent of the Holy Spirit, Bangalore I saw many sisters bubbling with joy in the dining hall and I felt as if I am in heaven. After tea the sisters took me to the Chapel where they were praying. It was an awesome experience making me feel I am in the right place to worship and serve the Lord.

Joy of Pioneering

As we began entering the lives of the common people we realized that Kalena Agrahara needed an English Medium School. So according to the decisions taken by the PLT, I



was asked to join the team of sisters who initiated the noble idea. Being from the locality, I spoke in Kannada which helped me to connect better with the people, and to convince them to join our school. I had to walk miles, to reach the far villages and knock at their doors in order to advertise. Today the same school is flourishing and catering to thousands of children. I feel privileged to be a part of this pioneering journey.



Sr. Antony Mary, SSpS
Deepalaya, Kaluburagi

“DOWN THE MEMORY LANE...”

In 1977, during my Aspirancy in CHS, we had English reading at breakfast and writing class with Sr. Perfecta after breakfast. Before the class, she used to give us handwritten prayer bookmarks which we prayed aloud with her. One of the bookmarks contained this prayer: “God, Holy Spirit enlighten me, with your grace strengthen me, Immaculate spouse of the Holy Spirit pray for me.” I saved this bookmark in my Bible, my first one given to me by Sr. Mary Celine during our candidacy in Bombay. I never let go that Bible no matter where I went. And this bookmark written by Sr. Perfecta stayed in my Bible. It has lost its color and is barely legible. But I know the prayer and have prayed it all these years. My two sons have learnt it from me. When they were kids, I sat at their bedside talking about God and the importance of prayer and good deeds. I asked them to recite this prayer every day, especially before the exams. As adults they still practice it.

In CHS, we were an amazing group of novices who received strict formation from Sr. Michael and Sr. Bernadisa but I cannot forget Sr. Brigitta who taught me practical skills about housekeeping, cleaning, painting, mending clothes, etc. Her patience and endurance was an inspiration for me. I think CHS has given a strong foundation to my spiritual life that sustains me even though I am in a different life situation now. With immense gratitude I remember Sr. Therese Regine, Sr. Michael, Sr. Bernadisa, Sr. Aliciann, and many others who played an important role in forming me. And I can never forget my batch mates! They are truly my sisters.

At times I look back and laugh at some of the events during our theology in Dharmaram College. Towards the end of the year we acted out a drama entitled “Hole in the Wall,” in which Sisters from different congregations participated. It was staged in Dharmaram College and was well appreciated. Some photographs of the play reached our superiors that put us in trouble because our costumes (wearing pants, letting down our hair, etc.) were considered inappropriate for our way of life. Few days later Sr. Provincial called us, gave us a long lecture, and asked us to take our boxes and go home. Later, she cooled down and permitted us to stay. Though it brings a smile now, it was no laughing matter then.

Mrs. Gracy Kayany
USA

...These too went marching in!

As CHS celebrates its Golden year,
I feel it good to pen here;
My heart in CHS was there all-time,
Because you Sisters, made it mine!

My favorite Sis I joyfully remember
And her naughty smile even in slumber;
Loved her so much, not just her wit,
You saw me thru, so I didn't quit!
(Sr. Rosmina †)

Dear Aliciann†, thanks for your sisterly love,
I trust you are still working from above
Yours was a challenge each time you talked
Special it was when moments we walked!

Oh, Mary Flo†, I miss you dearly,
And your creative art that came naturally;
Your parting peck lingers on my cheek,
Your going was sudden, we all did weep!

Hark, now! Let us all stop to hear?
There's the sound of a humming so dear;

It's you **Mary Vivian**† sadly no more,
If I had wings, to you I would soar!
Sweet petite sister you were sensitive,
When I came to Bangalore in CHS to live;
Much love you showed and my heart recalls;
I bet it's echoing along CHS walls!

(**Sr. Bernadisa** †)

Often we walked to the cemetery,
And little by little I heard your story;
Your 'thank you,' I have learnt it too,
And my heart's full of those walks with you!

(**Sr. Bercharia** †)

Look at the wee birds chirping & singing,
As **Sr. Brigitta's**† energy goes bubbling;
She spends time in chapel silent and serene,
Resting her aches, none but God has seen!
We remember you well in children's ward,
And then with laptop in Jeevandata Hall;
Now your schedule's over one by one,
Sadly your jokes too and all good fun!

(**Sr. Hermandelde**†)

Betty and I did quarrel over you,
Both vying for a little attention from you;
I didn't love you first; this you should know,
Then later, it was difficult to let you go!

(**Sr. Michael**†)



Sr. Therese Regine† my first formator!
From my homesickness you did succor;
Your humility was a noble role,
You told me prayer wasn't part, but our whole!

Dear **Sr. Val**†, yours was the cutest face
Of the entire east Indian race!
And though at times you showed no emotion
Your flashing smile conveyed much passion!
These above **departed** ones left their mark;
When a few times I was caught in the dark;
Those were good, genuine and rewarding times,
Our CHS storehouse of gold & silver mines!

Sr. Molly Rego, SSps

Helena Seva Sadan, Pamboor

MY MEMORIES OF CHS



I came to Bangalore for the first time in the year 1973-74 as a tertian in preparation for my final commitment. From 1975 onwards I had been in charge of the farm at different times. Since I am also a nurse, I had been appointed as a nurse in different mission stations. The longest period at CHS was from 1987-1997 and the last appointment was from 2006-2010. A connectedness with nature was very life-giving for me. I loved nursing; I also enjoyed taking care of the animals in the farm. Therefore, I enjoyed both activities. Both had joys, problems and challenges. By the grace of God, I was able to carry on. By the year 2010 I was unable to walk around due to varicose vein on my both legs. Therefore, I was advised to stop taking care of the farm.

Our sisters and superiors were very good to me and supportive. I am very grateful to all my superiors and sisters and at the same time my heart is filled with gratitude to God for his blessings and support and guidance in my life.

Sr. Agnes Rose, SSps

CHS, Bangalore

THE GATEWAY TO THE SSPS FAMILY



It's with great joy I pen down my memories of persons, events, learning experiences, of my past years spent in CHS. Convent of the Holy Spirit which belongs to the INS province is a home for me within my inner being more than any other SSsP convent in the rest of the world. The Lord who called me led me into it. It's wonderful to recount the all-round growth I was blessed with, to become a full pledged SSsP as I spent about eighteen years under its roof.

1971 Initial Days: To start with I choose Sr. Carmel Rose who is my province member. It is she who opened the main entrance door of the house (CHS) when I first put my foot in the convent. It is she who served the first plate of food I received from the SSsP community. It is she who led me through the long corridor to the dormitory above the chapel where I slept for the first time in an SSsP house. It is she who stitched the first religious habit I wore at my first profession. Caring and active, she seemed a 'big sister' to me.

1972 -73: The Aspirancy - Postulancy under the guidance of late Sr. Aliciann. I was taught to lead bhajans when the whole community of aspirants/postulants, novices, juniors and senior sisters gathered for an hour on Saturday mornings. Many are the Sanskrit bhajans that are still ringing in me... Ishvara...Ishvara..., Vande Sachidanadam, Om Bhagavan....!

As a postulant I worked with late Sr.Maurina, our garden in-charge who tirelessly worked and brought out vegetables for the big community almost every day. For the first time I saw how to grow peanuts, onions, carrots, potatoes, beetroots and many more. Her disciplined commitment and dedication was observed deeply with wonder.

1974 -75: Novitiate years with late sister Michael. I believe that God places persons on our way to be with to accomplish what He wants for us. Sr. Michael is an unforgettable person in my life; her care and guidance was deep. Prayer, work, knowledge, simplicity and accomplishing what is needed were lessons for us.

During my novitiate CHS had a vast guava orchard of very good quality where the present Holy Spirit Home, the Children's home and the workers quarters stand. Sr. Michael gave me two terms (6 months) to work in the guava garden to prune every tree. She instructed me how the pruning should be done. I enjoyed that work and even climbed the trees if it was needed. As a result we got better fruits.

It was that time that CHS had the first cows, amazingly, from our sisters in Techny,USA. Two were milking cows and a heifer. They were called with American names Dandy, Doodle and Yankee. In two years time Yankee gave birth to a male calf. It was named Mike in honor of Sr. Michael. Yankee gave nearly 20 liters of milk per day. Later Yankee and Mike were sold to a

butcher as Yankee became barren and Mike was difficult to manage. During one Christmas season unexpectedly Doodle got electrocuted as she pulled the live wire of the Christmas star in the cow barn. We all felt very sad at this incident.

Today the grass fields, the cow barn area and the strongly built open well gave way to the beautiful and impressive Holy Spirit PU College. Transformation for the better!

The novices also concreted the Stations of the Cross under the guidance of Sr. Michael and fixed them. Almost all the trees around the compound were planted by the Novices and the juniors of the seventies. These types of work were very empowering and educative although it demanded energy and hard labor. Work and prayer, silence and rest, community and common concerns nourished and formed the SSpS within us.

I did my five years college studies along with others in the new Jyoti Niwas College at Koramangala in 1977. In the same year Dharmaram Theologate welcomed sisters for one year course. Our sisters were the first ones to take admission. So a big number of students, numbering more than twenty, had to go to various institutions. Public transport could not be depended on. Our Regional superior late Sr. Bernadisa and others decided to buy a bus. So we had the CHS bus where about 30 could be accommodated. Here, I remember Srs. Mary Benedict, Mary Vivian and Gonzala, kitchen in-charge sisters; they were instrumental in getting the lunch pack ready. God bless them...!

From 1985-1987: I worked as the Bangalore diocesan animator of YCS/YSM. CHS was far from the city for daily travel so I stayed at Good Shepherd Convent, near St. Joseph's College. Every week end when there were no programs with students I came to CHS my home. Awareness-Reflection-Action is the methodology of YCS/YSM used in the meetings which was applied in formation later. Two years I was with the candidates at CHS. The candidates had built up a Centenary garden close to the big hall and a flower garden in the centre of the cemetery. All enjoyed the beauty. Coconut garden was looked after with good watering even in the evenings. Cultural programs were held mainly for learning English. My youth ministry experience became a great help for the candidates.

While in INS, I had three groups of tertians, 2 in CHS and the last one being in Rajkot. I am proud of them. Today in whichever province I go, I see one or the other of my candidates or tertians doing well in their responsibilities. Many of them celebrated their Silver Jubilees. God bless them.

Sr. Rosmina and Sr. Therese Regine are my vocation promoters. Sr. Rosmina is the first foreign person I have seen in my life. Sr. Rosmina was someone special to me throughout my many years at CHS. She has taught me solo singing. I remember the song 'Gentle Woman'. She taught me and made me to sing it for the first time in our old common class room as a prayer to start a



meeting of our sisters while she played the guitar. At every Holy Thursday night 'I listen to the agony of God' was sung solo. She taught me the hymn, 'It's a long road to freedom'..... Many songs have been taught by her; they are currently in 'Sing Along' which has replaced the 'Yellow Book'.

OUR DEAR DEPARTED:

The first sister called to eternal life from CHS is Sr. Perfecta, our English teacher, who was an American. She was the oldest member of CHS. Her room was the nearest to the chapel. We were many junior sisters in the house. Sr. Shalini was entrusted to see that Sister is awake when the community starts the Morning Prayer so as to be on time for Holy Mass. One morning as Shalini knocked at the door there was no response. After waiting for a while she slowly opened the door which was not bolted. To Shalini's surprise sister was still in bed. Finding no response, Shalini informed Sr. Bernadisa who was ready for the Morning Prayer. Quickly sisters came to the room and found that Sr. Perfecta had gone to her eternal reward. It was a shock for us. She is the first to die in CHS and the first to be buried in the cemetery.

The departure of dear Sr. Fridolina: The first human death I witnessed in life is that of our first SSps in India, Sr. Fridolina. I was already a full pledged sister. Her room was in the ground floor of the annex and was confined to bed for some time. It was around 10 in the night that she started to show signs of breathlessness. Sr. Vinita Joseph who was the community leader called a few of us to be with our sister at the last moments. Sister was not responding to us. We sat around the bed holding her hand and praying. Sister was very peaceful. As we watched, her breathing became slower and slower. Within a little time at one moment, she did not take the next breath. I was looking at her to see that she takes another breath. Around 11.15 pm she passed into eternity while we prayed 'Jesus, Mary and Joseph.' Sr. Vinita closed sister's eyes and placed the hands together and covered the face. The gentle and loving Sr. Fridolina; may she pray for us.

Our other sisters who played a role in my life in CHS or in the missions and whose funeral I participated are Sr. Brigitta, Sr. Juvata, Sr. Anfrida, Sr. Bosco, Sr. Lipolda and Sr. Theodimara. Sisters Mary Benedict and Gabriel Mary too were my community members. Sr. Mary Benedict went to heaven in Mumbai and I was on home leave when Sr. Gabriel Mary said bye to CHS. Excellent food preparations and wonderful flower arrangements and decorations will not be forgotten.

I gratefully remember all the sisters who entered my life and I thank God for them. If I count, there will be more than a hundred. A good number of them have gone to their eternal reward.

CHS is a building, an experience, a source of life, a dream world and a path way to fulfillment. May it have God's blessings, protection, strength and goodness. May the Holy Spirit abide in it and hover over it.

God's blessings!

Sr. Agnes Ignatius, SSps
India East Province

IN THE BOSOM OF CHS...

It is a privilege to be present at CHS in her Golden Jubilee year. I think of CHS as a 'Mother' who creates a home where everyone feels loved and is given the opportunity for growth. I have lived here for 25 years (my initial formation of 10 years and later about 15 years with intervals). I could celebrate the silver jubilee of my life at CHS together with her Golden jubilee.

The thought of returning to CHS at different times has filled me with a sense of deep gratitude, positivity and joy, irrespective of who the members in the community were. It's an indicator that there is deep inner bond with the house itself, developed through the years of life here. Even if I am offered a better place with modern facilities, I think I will settle for CHS with its old-new beauty and charm.



The Jubilee days offered the opportunity of reliving past experiences. As I walked through the corridors I became aware of the blessings which I had often taken for granted – the stability of the floor imprinted with the touch of thousands of feet that walked there, the protection and security offered by the walls and the roof, the rooms - space of rest and relaxation, study and reflection, the grandeur of the wide open sky, fresh air and the magnificent view which I had from the terrace. Above all else, the sacred place, our chapel with its unique beauty and power, where we daily met together with the ONE in whom we are all one, Jesus our brother and Master.

What I share below is very personal, at the same time it is also very communitarian:

Into the bosom of CHS, we were welcomed warmly as we left our own homes; we have learnt here to walk the first steps of religious missionary life; we have had the opportunity of being a part of the dance of SSps history; we have grown as our inner treasures were opened up; laughter and tears got intermingled; we have played and enjoyed lighter moments; we have argued, struggled and come through; we have learnt lessons of life; different roles have been ours at different times; through deep encounters and moments of togetherness healthy friendships developed; praying alone and together, celebrating the memories of Jesus brought about communion; we have grown to move out of ourselves, reaching out to the people around; we have shared meals and have feasted; we have learnt to care and offer hospitality; learning to cook delicious dishes both Indian and western raised our curiosity; we have experienced internationality and our horizons have enlarged; a sense of belonging and solidarity have been gifted to us; welcomes and goodbyes became a regular feature; final farewell to our deceased sisters kept us in touch with our limitedness...In and through all these and more, we have



grown as SSpS. The accompaniment by our sisters both from India and abroad held the initial formation in a mysterious balance, the whole atmosphere inviting us to stillness, relaxation, renewal and revitalization. What CHS has done for me/us can never be forgotten. Like a mother, CHS waits for me/us with open doors. CHS has borne witness to all of the above and more. If we could listen to the walls and the trees, we would hear more stories. To CHS I want to say: I want you to keep your grace and

beauty by taking care of you... by adorning you not just with external decorations, but continuing to keep you as our home for all who enter your portals, filling you with positive energies.

On the screen of my memory I see different scenes that have taken place at CHS as though in a movie, from the moment of my first contact in 1971. The changes/developments that have happened at different stages in and around the house - how different rooms have taken on different roles, how the campus has taken on a different look. Dormitories of one time became class rooms at another time, class rooms have become offices, dining rooms have become community/recreation rooms etc. Terrific adjustability! Amazing changes! Awesome newness! They were/are known by different names. Yet the foundation remains the same and firm which, for me, is an imagery of human beings changing with the changing times, yet in our depths we are the same. So many of us have come and gone, but the house stands unmoved/firmly grounded; an indication of the temporariness of nature and permanence of the Divine. Eternity and momentariness walk side by side. SOMEONE who is a Constant in all these bears witness to all this.

May we draw inspiration from CHS in her total availability!

Sr. Gracy Antony SSpS
Deepalaya, Kalaburagi

**"Christmas is most truly Christmas when we celebrate it
by giving the light of love to those who need it most."**

- Ruth Carter Stapleton

“UNFOLDING THE CORE COMPETENCIES OF NURSE EDUCATORS IN INDIA”

(Synopsis of PhD Thesis)

Nursing is a scholarly discipline built on the bedrock of science and art that stands tall as a 'lighthouse of Care'. Nursing education is a blend of knowledge and practice that aims at 'Nurse Educators' who are benefactors and beneficiaries of competency. Competency is a complex integration of role-specific, generic, and behavioral skill sets. Although these competencies are integral for improving quality outcomes, specific researches done on nursing education are few with no particular study on “competencies of nurse educators” in India, while the milestone of nursing goes back to 1861. India is a multifaceted country with a great regional span of nursing institutions that train the maximum number of professional nurses annually. So, with these pieces of literature, and personal experience with diverse mentors and their signature style of execution, I have anchored this scholarly paper, to probe into the very building blocks of nursing vocation that is “competencies of nurse educators”.

A descriptive mixed-methods design specifically the convergent parallel design was conducted in two (2) Government institutions, six (6) corporate institutions, and seven (7) minority institutions of the three (3) geographical zones of India: the Southern Bangalore and Chennai, Northern Delhi, and Western Mumbai. The information was obtained through an adapted core competency survey questionnaire after validity and reliability check among 240 Nursing Faculty members and 125 M.Sc. (N) Students and an in-depth interview that searched for the probable competencies of Nurse Educator was among (21) Nurse Leaders, who were in the position of Vice-principal, Principal, and Chief Nursing Directors.

THE NURSE EDUCATOR CORE COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK unfolded in this study strengthens the distinctiveness of nurse educators who meet the professional nursing standards with adequate academic preparation coupled with competency, skill, and love for the profession, propelling him/her as an exemplary nurse, educator, and leader.



The current study was the first study initiated to develop the nurse educators' competency in India that spread-out Seven Core competencies (fig.1), and each is supported by ten sub-competencies. These competencies will be of practical life-line in nursing education. Considerably will sculpt the professional nurse educators, aspiring students, and the policymakers of the apex body, to prepare the next generation of faculty members, design and devise guidelines and policies affiliated to the operation of nursing education and health care.



Figure.1 Nurse Educator's Core Competency for India

Finally, I quote the founder of Modern Nursing, Florence Nightingale:

“You don't build a house without its foundation

You don't build a hospital without its nurses

Similarly, you don't build nursing institutions without nurse educators.”

Such educators are a blessing to the institution if they are blessed with these competencies. These competencies will enable the nurse educators to be enablers of competency.

A Special note of gratitude to Sr. Lissy, SSpS, the Provincial Leader, India South, and the members of the leadership team, Sr. Carmelita SSpS, the Provincial Leader, Philippines North, and the leadership team, and the community of sisters for your affection, and concern towards my educational, physical, spiritual, and emotional wellbeing that enhanced my academic success and mission experience. Your hospitality, acceptance, prayerful support, community spirit, and love animated my will power to bring out this unique work. Thank you sisters for you all have helped me in many ways and journeyed with me to add a feather to my academic qualification as Dr. Sr. Lalitha Rosali, SSpS. Thank you!

All things are possible if we believe. Mk 9:23

All for the glory of God!

Sr. Lalitha Rosali, SSpS

Anugraha, Mumbai

WE STOOD IN... WE STAND ON... AND WE WILL RISE OVER...

Much had we loved the year 2020 and grasped it in the joyous bounty.

Life of young and old was twinkling,

That dreamt of living, as life-giving.

Silent globe choked, to the entry of a Virus, as

Wuhan breathed out the COVID-19, a pandemic surprise.

Amidst the misfortune of fear, isolation, and sickness

A green and clean milieu illumined freshness in the campus.

When the Corona virus shut the doors and windows of hospital corridors,

'Service in Love' impelled us to save and preserve others' lungs.

The Management of Holy Spirit Hospital bridged the way to BMC,

To embrace the challenge with faith, hope, and love in modesty.

As the patients flocked in desperation to restore from COVID-19

The staff in dedication risked freeing many of COVID-19.

The campus saw a paradigm shift from top to down

That refashioned the structure from wings to floors.

The life-story of warriors stirred in thick and thin

Mango grove garden turned out oxygen brisk green pasture.

God of health tested the power of the Virus in many of us

God of healing cleansed and healed most of us

God of strength enhanced the immunity of a few of us

And GOD of life indeed blessed our Executive Director Sr. Sneha, SSps,

As a plasma donor, she is 'the first woman in India to donate 5 times'!

We sensed the challenge and so, we welcomed

We honor the enduring spirit of our patients

We appreciate the cooperation of the relatives and caretakers

We value the hard work and commitment of our doctors, nurses, and staff

And we salute the sacrifice and prayers of many kind hearts.

change...

Through our Service in Love, May God be glorified!

"Service in Love means Holy Spirit Hospital,

Holy Spirit Hospital means Service in Love".

. Lalitha Rosali, SSps
Holy Spirit Hospital, Mumbai

HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS!!



Sr. Sneha Jospeh, SSps Becomes the First Woman in the City of Mumbai to donate plasma 5 times!

MEDIA COVERAGE



HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS!!



Sr. Sheela Joseph SSps

**On the occasion of your GOLDEN & SILVER JUBILEE
of your RELIGIOUS PROFESSION**



Sr. Shaila M. J. SSps



Sr. Suchita JoJo SSps

MUSINGS AROUND CHRISTMAS TIME!!



Mary and Joseph then stopped at the final inn
Hoping that this time they would win;
A precious space in which to lay,
The sweetest Babe on the way!

And when they were shown to a stable,
It was more than they had gambled;
In no time the Holy One was born,
Just as the dawn heralded the morn!

The ox and the donkeys watched in wonder,
At the awesome birth of a little stranger;
They drew closer in intimate embrace,
To warm the Babe's adorable face!

The angels looked downwards,
To announce the glad tidings in angelic words;
They chose not the world that was asleep,
Save the shepherds who tended their sheep!

The Kings got wise seeing the new Star,
Stopping their works they travelled afar;
Each treasuring a holy inspiration,
Not knowing whither their destination!

Little Babe your sweet face we adore,
Venerating thee with praises galore;
You are alive in memory and heart,
And trillions follow you from the start!

But Babe Jesus, do rewind the clock,
To the time when you were with your flock;
What simplicity marked that stock!
Gone today! Values seem blocked!

Knowing right and wrong is confusing,
Where's the world that had a meaning!
Feeling lost in the midst of such a rush
Truths and memories feel crushed!

There is a yearning for what was familiar,
Now that the Christmas season is here;
And though Your birthday comes every year,
It's a feasting without you, I fear!

Babe Jesus, see the changes everywhere,
To fit the moneyed and the modernity air!
The outside changes, but the insides decline,
Wearing masks we say, "We are fine!"

And if dear Babe, you come again,
Know as girl-child her many pains!
Rejected, raped, killed and aborted,
To this end many a girl-child is fated,

Lying, not truth, is considered to be wise
Because everywhere it pays in a trice;
And let not thoughts of black sheep resound,
It's now the white ones that aren't sound!

Better are the LBGTs, who feel so different,
These don't crime as the hired ones sent!
For it's vital that hearts be in its rightful place,
Filled not with hate, harm and deface!

Babe Jesus truly our world's quite changed,
And following the trends some are estranged;
Yet we rejoice that here you took your birth,
And believe that you will restore our Earth!

Sr. Molly Rego SSPs, PAMBOOR

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