

SOCIETY OF THE SACRED HEART PROVINCE OF INDIA NEWSLETTER



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NEWSLETTER FROM THE HAREGAON COMMUNITY

Back to Haregaon Back Home....

Coming to Haregaon is like returning home – the familiar places and people brought back happy memories of the 9 long years that I had spent here as a PTV and PY. It's been a month since I am here but I feel I always belonged here – so fully involved in ministry and community straight away.

Many things have changed for the better with all the developments both in the school and community and of course the Parish Church. The radiant faces of young and old for having met me, their old friend and accomplice, brought much cheer and warmth to me. I felt proud to meet so many of our ex-students, now well settled in life – fruit of the Sacred Heart Education received at our school.



Another source of joy was to get back to teaching English to Std. IX A – the Semi-English medium section; they are so enthusiastic and eager to learn and to participate whole heartedly in class. In school, I also have the privilege to attend to the needs of the staff, the students and the parents though most of them are new to me.

I thank God for the new experiences of dealing with finance and maintenance that I didn't have to look after while I was at Sophia College. God has his own ways to teach us many things only we need to be open to all the opportunities that come our way.
HIS GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR US.

Annie Peter RSCJ

Sorrow turned into Joy during this Lockdown

The shadow of death had spread its wings over the whole wide world. Human beings were helpless to face the invasion of this microscopic virus, Covid-19. Reports were pouring in from every country that people were getting infected, were falling seriously ill and were dropping off into the hands of God like dry leaves falling from trees. An unknown fear gripped the hearts of everyone as near and dear ones were taken to hospitals and just vanished – never to be seen again. Why was God punishing us, we questioned, as we struggled to keep up our Faith in God.



As a teacher, I missed the presence of children in the school during the months of the lockdown. I longed to listen to their different and incredible stories. I started conducting online classes for the children. I was sad and disappointed with the very poor response. I took up reading to grow in my knowledge of the physical world and to progress in my spiritual life. I was inspired to find God in nature. Sr. Divya and I began to dialogue with Mother Earth. We dug and cleaned our garden field preparing it for plantation. We planted a variety of vegetables – cabbage, beans, methi, tomatoes, onion and so on. And the freshly grown vegetables found their way to our dining table and also provided nourishing food to some of our workers and teachers.

In the New Year, January 2021, we welcomed back some hostel students onto our Campus – bringing new joy to our community and to the school. New hope arose that we were winning the battle against Covid-19. We are grateful that all through this pandemic God has preserved our community – safe and healthy. His grace has turned our sorrows into Joy. Praise the Lord!

Valeria Kerketta RSCJ

I Will Give You a New Heart and Put a New Spirit in You

While the Corona Virus Pandemic was spreading news of fear and despair and death, the Lord was filling our Haregaon Community with hope of new life through the prophet Ezekiel: “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you”.

The Lockdown was imposed abruptly on the night of 24th March 2020. The Haregaon RSCJ community was quarantined within our premises. Despite my great desire to spend time grieving the sudden passing away of my dear mother just a month before, the Lord of the Resurrection kept repeating His offer: “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you”. While reflecting on these words of Ezekiel, the whole Haregaon community was suddenly filled with new hope of creating new life beginning with our campus.

Sr. Valeria and Sr. Divya, daughters of the soil, gave us the lead to draw new life from the neglected and dying soil in our own garden. With their expert hands, they dug and prepared the land for cultivation. They planted a variety of vegetables and with regular watering of the plants and caring for the soil, new life arose all around adding new greenery to the area. I had brought two coconut

saplings from Mumbai. I prepared the soil and planted the coconut saplings in memory of my mother. Soon the saplings took root and up came the tender shoots of the coconut plant bringing joy and hope in the hearts of all. Divya planted two saplings of bananas – and to our great joy the banana plants grew up fast. The other plants and trees in our garden also received due attention and regular watering gave them a new lease of life.



However, we all wondered – would the severe heat of the summer dry up and kill our plants? Sr. Divya reassured us that plants have their own water storage system to survive through the summer months. Lo and behold! The plants experienced a new resurrection as soon as the Monsoon began and we began to receive the fruit of our labours.



Sr. Jyoti got the Community involved in the important project of providing hampers, containing food grains and other essential commodities, to the poor and needy in the locality. Stocks from the School Mid-day Meal Project were distributed to the school children and their families. Some CRS food hampers were distributed to the far off villages. The poor were indeed grateful for this act of generosity and concern on the part of Sr. Jyoti and the sisters.

The Lockdown was indeed a moment of grace for all of us at Haregaon. We were inspired to give new life to the environment in our garden. We were inspired to give new life to the poor and needy people of Haregaon. God bless us all as we take part in the Paschal Mystery during this Season of Lent.

Anita Nazareth RSCJ

Moving from Death to New Life during the Lockdown

A whole year has passed by and we are just recovering from the deadly effects of Covid-19. We are grateful to God that a year ago, we, the staff of St. Theresa's School, Haregaon, had ventured out to visit Sophia College, Mumbai, and we all joyfully returned safely, before the Lockdown quarantined all of us in our own homes. For the sake of the education of the children, St. Theresa's School continued our teaching programme, till the Government declared all schools closed for the safety of the children. We contacted the parents of our hostel girls – to please come and to take their daughters home. A death-like silence and sadness descended upon all of us at Haregaon.

Depressing news poured in from every part of the country and from every other country. Everyone was struggling to understand this new pandemic, which was causing much suffering among all classes of people with many deaths. Fear gripped the hearts of migrant workers as they faced unemployment and starvation. In the absence of transport, many walked miles with their families to reach the safety of their village homes and suffered much along the way.



To overcome the depression that was coming over us, Sr. Valeria and I began some life-giving activities. We struggled to dig up our garden soil and prepared the land to plant vegetables like methi, karela, ladies' fingers, brinjal, and so on. The work was hard but the fruits gave us great joy. Harmony with Nature blessed us with new life and gave new meaning to our lives.

Mass began to be celebrated in the Parish Church only for the Fathers and the Sisters. In the absence of people, I was inspired to learn to do the Marathi Reading and to conduct the Marathi singing. Sr. Jyoti was a patient and encouraging guide. The Holy Spirit filled me with confidence to conduct the Marathi Choir all by myself even in the absence of Jyoti.

Working a little extra, doing something new, brought newness into my religious life. I learnt a few new Marathi hymns. I cooked some new foods and tried out new recipes. I accompanied and collaborated with Sr. Jyoti in the new out-reach programmes. I am indeed grateful to God for awakening new talents within me and inspiring me to give new life to the Liturgy and to our other apostolic activities in Haregaon.

Divya Kerketta RSCJ