

SEPTEMBER 2023



NEWSLETTER
SOCIETY OF THE SACRED HEART
PROVINCE OF INDIA



**NEWS FROM THE KRISTHPREMALAY
COMMUNITY**

➤➤➤ A CONSTANT CONCERN OF MY HEART

For many weeks now the state of Manipur in north-east India has been in the news for all the wrong reasons. The culture of peace and harmony that had reigned in the beautiful hills and valleys of Manipur is now replaced by hatred, violence, killings, destruction of property and displacement of entire villages. I try to follow the news by reading all that comes in “Indian Currents” and in the newspaper and watch the news on T.V. I see hundreds killed and thousands homeless. This terrible situation of suffering has gone on so long without coming to an end. All this is a cause for constant pain in my heart. I wonder what I can do. I can only pray – pray for the people of Manipur, for the people of goodwill, who are trying to help, the leaders and politicians who have the responsibility to bring this to a peaceful conclusion without delay, for our Bharat Mata (Mother India). We pray in our community, too, for this intention. It gives me much joy and consolation that our college has reached out and is sponsoring the education of 4 girls from Manipur in our hostel and in our college. It is a call to all people of good will to reach out in any way they can.

Sr. Terezita rscj

➤➤➤ A STEP TAKEN TOWARDS BECOMING A NEW PROVINCE

A historic moment for the Indian Province – the departure of the first 2 candidates for the ASIANZ pre-novitiate! Much preparation had preceded this event – the correction of Aadhar cards, police verification - several times, passport and visa work, the making of uniform skirts, the purchase of ‘trousseau’ requirements, medical tests, a brief look at the map of the Philippines, etc. etc.

At last, the awaited moment arrived, and we were on our way to the airport, seen off by Sr. Anila and the community.



The Two zoom meetings we had attended had made us familiar with the names and faces of the 2 Indonesian candidates. We were able to greet them by name when they met us at the Manila airport with Kathy and Kiran. Soon we were on our way in the van, I, seated next to the driver, who explained the various interesting sites, as we passed them, and the rest at the back, chatting. On arrival a photo session and refreshments followed and soon we found ourselves quite at home.

The candidates then slowly settled into their program with Kathy. I stayed on for 6 days to get to know, a little, this part of our new province, especially the pre-novitiate and novitiate. Digna had very kindly offered to show me something of Manila. As I was interested in the history of the Philippines, she took me for a whole morning to a large museum. There I saw the visual depiction of the history – from pre-historic times to the 300 years of Spanish rule, the 80 years of American rule and the 5 war-torn years of the Japanese occupation. It helped me to understand the traces of Spanish influence there and the use of English as a common language. I was amazed to see the large quantity of gold used in pre-Spanish times, not only for jewelry, but also for utensils and other objects of daily use. “People’s Power”, the very courageous struggle, in which our sisters too were involved, to win democratic rule for the Philippines, was presented through a documentary film. On the way Digna and I had very interesting discussions about this movement and also about formation. I was happy to get time for some chats with Kathy too, about formation.

One day I had a two-hour sharing about India, followed by a delicious supper, with the elderly sisters in Manalo, the elder-care house, not far away. I was impressed by the interest they showed in a wide variety of topics and the very pertinent questions they asked about India. I also had an overnight visit to Montalban, the novitiate house. I was very interested to get to know about our St. Madeleine Sophie Project there, which works with women and children. Kiran, who is part of that community, and Michiko, a second-year novice, took me for a long drive around the town, during which I also visited the families of two of the women who are in the Project.

As I left after 6 days, I carried away warm memories of the kindness and hospitality I had received. What had been mere names before – Sophia House, Manalo, Montalban and the names and faces of the sisters there, now became concretized. We now also have, besides Kiran, 2 pre-novices in the Philippines. Our new province is taking a clearer shape in my mind and heart.

Sr. Vimala Verghese rscj

>>> VOCATION MINISTRY

One of the ministries that I have been involved in since my first vows is Vocation ministry. At times the following questions have often perplexed me: Why do we need vocations? Do we really want young women to join us? Do we pray earnestly for new vocations? Are we welcoming towards the new members? Are we planning for our Society's future? I personally feel that each one of us has a responsibility for vocation promotion (not only those who have been named). I am deeply humbled when I think that I am here because someone somewhere prayed for me. The reality of today is the same as Jesus had said "labourers are few", for we know many are called but few are chosen.

I sometimes feel that we often focus on perfectionism and formation of mind but the qualities of the heart often go unnoticed. We need to tap into our humane gifts, strengths and abilities of our sisters. Maybe not all of us are blessed with gifts of mind but we surely can produce 40-50% in some areas if not 100%.

The ministry of vocation promotion is often very disappointing and frustrating, many a times I feel like giving up but then I look at the charism of our Society "to discover and reveal the love of the heart of Jesus allowing ourselves to be transformed by the Spirit of God.." and I feel the stirring within me to continue. There is an urgency today to encourage young people to commit themselves to religious life. At the time of my probation when we visited Hotel Biron, there is this tree which is more than two hundred years old that Sophie has met and it gives me hope. I think of our Society as this tree – old and haggard yet standing firm. New shoots keep sprouting from time to time and become a part of this old tree trunk.

Our vocation is not to run institutions but to impart the love of the Heart of Jesus through our works and mission.

Let us pray earnestly for vocations and make efforts to His love known to all the people whose lives we touch. Let us ask the Spirit of God to help us in this ministry and trust in him.

Sr. Deodita Gudinho rscj

>>> IKS - INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM

National Education Policy 2020 could not be implemented throughout the country in 2020 due to the Covid Pandemic. So post pandemic i.e. during the last year itself our college started planning and preparations for its implementation in the academic year 2023-24.

Here I am going to share only about IKS (Indian Knowledge system) – a mandatory subject under NEP.

Our college offers the following courses under IKS -

- Indian Epics
- Indian Folktales
- Kautilya's *Arthashastra*: Statecraft, spies and subterfuge
- The idea of Bharat: Elements of Political thought and structures in Ancient India
- Minerals and metals in ancient India
- Indian Ecology
- Animal husbandry in Ancient India
- Nanotechnology in Ancient India

I am sure that from the above mentioned titles you all have guessed the mission and vision of this paper. If not please check out IKS website on the internet; it's worth it.

So the Department of Chemistry is conducting the course on Minerals and Metals in Ancient India. The journey of research, shortlisting, finalizing and preparing the syllabus for the same was very stressful and full of anxiety as none of us had a clue as to what exactly are we supposed to do!! Anyway we did manage to finalize the paper and finally started the lectures which are held twice a week; whereas my main Chemistry paper has been allotted only one lecture a week!!

This is a common course, i.e. for both Science and Arts streams. The students were given the choice to select any one of the above mentioned IKS papers. So my class has 35 students of which only 3 are BSc students. I had to start from the scratch – what are minerals and metals? Since this part is actual chemistry I was comfortable teaching this to the beginners. When it came to metals and minerals in Vedic age, I realized that I knew nothing about it and so began my frantic search for references to prepare for my lectures. As far as Vedic era is concerned there is a lot of material on Indian websites. The authenticity of many remains a question mark. Eventually I was able to get a whole lot of documentaries on BBC and Discovery YouTube channels and other websites (there is very limited literary material). Well I managed to collate things and started teaching and I am actually enjoying the subject. I am learning something new that I wouldnot have otherwise ventured into.

As a Chemistry teacher I am always teaching some concepts, derivations or numericals. Even though I do take up a discussion on some value in all my lectures; I have never had critical discussions in my class. This subject gives me that opportunity. I realized that these students are like clean slates; they don't have any idea of Vedic era or what is being projected as Vedic era. After all, they are just teenagers. So in reality this becomes an opportunity to inculcate critical thinking in these young women. There are a few students though not all who do participate in discussions and raise questions.

Currently, I am teaching Minerals and Metals in Vedic literature; again very interesting to know the Sanskrit names and the history of how metals were discovered and smelted for making early weapons and jewelry.

I personally think that this could be an opportunity for us educators to teach the young generation the factual history and help them understand what is the difference between the reality and what is being projected about the glorious past of the great Bharat!

Sr. Rajani Khandagale rscj