

# SOCIETY OF THE SACRED HEART

## PROVINCE OF INDIA

### NEWSLETTER



June 2019

#### **PROVINCE RETREAT & FORMATION PROGRAMMES OF MAY 2019**

Early in the month of May, the On-Going Formation Team of the Province organized a unique retreat based on the Constitutions. It was conducted by three RSCJ of the Province, namely Marie Noronha, Shanti Fernandes and Manisha Gonsalves. Towards the end of May, we were fortunate to have Sr. Kathy Conan with us. She conducted two sessions of on-going formation, one for those in the age group of 60s-70s and the other for those in the age group of 50 and below.

#### **The RSCJ Retreat in Pune**

In May 2019, I was very happy to have the opportunity to attend the 8 day retreat organized for RSCJ in Pune. It was really an experience of “Renewal” for me, and so I am glad to share about it.

The venue, the Postgraduate Block in JDV, was very conducive for the retreat. Each of us had a large airy room with an attached bathroom. There was plenty of space for taking long meditative walks on the spacious grounds. If one did not wish to, one did not even have to go outside, to take a walk in nature, as the rooms were built around 2-3 courtyards with plenty of trees, bushes and birds and with long broad verandahs on which one could take an undisturbed walk. There was the large chapel, which many used, and 2 smaller chapels, one of which was for our particular use.

We were 11 RSCJs who made the retreat. Most of us were “senior citizens” whose ages ranged from around 64 years to 80 years, (91years if one counts Sr. Millicent who left after the 2<sup>nd</sup> day!), and at the other end of the age range were Josephine and Kiran. The retreat theme was the Constitutions. Every morning one of the 3 “Retreat Givers”, Manisha, Shanti and Marie, gave about half an hour’s input, based on the chapters in the 1982 Constitutions, but referring to the 1815 Constitutions as well, drawing from their own experience of living the Constitutions. We were free to use the input according to what inspired us and to organize our own day. In the evening, before supper we had an hour’s shared prayer.

All of us felt, I think, that the very enriching shared prayer in the evening was the highlight of the day. There was no compulsion to share, but most shared from depths of their own experience of living what the Constitutions were inviting us to. It was like a new way of having “Spiritual Exercise” on the Constitutions, based not on theory, but on a long life lived guided by the Constitutions. It was also a very bonding experience as we met each other at depth. Josephine and Kiran too shared at the end how they really appreciated the sharing from which they got so much. I do hope many others too get a similar opportunity.

*Vimala Verghese RSCJ*

## Kathy Conan's session for the age group 60s and 70s (26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> May 2019)



Seventeen of us in the age range 59 to 80 years met for one and a half days reflecting on “**Centering in a Time of Transition**”. The time was short but not too short for us to “draw waters joyfully from the springs of salvation”. We began our sessions by looking at what transitions are affecting us personally now – in myself, as Province, as Society, as Church and in the world; how I feel about these transitions and about being in transition and how I can help transitions become transformative.

William Bridges has described Transition as “the process of letting go of the way things used to be and then taking hold of the way they subsequently become.” As each one shared the transitions they were going through, Kathy wrote them briefly on the black-board. There was such a VARIETY of transitions. I felt connected with those in the group when I could resonate with some of their transitions and there were other transitions that were unique to individuals. This session energized us greatly.

Kathy then took us through the seven steps of Generative Listening which became clearer to me this time round (we had been introduced to this at the Provincial Assembly of May 2017). During our sessions with her, Kathy modelled for us all along what Generative Listening entails. Next she led us through ‘Theory U’ as



a resource for interior life. In doing this she referred to Philippine and how she had *to let go* of values and practices that to her mind were an essential part of religious life, practices that meant a lot to her in order *to let come* other realities more suited to the culture and needs of the places where she was based in the New World at different points of time, e.g. she was called to relativise ways of praying, the order of day and so on.

We spent time sharing “What is my image of an elder/of an rscj who is living her elder years well?” In doing this we recalled with much affection and gratitude what we had received from our sisters from abroad and how they had touched our lives so tangibly. And we reflected on what we need to do and to be to live our elder years well: “What will center me and help me to live this phase from the center?” We heard again the call to keep deepening our understanding of the saying of St. Gregory of Nyssa “**Sin happens whenever we refuse to keep growing**”.

And finally, Kathy did a kind of re-capitulation by reminding us of how God continues to enchant us, to draw us, how he wants to open up parts of ourselves to us more and more, and how I need to let myself feel and know God’s love for me now, at this time in my life. Being centred in my true self – can I accept myself with humility? my giftedness and vulnerabilities? and decide that I am going to live with this person I am. Centred in the Society, I am called to come to know the life of the Society today in other provinces, especially those in my region. I am invited to imagine what the Spirit is calling us to live now and in the near future so that the charism and mission of the Society may have life.

I was amazed at how much we covered in one and a half days. I feel grateful to Kathy and to my sisters who were part of the group for this experience of being nourished for the ongoing journey. Thanks too to Ananda and Terezita who were so delicately sensitive to our needs in the area of food and to those who prepared our rooms for us.

*Phila Gomes RSCJ*

### **Sr. Kathy Conan inspires the New Generation**

The “New Generation” Sessions conducted by Sr. Kathy Conan from 27<sup>th</sup> May to 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019 was a golden opportunity for each of us, New Generation Sisters, to come together and to spend quality time with each other. We could share in depth about matters that concern our Religious life – our prayer, our apostolates, our joys, our struggles, the challenges we encounter. This Inner Renewal Workshop of three and a half days made us reflect on, discuss, and seek clarification on several important themes: Seven Principles of Generative Listening, Prayer and Spiritual life, Spirituality of the Sacred Heart, Adult Development and Relationships in an Intercultural Context.



While we knew Sr. Kathy as our Superior General, a gentle, kind and warm person, always ready to listen to us, we were amazed to see her as an experienced Formator – deeply interested and committed to forming us as good Religious of the Sacred Heart. Having studied carefully the information we gave her in advance about ourselves, Sr. Kathy lovingly responded to our hopes and aspirations. We were in great admiration of the thoroughness and simplicity of her presentations – giving us sufficient time for spontaneous interactions and quiet reflection. The theme for each day unfolded in the appropriate Readings she chose from the New Testament, the Constitutions and from “Life Unfolding”. The beautiful hymns she selected transformed our minds and our hearts.



The personal sharing in small groups brought a new richness and depth to our relationships. We could share freely and deeply with trust and confidence in one another. We were convinced of the need to stay connected with each other, to encourage one another, to support one another. We realized that, to enter into the depth of a person, we need to listen not



another, to support one another. We realized that, to enter into the depth of a person, we need to listen not

only through our ears but also to listen with our eyes, our mind, and our heart. We realized the importance of putting aside our own prejudices while we listen to the sincere sharing of the other with an open, loving, caring heart. The session on Inter-culturality made us aware of our cultural differences which could affect our relationships in community, if we do not keep in mind our differences as also our uniqueness as spiritual persons. Sr. Kathy helped us to see how to intensify our Inner Spiritual Life through regular prayer and self-surrender to the Spirit, and by developing a deep, strong bonding among ourselves. She thus prepared us to encounter one another in 'care-frontation' that we may all grow into the fullness of our personalities as Religious – ready and willing to dissolve our personal differences and to resolve our communitarian conflicts that we may focus on and promote the success of the mission of Jesus entrusted to us.

At the end of the sessions, we felt renewed, transformed and inspired to work with zeal and enthusiasm in our respective ministries. Building up a deep strong personal relationship with the Sacred Heart of Jesus and building up deep strong personal relationships with one another in Religious Life can help build up the Kingdom of God among all the varieties of people in our apostolic ministries.

While we thank Sr. Anila, our provincial, and the On-Going Formation Team for organizing this spiritual and religious renewal programme, we are grateful to Sr. Ananda and Sr. Terezita for lovingly caring for all our material needs. May Sr. Kathy Conan continue to be the Divine instrument to draw down abundant graces on us and on our whole Congregation, now and in the years to come. Sacred Heart of Jesus, make our hearts like unto Yours.

*Anita Nazareth RSCJ*

### **Language of Love**

Sr. Kathy you appreciated the graceful decoration of our prayer corner.  
You appreciated an inspirational poster on the notice board and other things as well.  
Oh, how beautiful are your eyes to notice the goodness around!  
Truly you inspired us to be appreciative of one another.  
Indeed your word of **appreciation** is a language of love.

You gave us a quality time to share our vocation story and the graces received  
It opened us up to a reality.  
We listened to each other with an undivided heart.  
You surely tapped in us the ability to listen compassionately.  
We felt loved, understood and supported.  
Indeed a **quality time** is a language of love which created a deeper bond among us.

Togetherness at delicious meals, life giving mass and a  
Fun-filled recreation filled our emotional love tank.  
The renewing sessions led us to draw out the 'care-front and a **Self Awareness** goal'.  
The encouraging and passion-filled words of Sr. Anila fired us to carry our mission together.  
Indeed **togetherness** is a language of love which enables us to work together for our **common mission**.

Thanks do we render to Sisters Kathy and Anila and to our supportive ongoing formation team!

**Anita Kongari RSCJ**