

# SOCIETY OF THE SACRED HEART PROVINCE OF INDIA NEWSLETTER



14<sup>th</sup> February 2023

## NEWSLETTER FROM THE HAREGAON COMMUNITY

### The New York Sacred Heart School visits Haregaon

On 9<sup>th</sup> December 2022, a team from the Convent of the Sacred Heart, New York comprising 11 students and 3 teachers arrived in Haregaon for an Indian immersion experience. Mr. Michael Chang had visited Haregaon in 2020 to see the possibility of his students coming to Haregaon. Due to the Pandemic, this visit was delayed. When the group arrived, they stayed at Bhokar and came to Haregaon each day. On their arrival at St. Theresa's School, Haregaon, on the first day, I told them: "It is Sr. Shalini's birthday today". Although they did not know her, they all came to the Convent to sing for Sr. Shalini. When they saw Mater's Frame on the steps they felt at home with the sense of 'One Heart and One Mind'. They spent the rest of the day visiting classrooms, the Nursery School, learning Kabbadi and Kho-Kho from Mr. Salve and Mr. Balraj, our Sports teachers. The kind-hearted foreign students won over the affection and love of the Indian students, with our students spontaneously calling them 'Didi'.



The second day, 10<sup>th</sup> December, I took them to visit Daulatabad Fort and Ellora Caves. They spent the whole day of 11<sup>th</sup> December with us in Haregaon. They attended Sunday Mass and met the parishioners. After breakfast, we visited students' homes in Mahankalwadgaon which is 12 kilometers away from Haregaon. Our students welcomed them while their parents happily offered them hospitality, offering them sugarcane and groundnuts from their fields, giving them the



opportunity to water crops in the field. The visiting students were eager to experience the hardships in the lives of the families they visited in the village. They asked questions about the facilities available to farmers from the government. They felt sad to see the sorry plight of the village farmers. The afternoon was spent with our hostel girls – dancing, singing, painting, and playing. Though our children spoke in Marathi, the visitors developed a close relationship with them

by speaking the Language of the Heart.



On 12<sup>th</sup> December, we celebrated St. Madeleine Sophie's birthday with a small skit on her life. The Quiz Competition which followed was conducted in Marathi and in English. All participated in the Fun Fair held on the School Ground and enjoyed the variety of foods available in the numerous Food Stalls. Surely Madeleine Sophie in Heaven must be overjoyed to see students and teachers of her Institutions happily living and joyfully working in collaboration, in harmony with one another.

What I admired in these visiting students is that every night they sat together to reflect on the happenings of the day and how it had influenced them – emotionally, intellectually, spiritually! They had imbibed the compassionate spirit of the Sacred Heart with the guidance of their teachers – Michael, Joan and Barbara.

This visit provided our Haregaon students an opportunity to interact with American students, to share their thoughts and dreams, to realize that we all aspire to live a simple, genuine, loving and service-oriented way of life, inspired by the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This growing relationship with Sacred Heart School, New York, will broaden the outlook of our Haregaon students and enable them to think globally and to develop friendly relations with good people around the world.



*Jyoti Gajbhiv rscj*

### **Haregaon Matmauly Yatra**

This year's Haregaon Yatra was a unique and heart-touching experience for me. People from all the parishes in Ahmednagar district expressed their devotion to Mother Mary during nine Saturdays preceding the Feast Day – coming in procession, reciting the Holy Rosary and celebrating the Holy Eucharist – with the local people joining in the Eucharist. One Saturday, Sr. Jyoti and I joined the Padayatras (Walking Pilgrimage), with people of all faiths, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, all walking in peace and harmony. The nine-day preparation for the feast included the recitation of the novena prayer and the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

The second Saturday of September (this year it was the 10th of September 2022) is the main feast day of the Matmauly Yatra. People from far away villages came walking and began assembling in Haregaon on the previous day. The Yatra commenced at 9.00 am on the Feast Day with a Gold Crown being placed on the head of Mother Mary. Every hour, the Feast Day Eucharist was celebrated. Bishop Lourdes Daniel was the main celebrant at the 4.00 pm. Holy Eucharist, which was followed by adoration of the Blessed Sacrament till around 11.00 pm. Singing of devotional Bhajans continued the whole night and culminated with the Holy Eucharist celebrated at 8.00 am on Sunday, 11th September.



Good arrangements were made to accommodate the lakhs of pilgrims at the Yatra. The premises of St. Theresa Girls High School were opened to welcome the pilgrims. Tea and refreshments were arranged for all the priests and sisters joining the yatra. The Sisters' convent welcomed the Bishop and priests for the night supper. Our Bhokar sisters spent the night of the feast with us in Haregaon.

The unexpected rain at night destroyed the beautiful covering we had put over the convent grounds. We admired the efforts of Sr. Jyoti and Sr. Divya to restore the cover while getting fully drenched in the rain. However, this did not dampen the joyful and devotional spirit of the yatra.

For me, this year's Matmauly Yatra gave me a rich experience of the deep devotion of the simple people towards Mother Mary – expressed in their devotional singing and dancing while many lined up peacefully to take *darshan* of Matmauly. Outside our parish church, an entertaining Jatra (fair) was organized with sweet shops and games stalls for the children. Inspired by the devotion of the people, I experienced an increase in my faith and loving devotion to Mother Mary.

*Albina Guria rscj*

### **Welcome Sr. Geradette**



We were thrilled to welcome Sr. Geradette (Gera) to reside in our Haregaon Community though it was only for two days. Her very presence with us has left us with an indelible experience of joyfulness and graciousness. She was also delighted to visit Haregaon after 35 years. We were able to chat, to share, and to ask her questions to which she responded in her wise and inspiring manner. She challenged us to be more sensitive to the needs of the people and to take responsibility for the fulfilment of our RSCJ mission in Haregaon with special attention to the promotion of vocations.

The school and the staff had the opportunity to listen to her words of wisdom at the morning assembly and in the staff room. She encouraged and advised the students to listen to their hearts, discern and be successful. She appreciated each staff member for his / her contribution to the mission of the Sacred Heart. They were enlightened by her gracious

presence and simplicity.

At the end of her stay, our two Communities of Bhokar and Haregaon joined the Parish fathers for a Solemn Eucharistic Celebration, which was followed by a Get-together – to celebrate the birthdays of Sr. Sabita (CCR) and Fr. Sachin in the Bhokar community.

*Divya Kerketta rscj*

### **My Sadhana Experience**

I had read books written by the Spiritual Guru Fr. Anthony de Mello S.J. I had heard about Sadhana Institute from our Sisters who had participated in Renewal Programmes there and had returned, liberated and renewed, energized and enthusiastic. It was my hope that the Good Lord would choose me at a favourable time to experience the transforming power of the Sadhana Institute. That auspicious moment arrived when Sr. Anila Verghese, our provincial, confirmed my participation in the 50-day Tanmay Course at Sadhana Institute, Lonavala, from 1st September to 21st October 2022. I will always cherish this priceless gift – with gratitude to our RSCJ Indian Province, for the



generous sponsorship, with gratitude to the St. Theresa's Girls High School for sanctioning my leave.



That long awaited day dawned on 1st September 2022 when I entered the sacred portals of Sadhana Institute. I felt reassured by the words of Juliana of Norwich: "All shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well." My first meeting with my course companions, all professionals in their respective ministries, yet humbly and eagerly seeking renewal, gave me the confidence that all shall be well during my stay here. The participants, 22 of them, with 15 Sisters, 5 Priests and 2 Brothers,

hailed from every part of India. The Ice-breaking session revealed our strengths as also our vulnerabilities while it bonded us into a privileged community seeking renewal under the guidance of excellent mentors, Fr. Pravin Severeekar, Fr. Joe Parakath and Fr. Edwin Dang.

After four days of Orientation, we were initiated into the practice of Vipassana in the style of Goenkaji. Mr. Mario, a certified Vipassana teacher came from Goa to guide us. Since I was the only sister who had done Vipassana earlier, I was incorporated as a Sevika, a mediator between the teacher and the participants. The long hours of observing the rise and fall of Body Sensations produced an inner cleansing in all of us. I was able to clear up and to release some of my deep seated emotions. Each day ended with the Metta session – radiating vibrations of peace to the world around.

The Group Therapy Sessions proved to be a death-resurrection experience for me. We agonized while listening to and to sharing our painful histories. It was very difficult for me to accept and to release the deep-rooted emotions of anger and resentment that had accumulated within me over the years and which had controlled my behaviour and influenced my lifestyle. The choice lay before me – to get it out and become free – now or never. I chose to be free – to undergo the inner struggle, to overcome my bodily weakness, to rise above my physical and mental ill-health. The resurrection came as the light beyond the tunnel – I felt free and light. With a unique and deep experience of freedom, harmony and peace. "Blessed are the clean of heart, they shall see God". With my own inner cleansing, I was able to experience God's infinite love. I returned to my community with renewed energy and blissfulness. I can now radiate the love and joy of the divine – living in harmony with the whole of creation – attuned to the joys and sorrows of all living beings.

The Sadhana Institute, the brainchild of Fr. Anthony de Mello, has continued his Mission of helping participants to find inner freedom, to attain wholeness and integration, to discover the divine in all things and all things in the Divine. The Institute has been a beacon for those seeking spiritual wellness and renewal in a natural ambience on a picturesque hill station, Lonavala, in the Western Ghats.

*Anita Nazareth rscj*