

SOCIETY OF THE SACRED HEART

PROVINCE OF INDIA

NEWSLETTER



August 2018

NEWS FROM TORPA...

Youth Ministry

Youth ministry is a challenging, yet an energizing, ministry. I have been fortunate to join, now as animator, the same youth group of my own Parish, which had directed me to religious life and I am proud of it. Though there are many young people in our Parish we have failed to bring them together and guide them. Our young energetic youth director, Fr. James, always comes up with numerous ideas to unite and enlighten the youth. One of them of this year was – A Youth Convention, which was held on 14th -16th June in Dorma. The topic was – “Our Identity as Tribals.” Around 110 youth were present from different Parishes of our Torpa Vicariate.

There were two main speakers. Fr. Bisu Benjamin very beautifully unfolded the theme, “our own identity as a follower of Christ” with a game. He posed challenging questions – What is my relationship with Jesus? How do I relate to Him in my day-to-day life? How do I identify with Him? He urged them to build up their foundation of faith in Jesus alone, so that their spiritual life may be unshaken even in a crisis. He requested them to personally know about Jesus, read the Bible daily and take part more in the holy sacraments, even in their busy lives.

The next speaker was the Social Activist, Mr. Gladson Dungdung. He spoke very convincingly about the CNT (Chotanagpur Tenancy Act) and the SPT (Santal Parganas Tenancy Act) Acts in depth. He directly challenged them to be aware of the political situations of their own areas; to take interest to know the laws, the government and the Constitution; to know our own rights; to preserve our own culture, land, customs and identity. He really stirred the heart of the young to work rigorously for the next election. That made them to think and they were able to ask many questions to him.

All of us truly enjoyed those three days. There were varieties of action songs, games and tribal dance competitions. Everyone was thrilled and in awe to see these young, energetic youth, whose lives were imprinted with the tribal identity of the language, of music, songs and dances and with their very own life style, which they can show to the world. Everyone went home carrying beautiful memories and learning to light up their own areas with the new insights they had gained.

Sushma rscj

My hostel experience

During this year I am very happy because this is my 2nd year of experience in the hostel and because I now have a hostel warden and two girls for cooking. I have experienced their support and love. In the hostel we have altogether more than 79 college students and 4 staff residents.

This year we had various activities for the hostel girls. The sisters of our community took sessions with them, for them to know about their life and to make them to know about today's situations. If there is any programme or any party in the Church, all the hostel girls also take part in it. They help for any need in C.W.D or in the college like transplanting. This year the hostel reopened on 4th of January. On 4th of May we had a farewell for B.A. part 3 and the K. G. trainees. We gave them a small gift each. After the programme we had supper together with our sisters, staff, and hostel girls. After that we danced. Every one enjoyed themselves very much.

This year I had some difficulties also, when the hostel warden suddenly left and the cooking girls also left at the same time. So, when new ones came I was very happy. There are problems also with a few girls, who do not listen to instructions given. Before their exam we sent them home. After that I felt sorry for them. I prayed for them. After two days passed I phoned them and they apologized. I felt happy. When their marks came and they had done well, I was very happy.

Mukta rscj

Bal Sansad (Children's Cabinet)

On 19th July I visited some of our educational centers where the Torpa Rural Development Society for Women (TRDSW) has provided one teacher for Std 1 and 2 in 35 government schools and in 40 centers. This venture is sponsored by the Tata Trust and it is called "School and Community based Quality Improvement Program (SC QuIP) for Primary level Education" in the Torpa Block of the Khunti District, Jharkhand.

Beside their school syllabus, for children's all round development, there are planned extracurricular activities like Bal Sansad, kitchen garden, library, sports, and preservation of traditional art and craft etc. Under the scheme, "Education for All", the Jharkhand Education Project is trying its level best to give quality education to children, but only providing material resources does not create conducive atmosphere for education. One has to see how children will be retained in the school and there will be less drop outs. So certain objectives have been planned by the government to enhance good governance and leadership:

- Attractive school building and compound and its maintenance.
- Ensuring the regularity in attendance of the children as well as of teachers.
- Ensuring teaching learning materials are available and their maintenance.
- Ensuring clean drinking water, toilet facilities and cleanliness, monitoring of mid-day meal and distribution.
- Ensuring that the school has a compound and a kitchen garden.
- Cleanliness of the school and the surrounding area
- Cultural programs, use of the school library and its monitoring.

The above jobs are distributed to various (child) ministers so they learn to take responsibility and execute accordingly. They meet once a month. During my interaction with them each one of them knew their responsibility well and how they have to carry it out. E.g. if a child is absent in the school for 3 to 4 days, immediately 2 of them go and enquire why their classmate is absent, and bring him or her to the school. They were vocal. If there is any problem in the school they complain to the highest authority when they visit the school or to the school managing committee or in the Gram Sabha.



When asked, “What is your dream in life?” very surprising answers came. Three of them wanted to be a pilot, three said: doctor, nurse, teacher, the 4th girl said she wanted to be a nun!

When I went to Kasmar village and interacted with them I was stunned to see their understanding of *bal sansad*. The cabinet is based on the Central cabinet. They go as ministers - Prime Minister, Health Minister, Food Minister, Water Minister, Cleanliness Minister etc. So children understand the work and how the sansad functions.

I was very happy to see the way children were taking their responsibility and carrying out their responsibilities. In their future life these children will become responsible citizens of India and will understand their role in Society in a better way. I was happy I was part of this meeting with them.

Charusheela rscj

Inclusion of knowledge and technology at village level schools

It is a well known fact that the library is the biggest warehouse of information through books and other printed resources and Google has the widest database when it comes to searching information online.

Library Setup Programme:

At TRDSW, we have understood the importance of both online and offline media in education. Therefore, we started the task of setting up libraries at 20 village schools from July 2018. Here, it was an environment of creativity and thought for our program staff and school children as they explored school corners and classrooms and have transformed them into inspiring spaces for learning. On the walls are colourful themes inspired by nature like the forests, oceans and so on and on one side are books arranged as per interests. This activity has been an atmosphere for creativity, knowledge and camaraderie as the staff and children spent ample time together in the Library Setup programme.



Library Programme



LIBRARY
SETUP

Staff and school children at the Library Mundari books for tribal children

ITE – Integrated Techniques of Education:

We love technology and the same sentiment resounded with the children who participated in the ITE three-day camp at Khajurdag school. It was amazing to see the student's eagerness to learn and their zeal to present various projects on the inauguration day of the camp on 1st August 2018. Google and other online tools aided the search for presentation topics. But the choice of indigenous topics like forests, people and minerals came naturally to the children as the land of Jharkhand is surrounded by many of these natural resources and forest reserves. This truly was a combination of knowledge of the land and implementation of technology. The implementation of presentation tools like Microsoft PowerPoint and an overhead projector with live walkthroughs were performed with ease by the participating students. Also, the excitement to learn new technology enabled these village children to adopt to laptops with such confidence. Each day 3 schools participated. In one such group consisting of 3 boys from Khajurdag school was a boy named Birsa Munda – his name is taken from the legendary freedom fighter of Jharkhand Birsa Munda himself. Imagine today's Birsa Munda has transformed from the bow and arrow era by adopting to new skills on the laptop.



ITE

ITE Camp at Khajurdag School
Birsa Munda (1st from left with
his team)

Mariaelena rscj

Our Pastoral Involvements

Our community, as everyone knows, is basically involved in the ministry of our Centre and that of our school. However, like many of our ministries, we also have some pastoral involvements and responsibilities. Sushma, and last year Valeria too, taught in the Sunday School; Sushma is in the Youth Ministry and for every big feast or religious celebration in the church, Mahila Vikas and the Children of the New Dawn, along with the other institutions and the Catholic Sabha, the Mahila Sangh and the Youth Group are given responsibilities. The Superior of the Community and the Principal of the school are automatically part of the Parish Council.

Two big celebrations in 2018 were two ordinations, the second one being that of Anuj, the brother of Sr. Neelam rscj. Numerous Parish Council meetings preceded the celebration itself, because it is not just the family, members of the deacon's congregation and immediate friends who come, but many parishioners from the villages around. The parish "bageecha" with its large shady mango trees and stage at one end and colourful pandal was the venue for the ceremony. It is taken for granted that as many priests as can come from the neighbouring parishes and numerous priests from the deacon's congregation come to concelebrate. So the large stage was filled with priests and it is a real "Dhoom Dham" celebration, Jharkhand style with loud music, drums, dance and song! The deacon to be ordained was solemnly brought to the venue walking on new baskets placed for his feet. All were given lunch at the end! It is like the feeding of the 5000!



Our Mahila Vikas hostelites did the recessional dance. The Children of the New Dawn had been given the responsibility for the “Bible Juloo”. For the first ordination we decided to do something colourful which we had seen in other celebrations elsewhere. One cute little podge, with a winsome smile, from the lower classes, seated in a decorated basket carried aloft by a bigger boy, held the Bible high above her head. Two smaller boys in white held up either end of her “train”. Another two carried candles, a garland and agarbatti were carried by two girls. All held their breath as the basket was lowered carefully to the ground and the bible bearer “descended”. All had smiles on faces as she carried the bible solemnly to the waiting celebrant. However, after that the young “train bearers” turned around and unceremoniously started marching off with the train still in their hands and the poor mite had to walk backwards for 2-3 steps, still retaining the beatific smile and folded hands, till someone hastily rescued her. It was decided after that, that the next “Bible Juloo” would be simpler!!

Vimala rscj