

SOCIETY OF THE SACRED HEART

PROVINCE OF INDIA

NEWSLETTER



NEWS FROM THE TORPA COMMUNITY

7th August 2021

Our GOAL: We want to be a joyful community drawing our strength from the Heart of Jesus.



Visiting Families of possible vocations & making our Society known



Social & Economic Empowerment



Our Sacred Space



On Mission



With Children of New Dawn Staff

Our Initiatives of JPIC in our Life and Mission

A story of change: Women led Micro-Enterprise

Our efforts have been consistent in empowering the community to explore alternatives for micro enterprise and to build their resilience through entrepreneurship development. We are grateful to the timely support received from the COR UNUM COVID Project, 28 women are now self-employed through a regular income generating activity at the weekly local market.

Our aim has always been **“to help the poor to help themselves”**. This is always a challenge for a local tribal woman, to withstand the barriers of society and to be economically independent. I shall share one such heart-warming story of change.

The ambience was really grim during the second surge of the Covid pandemic, especially for the tribal community whose daily requirements of the household are met through micro-business and (MFP) Minor Forest Produce. Minor forest produce includes forest resources like chironji, mahua, karanj, rugda, mushrooms, etc. MFP plays a vital role in the socio-economic life of the tribal community. In fact their life without forest resources is unimaginable. Collection and sale of different minor forest produce for commercial purposes are considered an additional income for the household. The tribal community of 15 villages situated in Rania, Jharkhand, seasonally collect various MFPs for sale in the local village market.

The COVID-19 pandemic hit hardest on the agricultural activities of the small and marginal farmers as well as the local market micro-enterprise. The women faced difficulties to sell their MFPs as local markets were non-functional and therefore there were no traders. Currently, women are willing to take risks, only to emerge as successful and resilient entrepreneurs.

28 women came together to collectively sell their MFPs twice a week in Ranchi, the capital of the state of Jharkhand, so as to secure a good price. Their villages are situated at a distance of around 80-90 kms away from Ranchi. The women first hired a tempo (3 wheeler), then they made an e-pass to transport their products.

Being a group of determined women they braved all challenges during the lockdown time. The women gathered at 2 a.m. and travelled to Ranchi in order to reach the market area well in time in order to secure their spot. They returned in the evening after the sale of their products. Earlier, their income from MFPs depended on the price of the traders. Now they earn more than whatever they earned earlier through traders.

These are the women who continue to inspire me and to recharge my being with love for mission.

Sr. Mariaelena Figueredo rscj

Mushroom



Karanj



Chironji



Jamun



MINOR FOREST PRODUCE



Tamarind



Mahua



Rugda



Women ready to travel to bahu bazaar Ranchi

The story of Manonit Bhengra

I shall share with you the story of a courageous young woman called Manonit Bhengra who has made me even more aware of the gratuitous gifts of God in my life.

Manonit Bhengra lives with her 5 siblings in a village called Korla. At the age of 13 her mother died. Her father was addicted to alcohol. He hardly cared for his 5 children. And in October 2019 he passed away. With no parents, Manonit, the eldest in the family, now aged 25 years, has been caring for the family ever since her mother died.

In 2019 I got to know Manonit more closely while she was a K.G. trainee student in our education program. With great dignity, trying to hold back the tears, she shared her reality. She said, that sometimes, they had no food to eat. Every month her younger brother needs a blood transfusion. Her mud house badly needs repair. When there is heavy rain the roof leaks in several places.

Due to the ongoing pandemic Manonit has not been able to secure a job for herself. Whenever possible she takes up daily wage labour that helps her to earn just enough to meet their minimum household requirements. Due to their poor economic situation, her siblings soon dropped out of school. Manonit is the only one who has completed her education till class XII. She dreams of graduating from college.

I visited her family and ever since we have been providing them with essential food supplies, clothing and even blankets for the severe winter. A cycle was also provided so that Manonit could travel the distances.

We want to link the family with the government Social Welfare schemes so that Manonit and her siblings can soon avail of the required government assistance provided to orphans in need. But the bureaucracy and corruption is slowing down the process at every level. Our work of economic empowerment continues.

Sr. Charusheela Gaikwad rscj



Sr. Charu with Manonit's family



Manonit's house

Covid Emergency Support Program

I would like to share with you a glimpse of my interesting ministry. During April-May 2021 the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic reached its peak in India. Our organization was asked to support the government organized vaccination drive.

All the other programs of the organisation were suspended. From June 2021 around 30 staff actively participated in this emergency program. A core committee of 6 staff joined an online discussion to understand the ground reality at village level. We looked at the myths, misconceptions and false information that were misleading the village community. One of the myths was that if the community got vaccinated they would not be able to do hard work in the fields. Since the farming community is fully engaged in agricultural activity during this season, the people greatly resisted the vaccine.

I soon learnt how to use the Google meet platform and shared the link with the other staff of my team so that they too could join the open discussion. I was happy to help my colleagues who were using Google meet for the first time and to teach them the features so that we could proceed for our first online meeting of 30 staff. I also prepared a diagram to explain the hard facts about the Coronavirus and how it affects our lungs. Each one shared simple home remedies like the preparation of herbal drinks, steam inhalation and salt water gargles. We then began to visit the villages in trios.



A Whatsapp group was prepared with 30 staff members. We began posting the photos of the awareness drives conducted daily at village level. We used the Google meet platform to update the data every week. Last year online meetings were unthinkable but this Covid Emergency program pushed us to a novel experience of regularly connecting with each other online and sharing the appreciation, the positive feedback from village elders, their fears, their resistances and above all the immense motivation that we received with each awareness drive.

What stayed with me was a feeling of so much fulfillment – of reaching out to our vulnerable people in need.

Sr. Agnes Guria rscj



My 'lockdown' experience in Australia



Australia is one of the most beautiful countries in the world. But it is not just the beaches, mountains and forests that make it shine, but also the kind and generous hearts of people, like Sr. Rita Carroll and Sr. Genevieve Bannon. Staying with them, I have learnt to be kind, to be supportive to one another, to be patient, to care for the other, to safeguard my personal time for prayer and reading and to update myself in digital technology. During my stay in the ANZ Province, I was deeply touched by their kindness, love and generosity. They really loved me and

took great care of me. I am very grateful to each one for giving me this wonderful opportunity to learn and to grow in my life.

I got an opportunity to visit the Stuartholme School and to attend some religion classes and also to meet with the teachers and the students. I found that the teachers are loving and compassionate towards the students and that the spirit of the Society is very much alive in the school. I was able to go to the school only for a few days because of the sudden lockdown. I took some cooking classes with the students and taught them how to make chapattis. That gave me some interaction with the students and helped me to get to know them. The students enjoyed making and eating Indian chapattis.



During the pandemic, I felt that God gave me an opportunity to spend extra time with Him and to stay faithful to my daily personal prayer. I regularly attended the online mass and the reflections of the day. Initially, I thought that I would miss the Lord's presence, with no offline Eucharistic celebration, but gradually, I realized that this time drew me closer to God.

While in the ANZ Province, the Lord's presence taught me, "Do not get frightened of the storms of life see the light which is I Am, and I will always be with you". I feel that I have grown in courage and confidence. I thank the ANZ Provincial, the IND Provincial and Council for giving me the opportunity for an international experience in Australia. My special thanks to Sr. Rita and Sr. Jenny for accompanying me.



Sr. Kiran Kumrawat rscj

School Day Celebration - 22 July 2021



We celebrated School Day at New Dawn School on the 22nd July 2021, the feast of Mary Magdalene, since this day was always celebrated in St. Madeleine Sophie's time. We began our celebration with an introduction of School Day by Sr. Sushma Topno, the principal. This was done mainly for the benefit of some newly appointed staff. A prayer followed with the lighting of the oil lamp which was placed in front of the picture of St. Madeleine Sophie. As the lamp was lit by the staff, I remembered the words of Madeleine Sophie, saying "Fire brought me into this world". I felt that each of us was being blessed by her presence. At the end of the prayer each one received a bookmark with a message from St. Madeleine Sophie. This was done to make our Society known to the staff we work with. Each one then read aloud the message they received and it was so appropriate for everyone. It was an overwhelming experience that everyone wanted to share their message, even the service staff, confidently read their message loud and clear. As we were listening to the words of Madeleine Sophie, it just felt that our Holy Mother herself was accompanying each one of us in this mission of education. After the prayer the staff entered into lighter moments of games, fun and laughter.

All the staff participated and thoroughly enjoyed the program. The School Day celebrations brought all of us together as one school family. I thank God for this beautiful day which made us more aware that each one of us have an important mission to carry forward - the legacy of a NEW DAWN which Sr. Karuna Mary left behind for this land.

Sr. Neelam Hemrom rscj



Games conducted by Sr. Neelam & Sr. Kiran



Chicken dance by staff

Abundant Blessings of God



I often hear this word and I am fascinated with the expression! The more I dwell on it, the more I enjoy the awareness of God's awesome presence in my life. During the pandemic I was drawn to savour my sacred encounters. I felt forced to search and to find the sudden spark that lit up my heart and to re-visit my Probation experiences. The name and device "*From His fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.*" (John 1:16). I was overjoyed! When I gaze at God's creation here in our campus and surroundings, I see lovely greenery, open fields, varieties of plants, fruits, flowers, trees and all sorts of crawly creatures. Also our village communities, in Jharkhand, greatly depend on forest produce. I

like to recall the plentiful experiences that I enjoy here in Torpa: good health, quiet spaces, a lot of time to remain with the word of God, a grace-filled community, many simple and helpful people around me in my life and ministry, the digital technology to connect with the world, the great expanse of information and knowledge with one single click and above all the ability to make the right choices for mission. God's abundant blessings always surround me. For all the goodness of the Lord I just want to Thank you Lord.....**THANK YOU LORD!!!**



Sr. Sushma Topno rscj



SacredHeart Torpa

 Message



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