

SOCIETY OF THE SACRED HEART PROVINCE OF INDIA NEWSLETTER



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NEWSLETTER FROM THE HAREGAON COMMUNITY

Christmas Celebration with our Students

Every year, we, at St Theresa Girls High School, Haregaon, celebrate Christmas with a Christmas skit, singing Christmas carols and the giving of Christmas gifts. Since we could not celebrate Christmas last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there was more excitement among the students in the school to celebrate Christmas this academic year – freed from the restrictions of the Covid lockdown.



The Christmas Play, arranged by Mrs. Vaishali Sojwal, on the theme “Hope and Sharing” was a good response to the harsh realities of the Covid situation. After the skit, I enquired from the students their responses to the Covid situation. What did they do during the extended period of the lockdown? Their stories were heart-touching!

- 1) **Samiksha Parkhe**, a 9th standard student, was active in encouraging the people of the village to get vaccinated against Covid-19. When the medical team had come to the village, she noticed that many villagers were afraid to take the vaccine. Samiksha accompanied the medical team, going from house to house, explaining the need to take the vaccine. She even accompanied some villagers to the medical camp and remained by their side while they took the vaccine.
- 2) **Sneha Rana**, another student, went to the assistance of a family in the neighbourhood. While the grandmother went to the vaccine camp, Sneha took care of the children at home. She cleaned the house and even cooked food for the family.
- 3) **Soni Koli**, our hostel girl, looked after her neighbours who were detected positive with the Coronavirus. She provided food for them and even did their field work, collecting cotton on their behalf.
- 4) **Chaitali Pawar** looked after an old lady, cleaned her wound and brought a mask for her to stay safe.

The Coronavirus was spreading, but reaching out to neighbours in need did not stop. One child informed her parents that their neighbours had contracted Covid. She insisted that her parents provide food for those neighbours during the whole week while they were in isolation. When the village people were not in a position to go out of their homes to purchase groceries for their needs, some of our children willingly accepted the responsibility of bringing them groceries from the

market. Times were difficult for everyone but these children went out of their way to help the poor and needy. When fear was spreading everywhere, the children instilled courage in everyone by their own good example. They brought joy and hope into the lives of all the people. Education in St. Theresa's has really transformed our children. I feel proud of our students, who risked their own lives, to bring new life, a healthy life, a joy-filled life, to all our people in Haregaon.

Jyoti Gajbhiv rscj

The Joy of Contentment

In the second week of January 2022, we visited Khattoor farm. Some poor Catholic families, who formerly belonged to our St. Theresa's Parish, Haregaon, have now settled there. They are landless labourers, offering the work of their hands to serve those landowners in their fields. They are glad to be given the opportunity to work on the lands, though they earn a small amount, quite insufficient even for their daily needs.

Sr. Jyoti showed concern for the poor financial condition of these Catholic families and obtained from the Bishop's House, Nashik, some Covid relief to provide food rations to these families. The joy of gratitude and of contentment was seen on the smiling faces of all these people.

Albina Guria rscj

My dream accomplished

Two years ago, when I was assigned to the Haregaon Community, Sr. Anila had given me the mission of visiting the people in their homes and praying with them. However with the lockdown, I could not fulfill this outreach mission. Instead, I utilized my time in praying for the people in our Community Chapel. Since I am not able to see well enough to read, Sr. Shalini does the Spiritual Reading, and I listen attentively and meditate.

When the lockdown eased, I was able to get into contact with many young women, who had studied in and had passed out of Kamgar Nursing School where I had worked. I was happy to hear that they were now well settled in life, some even holding good permanent Government jobs. While I was working in the Nursing School, it was my dream that the poor should benefit from Nursing Education and should come up in life. I thank God for making my dream come true.

Cecilia Adhav rscj

The Power of Love

Having bid goodbye to my beloved mother and father, both of whom went to God in April-May 2021, I returned to my community in Haregaon. However, my sorrowing heart could not open up to reach out in love to those around me. The school being closed, I started keeping myself busy working in the garden or on the field in the company of Sr. Albina. The hostel girls returned and brought new joy into my life. I loved to be with them and to take motherly care of them, supervising the preparation of their meals, in the absence of the cooking women, and looking after all their other needs.

Love once again flowered in my heart and I was inspired to use all my God-given talents to nurture these young 'plants' who living and studying in our hostel, that they may grow into



strong, confident, mature and fruitful ‘trees’ – to bring joy and beauty and new life to our world. Some sacrifices I had to make with little time for myself and for my personal works. But Love transformed me into a missionary – longing to bring good news to the poor and simple girl students. “Whatever you do, do it with love”, said Mother Teresa. I experienced the power of love – strengthening me to do everything for the glory of God and for the glory of our girls – enabling them to become the beautiful loving human beings that God has destined them to be.

Divya Kerketta rscj

Joys of being in Haregaon

I have been serving in Haregaon for quite a number of years. I have touched the hearts of many people and they in turn have touched my heart and inspired me to renew my commitment to the apostolate in Haregaon – working for the greater glory of God and for the greater good of these people in the School and in the Parish of this Haregaon mission.

One such inspirational experience was my encounter with one of our ex-students, Julia Ohol. In my first year of teaching in this school, I was impressed by Julia, this smart and well-mannered girl, studying in the 7th standard, neatly dressed and with shining sparkling eyes. On visiting her home, I learnt that she came from a very poor family, living in a rented one-room house. Her parents were daily wage-earners. They had come from a distant village to Haregaon for the sake of their children’s education. Julia was highly motivated to work hard at her studies to raise the standard of life of her family. She completed her School education and moved on to Nursing School. With a B.Sc. in nursing and a post-graduate degree as well, Julia got a post as staff nurse in Dhirubai Ambani Hospital, Mumbai. When I met Julia again, she was beaming with confidence. With her good income, she had educated her younger siblings, two brothers and a sister, to become professionally qualified and to acquire good posts for themselves in society. Michael and Kalpana Ohol, the parents, are proud of all their children for their sincere efforts to come up in life. In one of my early visits to their house, Julia’s father had taken out a small wooden box to show me. I wondered which precious jewel was safely preserved there in! Michael opened the box to show me his treasure – the carefully preserved result cards of Julia from the 1st standard onwards. This was his wealth, his priceless possession. His faith and trust in the goodness and hardworking spirit of Julia had paid rich dividends for the entire family.



Julia is one bright example among innumerable girl students who have studied in our school and have gone on to acquire greatness in various fields of specialization, rising in life, financially, socially and spiritually too we hope. They often come to meet us to express their gratitude. They feel great joy at seeing the progress of the Haregaon mission.

Last year, when the School reopened in January 2021 after the Christmas holidays, I was very happy to meet the students and began to teach them enthusiastically. The sight of children coming to School, after the first lockdown, delighted all of us. Then the School closed once again abruptly in the month of March 2021. Even the hostel girls had to be sent home. We all missed the sound of children’s voices. Like the other sisters, I too got engaged in garden activities – planting and caring for the plants. Sr. Jyoti had planted number of fruit trees in the field. I began to nurture and water these plants regularly to see them grow strong, healthy and fruitful. The banana tree flowered and gave its first fruits.

I took care of the sick members of our community and nursed them back to health in regular consultation with the doctor. Animals and birds too received my attention to remain well and healthy.

The children are again enjoying classroom learning from August 2021. The smiles and laughter of children brought joy and new life to the teachers and sisters alike. We are all hoping that the Coronavirus is finally dead and buried – never to rise again on the face of the earth.

Anita Nazareth rscj