

1st May 2022

NEWS FROM THE MALWANI COMMUNITY

This year was unique for us in Malwani with Covid-19 as our main compass and teacher. We lived our life ONLINE, as it were, starting with the daily Eucharist, all local, zonal and international meetings, including the Special Chapter, and school / confirmation classes.



It was interesting to meet the confirmands in person for the first time at the final practice just before they were confirmed. With their masks, it was difficult to match names and faces. We had ninety-nine students from Std. XI of different colleges; each of the Animators was also Sponsor for the members of their group, presenting them to Bishop John Rodrigues for the solemn *laying on of hands*. We pray that the graces of this journey will be cherished always.

On the Day of Celebration of Consecrated Life, the sisters of the three congregations working in our parish were felicitated by the Parish Core Team, Pastoral Council, and Representatives of all the Zones, SCCs, Cells and Associations. Each of us was presented with a bouquet, and the community with a gift of appreciation by the parish priest. We were welcomed in procession to a background lively music and clapping of hands. In the fun balloon game, Sr. Valeria managed to salvage her balloon till the very end and won a special prize.



During Lent, I was starkly reminded that the **P** in Pastoral stands for *People*, not *Place*, when the SCC of which I am Spiritual Director decided to visit the sick and the elderly. As the coordinator, animator, and myself entered the home of a parishioner, who had just lost his wife, he stood up and, with outstretched arms, prayed aloud for us in thanksgiving, asking for our continued well-being so we could be with them for many more years. *Outreach* and *Mission* take on a completely different meaning in moments like these.

This community, situated in the fast-developing, semi-urban area of Mumbai has been a learning experience in many ways over the past six years. I was privileged to live with Manisha who, as a member of the first Archdiocesan team for the “*Formation for Involvement of the Laity in the Mission of the Church*” (**FILMC**), an outcome of the Second Vatican Council, understood deeply the concept of *Lay participation*. The parish was organised into zones, subdivided into communities, each composed of smaller groups (*or clusters*) of six to eight families. It was celebrating the Silver Jubilee of the initiation of SCCs, the three pillars of which are: *Faith Formation, Community Building and Outreach*

Today, as I leave Malwani, St. Anthony’s is in its 30th year – our Pearl Jubilee! Pope Francis has convoked the Synod on *Synodality*, asking all the people of God to walk with each other, open to the Spirit, in *Communion, Participation and Mission*. As we look at the thematic nuclei articulating the aspects of lived Synodality in the *Preparatory Document* of the Synod, we find they are very similar the three pillars of the SCCs.

Preparing the parish bulletin on the theme of *Synodality* has deepened my understanding of how the Church is moving back towards inclusiveness in the spirit of the First Christians – that no one should be lost, left out, or lonely, and that the prayer of Jesus: *That all may be one*, be accomplished. This is also the call of the Special General Chapter as we search for *New Ways of Organising Ourselves*.

I am convinced that we are all called to *Pastoral Ministry*, no matter where we are. However, it makes a big difference if the ministry is well-planned at the parish level and individual commitments organised. The whole globe is our mission field. As Tagore puts it so beautifully:

When one knows thee, then alien there is none, then no door is shut.

Oh, grant me my prayer that I may never lose the bliss of the touch of the one in the play of the many
Daphne Viveka Furtado, rscj

New ways of organising...incorporating established expressions of ministry

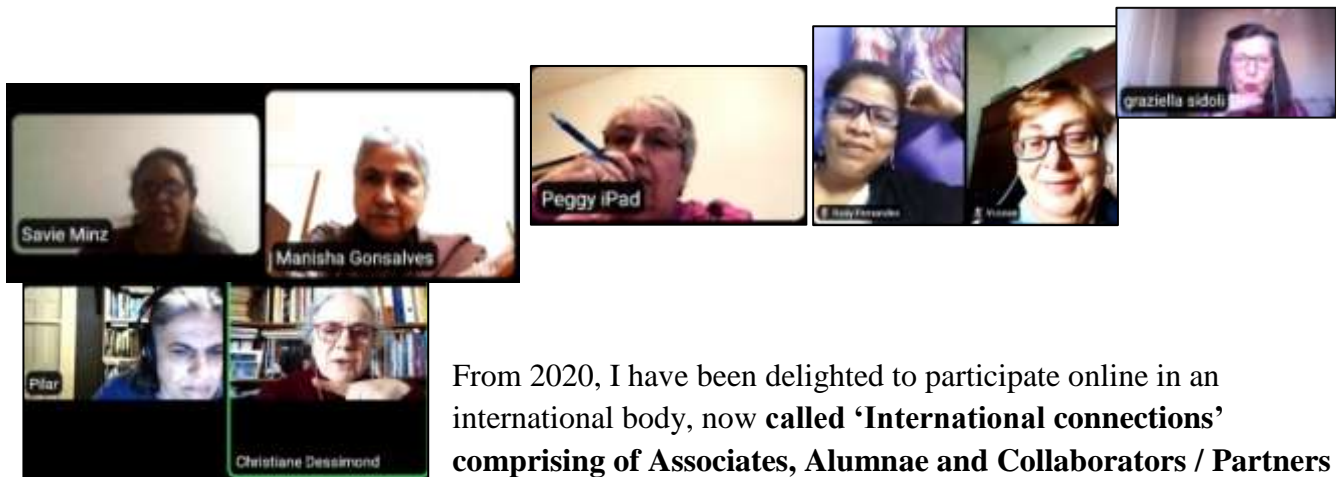
One of my greatest joys of the pastoral ministry has been my long-term association with our Associates of the Sacred Heart –popularly self- named ‘**FISH**’- *Friends In the Sacred Heart*’.

Begun on 18th November 2004 - *Feast of St. Phillipine Duchesne* – this precious group of about 20 members has been growing in depth over the years. Our Society charism and mission, our traditional feasts and invocations have been presented to them over this period, exposing them to much that we cherish as RSCJ.



As ‘*Lay collaboration*’ has been one of our concerns as Society and Province for many years now, it has struck me over and over again that the ‘Associates’ would be a good resource bank for us to tap in a systematic and reflective manner, at this stage of our history. They have a background of our spirituality that is the common ground for our way of thinking, planning and fulfilling our Mission through various ministries.

The idea of the ‘Associates’ was taken up initially at our General Chapter 1994, reiterated and further spelt out in Chapter 2000 (pp 40-41 of our Document) which was the source of my inspiration as I was a delegate at that Chapter



From 2020, I have been delighted to participate online in an international body, now called **‘International connections’** comprising of Associates, Alumnae and Collaborators / Partners in mission. This group was formed in January 2020. Our monthly meetings have been attended not only by me, but also by some of our Associates, and RSCJ from both the Malwani and Santa Cruz communities.

These meetings with members from the Northern Hemisphere have been enriching for all who participate. Besides being a supportive group throughout the pandemic, it brought to light the different grim realities faced by various countries with first-hand experiences of the participants, which kept us rooted to this earth while our gaze heavenward gave us mutual strength, courage and hope in our “blessed and broken world”. An eye-opener to me was the intense fervour among our international lay collaborators when they talked like RSCJ of “our charism”, JPIC issues, and as I listened to their faith-sharing on the traditional Society feasts, and much more.



Coming to our home-ground, our Associates here, some of whom are also alumnae, have strengthened their bonds during the pandemic through the regular ‘WhatsApp’ group, phone calls and prayer times online or even in person in small groups as needed. A great longing to meet in person was fulfilled when 7 of them together, with Sr. Valeria and myself, spent a half day at Erangal on 2nd

April. A memorable “Day of Reflection & Renewal” for us! intercessions After a short time of enjoying the beauty and freshness of Nature around us, we got into some time of silent prayer followed by a deep faith-sharing of “**Who is God to me?**”- a topic formulated from suggestions received from them, on which they had come prepared to share. Each one’s sharing concluded with an antiphon led by that person.

The second part of the half day was spent in for Ukraine- Russia, the pandemic and other global issues as well as local concerns and needs of our members. The feedback received was very positive.

The concluding hymn, “O give Thanks to the Lord” was a loud, clear expression of our hearts that had experienced a close intimacy with the Lord.

Manisha Gonsalves, rscj

Lockdown teaching experience

I had a great opportunity to experience city school education first-hand and to work at online teaching during the Lockdown. It seemed to me that if you know how to use Google classroom you are good teacher. The Government demands much administrative work from the school teachers; every day some links have to be submitted on Excel and other formats. Lack of knowledge of mechanical gadgets for the first few months made it difficult, but as the months passed, my community and school teachers helped me to get it right.

When I had fully learnt online classes, the offline classes started! So, teacher, students and parents are happy. I am also happy to interact with loving innocent, and naughty ones, especially the boys.

If you want to be happy in life teach little ones;
you will forget all your difficulties.



My second experience in Malwani is that people are loving, helpful and have faith in God.
My third is that when I look back over my one year here, I feel grateful to God for all that has been.

Valeria Kerketta, rscj