

SOCIETY OF THE SACRED HEART PROVINCE OF INDIA NEWSLETTER



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NEWSLETTER FROM THE KRISTHPREMALAY COMMUNITY

My experience at Sadhana Institute, Lonavla



We were 20 participants from 13 congregations from all over India. This included 6 priests and 14 nuns in the age group of 28-53 years.

We had daily 6 hours of sessions from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. A variety of input sessions included 3 days **Orientation**, followed by a week of **'Human affectivity and Sexuality'**, one week of **'Intensive Journal'**, followed by 3 weeks of **'Inner process and group therapy'**. After that we had one week of **'Christian maturity'** followed by one week on **'Communication'** and 3 days of **'Integration'**. Totally we spent 8 weeks at Sadhana Institute

Besides daily sessions we had morning mass at 7 a.m. followed by breakfast and vegetable cutting till 8.30 a.m. In the evenings after tea, we had to do manual labour which included cleaning all the different places within the institute. We also took turns in groups to do the washing up after meals. The time for long walks or playing badminton gave chance to make friends and have chats with companions.

The morning Eucharist was made very meaningful and participative. The main celebrant had very little role to play as most part of the mass was done by the participants. Hymns were chosen from different languages for the Saturday and Sunday masses. Choir practice was held the night before so that all could sing at mass. We sang hymns in Marathi, Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Sadri, Malayalam, Tamil, Konkani and, of course, English.

The resource persons and staff of Sadhana Institute – Fr. Joe Parakkad, Fr. Pravin Severeekar, Br. Anthony Arokyam and Sr. Philo of Presentation Convent – were extremely good and they helped us to understand ourselves and others in and through all the sessions and group therapy that we have had. There was such warmth, care and concern for each one of us that I felt part of the Institute itself. The spiritual ambience of the chapel and the serenity of the campus was ideal to maintain the inner silence, much needed for the group therapy and process.

Our weekends were free so we could walk and discover the length and breadth of Lonavla and Khandala, something I looked forward to and enjoyed thoroughly. Every Saturday evening an English movie was shown based on the topics or issues we were learning about.

The programme ended with a beautiful thanksgiving liturgy, farewell party and grand dinner. The staff at Sadhana made sure that they were present to see us off to our various destinations whether it was early morning or late at night.



I feel very rejuvenated and renewed from within and outside. I thank God for this time of 2 months given as a special gift to me during this ongoing pandemic. A special word of gratitude to Sr. Anila, Sr. Ananda and my K.P. Community for allowing me to be away for this grace-filled and blessed time that I have had. I miss Sadhana and all my companions, some of whom have become very close to me. THANKS.

Annie Peter rscj

Experience of the Special Chapter

This Special Chapter has been a “special” experience. It began much before the actual days of the Chapter – 10th November-2nd December 2021. The experience of daily prayer invoking the Holy Spirit for over a year during our Community prayer was a reminder that we felt the need for a special outpouring of the Spirit.

We were all aware that the main reason for invoking the Special Chapter was serious and needed much preparation. But God decided that this “special” Chapter needed a “special environment.” He allowed the pandemic to change the world at the same time!! All those who are used to General Chapters will know that having a Chapter online can be quite impossible – but this near impossible situation had its own graces.

The General Council was aware that not being able to meet capitulants face to face will deprive us of all the informal interaction that is so necessary for us to participate fully in the deliberations of the Chapter. The four CONVERSATIONS on zoom that were planned from June to October with international groups of six or seven RSCJ prepared the way for the actual Chapter days. Each of these had themes from Chapter 2016 and were held in an atmosphere that was truly informal and friendly. No taking of minutes – no formal speeches – only a heart-to-heart sharing of what God was saying to us in the context of the theme. There were moments when I found it difficult to accept or understand another person’s way of sharing. Language was always something to cope with in spite of simultaneous translation. But through these conversations I experienced a real conversion of heart. I began to realize that our internationality is not only a fact we have to accept, but a gift we have to treasure. **As Society we need each other – we need the gift that each culture brings to make our presence in the world whole.** I was often moved by the commitment of the RSCJ in Latin America to the situation of their

people – it pervades all their conversations. Their priorities are determined by the situation around them – often the political oppression or poverty.

The Chapter itself was of course a grace – surrounded by the prayer of the whole Society – accompanied online by RSCJ who participated in the daily prayer – knowing that the uncertainty of the future does not deter us from being fully alive and convinced that our Charism is needed by our world today and we must find the best way to respond to this call with the membership we have now and will have in the future. We can all be sure that the God who called us will make it possible in a way we cannot plan or imagine.

Pratibha Pinto rscj

Blessings from above

I thank and bless God for bringing me back to the Society. I have immersed myself in God and I am very happy, enjoying the many things I do during the day.

I feel blessed that I am responsible for the maintenance of the community chapel. In the process, I have learned many new creative things like flower arrangements, colour combinations, pot culture, festive decorations etc. I feel very happy with these new learnings.

I also help a little in the College administrative office, where I arrange, the Roneo cards right from the year 1941. This task is very fascinating as I get to know the students of the past. Every face connects me to God. Every name is not just a name, but a creature and child of God. This interconnectedness with many past students of the College fills me with immense joy each day.

I am also doing my First Year B.A. through Distance Education from the Mumbai University. Learning new subjects is challenging and exciting. Every evening an RSCJ helps me with my studies. I look forward to this class each day as I find the methodology that she uses very interesting and motivating. She comes down to my level and gives me many life situation examples to explain difficult concepts. I am learning a lot. However, what I like most, is that I am also learning from her methods of teaching, how to be a transformative RSCJ educator. Finally, I am very grateful to the Provincial, Sr. Anila, for giving me all these opportunities. All these experiences are blessings for me from above.

Shalini Sajan rscj

Life goes on

Whether it was pandemic or not, life did go on in Sophia College in the year 2021. I would like to highlight a few of the events beginning from January to December.

On the 2nd of January we had an orientation programme for the FYJC Students and on the 4th of January they were shown ‘Glimpses’, a peek into the various clubs and association of Christian Students., a programme specially prepared for them. This was on You-tube. The first semester exams commenced for the Senior college Arts students on the same day. The Science Excellence programme (EXSP) batch no. 29 had presentations on 4th January.

On 26th January we had the usual flag hoisting ceremony at 8 a.m. followed by an online mass at 9 a.m. There were various online competitions for the Junior college students such as patriotic songs, folk dances and speeches.

On the 9th of February the C.U.C. organized a webinar on ‘Technology and Jobs, the future of work ‘. The resource person was Professor R. Sudarshan. It was held on ZOOM platform. On 15th February there was ‘Ripples’ by the World Music Club conducted online. In February and March, a number of C.U.C. activities were conducted by PRISM, the cultural committee of the College. 70 colleges and over 1000 students participated in this event called ‘Mizaaj’.

From 5th to 23rd April, we had Club Secretaries applications, interviews, declaration of short-listed candidates, campaigning, elections and finally the results on 24th April.

On 3rd May, the second semester exams started for all the classes. The handing over of the leadership of our clubs and associations as well as the sending forth of the final year students took place on 12th June.

On Independence Day (15th August) we had flag hoisting on the triangular terrace followed by the online mass at 9 a.m. The events that took place in September included Teachers Day programme, an orientation for First Year Senior college students and glimpses into clubs and associations for them.

After the Diwali holidays, the third-year students came to college for offline classes in small groups on different days. Std 12 students also came to college in small groups for classes and practicals on certain days of the week.

On 4th December we had the online Prize distribution and Degree conferring ceremony for the batch of 2019-2020. Sr. Bernie Porter was the Chief Guest for the latter. Since College Day was on a Sunday, we celebrated it on 11th December – offline for the staff at 11.30 a.m. and online for the students at 3 p.m. The online college mass was held on 12th December at 10 a.m.

The year 2021 also had the College festival – Kaleidoscope. Eliminations were held online from 6th to 17th December and final days were on 18th and 19th December. The activities of the year finally came to end with the online Christmas wishing on 23rd December at 4.30 p.m.

If I were to write everything that happened in 2021, it would have been a book and not a newsletter. Let us pray that the New Year may be full of hope, grace and peace not only for us but for the whole world.

Rosa Makil rscj

Online life

We are in a digital world. We have never thought that we will live in a different way in future. I call this life, “THE ONLINE LIFE.”

Covid-19 pandemic swept across the world. It has made changes in life all over. From working conditions to freedom of movement. Education has been one of the sectors, which has been affected by the pandemic globally – having gone from off line, i.e. regular classes, to online; it has affected both the poor and the rich. The poor in urban and rural areas, who did not have enough money to buy food or pay school fees could not buy technological devices to help children attend online classes. So, these students are like sheep without a shepherd, because there is no body to help them.

When I reflect on my life as a student from 2020 till 2021, I feel very grateful to God for providing all my needs for study through the Society. I do not have the problem, which other students have today.

I have a mobile and a computer to attend my lectures every day, i.e. for 5-6 hours, without much problem. Of course, I face difficulties and challenges, because I do not know much about computers and have had to learn the new techniques for the online classes, how to join the Google class room, how to enter the meeting room, and how to submit the assignments etc. I have learned the new techniques from Sr. Annie as well as from the teachers. Sr. Annie was ever ready to help me at any time.

I remembered, one of my teachers helping me to join the Google class room in the beginning. She had given us the code, but I was unable to join. When I could not join in spite of directions from her, she shared her own screen and patiently directed me step by step, so that I was able to join in. I have also struggled a lot with the lectures and in doing long assignments. I have never done such things before. Many times, I was unable to understand, what the lecturer were explaining. When Sr. Vimala was in my community she helped me in doing the assignments, explaining subjects again and again. Sometimes she used to take my class twice a day. Sr. Vimala was and Sr. Tureeya and Sr. Mudita are my excellent teachers, who are always ready to help me. I am very grateful to God for giving me good teachers, to help in different ways. They never kept a record of the time they gave me.

I thank each one of them for their precious time and the energies they spent to prepare for my classes. I also thank them for their love, support, understanding and encouragement. With all the help I have, I am able to live with faith and hope, encouraging myself with positive messages, saying: 'Anita, do not be afraid, God is there to help you.' I believe that God helps me by sending so many good people in my life. I am trying my best to respond well.

Anita Hamsroj rscj