

SOCIETY OF THE SACRED HEART PROVINCE OF INDIA NEWSLETTER



6th December 2019

NEWSLETTER FROM THE SANTA CRUZ COMMUNITY, MUMBAI

Beginning the Associates in Santa Cruz



We are happy to announce that we have begun a group of Associates here in our Parish. We held the first meeting on November 23rd 2019. Actually on this very day last year we had welcomed F.I.S.H., the Associates of our community in Malwani and had invited some of our friends with a view to founding our own group here sometime in the future. This year, as part of our effort to be and act as one Body, we reflected and planned together in community and finally arrived at the decision to work together to form a group of Associates in our Parish. We drafted a letter explaining the why, how and when of such a group of Associates. We invited fifteen

women of our parish, ex-teachers, ex-students and friends. Of these, twelve attended this first meeting on that Saturday afternoon from 3.30 to 5.00 pm. Their ages ranged from 40 to 86 years. The oldest was Flossy Serrao, an ex-teacher of Sophia High School, Bangalore. She was thrilled to see photos of Rev. Mother Andersson and Srs. Bourke and Bullen in the flex on the Society on the Ground floor. She had taught from 1957 to 1959 under Mother Andersson and had loving memories of our Sisters, and of different events at Sophia High School. Three ex-students, Osmita Castellino, Jeanette Lobo and Anjali Albuquerque, were happy to be with us and remembered their college days and their contact with our sisters. The others invited were friends of the community and Nanda Magar, an ex-student and ex-teacher of Haregaon, now living in Goregaon, who could not attend this first meeting because of a prior engagement.

Three of us, Sr. Jokina, Sr. Marie and I shared in turn on the following: ministries and sisters in the Indian Province today, the origin and first beginnings of the Society of the Sacred Heart and the meaning and place of the Associates in the Society. The group of those invited assembled first on the ground floor for Sr. Jokina's presentation which was an introduction to the foundation of the Society in India and the arrival of our first sisters. She then explained the present ministries of the Indian Province with the help of the large flex on the Province ministries at the entrance. Many of them recognised the Sisters whom they knew. The world map was also helpful to show the other provinces of the Society the world over.

We then moved to the first floor where the sitting room was arranged in a large circle of chairs. I then spoke about the origins of the Society in the stories of 1. Fr. de Tournelly 2. Fr. Varin and Louis Barat 3. Madeleine Sophie.

1. The first inspiration of Fr. de Tournelly was during prayer in 1793, as he lovingly contemplated the pierced side of the Saviour and was moved by a



strong light on the great love and the suffering of the Heart of Jesus. There he received a special grace to found a new society of priests, the Fathers of the Sacred Heart; the motto of these Fathers would be, "One heart and one mind in the Heart of Jesus," a spirituality of union with the inner feelings of Christ (the tradition of the French School of spirituality). I explained this because in later meetings we will be talking about the spirituality of our Society. His second inspiration in 1796, again during prayer, was to establish an Institute which could be the feminine counterpart of the Fathers of the Sacred Heart, a Society destined to devote itself to the Heart of Jesus and to awaken the love of the Heart of Jesus in souls and the light of His teaching in minds, while entering into the sentiments and interior dispositions of that Divine Heart.

2. The role of Fr. Varin in carrying out the dream of Fr. de Tournelly and finding a suitable person for the foundation of such a society for women.
3. Fr. Varin's acquaintance and friendship with Louis Barat in Paris.
4. Fr. Varin's meeting with Sophie Barat and his sharing with her of the dream of Fr. de Tournelly.

Lastly I gave the brief story of the early life of Sophie.

Irene D'Souza rscj

Who are Associates?

After a break for tea and snacks, I took up the theme 'Understanding of Associates as it began and developed in the Society of the Sacred Heart'. I explained how it flowed from Madeleine Sophie's vision of the boarding school and the congregation of Children of Mary, which was to create a whole atmosphere and environment in the schools, where Christian virtues could be nurtured in the girls, who would then carry these into their families and so work to counteract the irreligion and 'enlightenment' of post Revolution France. This movement overflowed into a congregation of older women called 'Children of Mary of the world', whose primary purpose was the formation of a spiritual elite with further possibilities for social action in the world.. **This new congregation had for its purpose, "to help young girls and women in the world to persevere in the Faith, in piety, in charity and encourage them to accomplish the duties of their state in life and bring them spiritual help in their difficulties and consolation in the sorrows of life,"** and so ultimately bring about a change in the in the socio-political situation of the day.

In 1869, Mother Goetz started the 'Association affiliated to the Society of the Sacred Heart', who shared in the prayers and merits of the Society of the Sacred Heart. These women called Affiliée or Associates, chosen from among the most fervent of the Children of Mary in school, bound themselves by a solemn promise to strive for their own perfection and to maintain and extend among the faithful devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. They formed small groups all over the Society especially in Christian countries, meeting regularly and closely guided by Jesuit Fathers and Sisters of the Sacred Heart. One of them Emilie Marthe Tamisier gave her life to extending devotion to the social reign of Christ through the Eucharist, leading to the First Eucharistic Congress held in Lille, in France, in 1881, a tradition that is still carried out in the Universal Church.

Against this historical background we hope to go into the recent call from our General Chapters to invest once again and more widely, in the Associates as a powerful means of enhancing our presence and mission in the world and of enriching our own Spirituality, 'a gift given to the Society to be shared with others who help us further discover and extend it,' a large family supporting our Sisters and their mission in almost all the provinces in the world today. We concluded the meeting with a prayer to the Sacred Heart which we said before the Blessed Sacrament exposed. Each of us promised to say this prayer to keep us linked together as a group till our next meeting towards the end of January 2020.

Marie Noronha rscj

My Ministry in Sophia Nursery School

On 13th June 2019 I began my ministry in the Sophia Nursery School. That first day I was fearful and anxious about my English. We began with a small prayer. During the meeting with the teachers, the principal of Sophia Nursery, Sr. Charlotte, said that here we do not need high knowledge or language but we have to be loving, kind and patient with the children. When they cry we must give them love, a motherly love so that they can feel at home.

On 17th of June we had an orientation for the parents. A teacher showed them a power-point of the activities of the previous year. I saw that the audience, especially the new parents, were very happy and interested to know the school programme for the whole year. On 18th June we began classes with the children. On the first day the children were crying very much. We allowed the parents into the classroom for two-or three days. After that the children were quiet and settled down. All those days I was wondering what I could do for these children. I wanted to help them but these children did not know me and they were not coming to me. I too did not know them. After that we slowly became friendly with each other. Now when I see their little smiling faces it gives me joy. The two teachers whom I help are also very loving, kind and they support me.



During these months we celebrated different festivals such as Raksha Bandan, Independence Day, Parsi New Year, Children's Day and Diwali. Through these celebrations I was getting to know the culture of the children. In the power-point for Raksha Bandan, we saw how brothers looked after their own sisters in times of suffering and difficulty. The girls then very simply tied the rakhees to the boys. In the Parsi New Year celebration I came to know that the founder of the religion in India came from Iran to Gujarat where he founded the first fire temple. On this feast

the Parsees decorate their houses, wear traditional clothes and visit the temple to pray for prosperity and forgiveness of sins. The Diwali celebration was very beautiful; all the parents were invited for the celebration. We began with a small prayer dance. After that the mothers put up two dances, the grandmothers one dance and the teachers one dance. The children were very happy to see their mothers dancing. They were clapping their hands. The whole audience was happy. I too enjoyed the celebration. For Children's Day the teachers entertained the children by reciting and singing nursery rhymes.

I enjoyed the outdoor visits that allowed the children to experience and see what they were learning in the class. Through all this I am learning too, to use all the theory I had learnt during my training. I am so happy and grateful to have this teaching experience in such a good school.

Mukta Bhengra rscj

An Extraordinary Missionary Month

Our Parish took up Pope Francis' call to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Pope Benedict XV's apostolic letter 'Maximum illud' on the activities of missionaries around the world, by embarking on "an Extraordinary Missionary Month" this October, with the aim of fostering an increasing awareness of every Christian being "Baptized and Sent". Small banners with the emblem and theme fluttered on every pew in the Church on Mission Sunday, 'to ignite the baptismal awareness of the People of God in the mission of the Church.' At the Parish Council meeting we planned together the activities for the whole month.

Cells and associations, the Sunday School and the



Confirmation students, each planned a Breakfast Sale on every Sunday of October, after all the Masses. Various tasty breakfast items were on sale and were generously patronised. There were craft items as well as made by the little children and different games of skill that drew young and old to try their luck. The Sunday School children alone made Rs. 37,000/ so all together this programme must have made a big contribution to the Mission Sunday Collection. The Thali Project, running in our Parish for some time now, was planned and sponsored each Sunday of the month by the different SCCs (Small Christian Communities). Two hundred lunch boxes are distributed among the twenty communities and they are given by them to needy persons in their neighbourhood. This meant two hundred people were fed each Sunday. To make for greater involvement, on the last Sunday, ingredients for the vegetable pullav were asked for from the communities and each one had to hand in their contribution at the Parish office. In all these ventures we were invited to be personally involved with the poor, the migrants and the refugees, the maid in our house, the watchman at our gate, the driver of our car or rickshaw, to spend a moment inquiring about their lives, their concerns and difficulties, to share their hopes and fears.

The big 'Mission' event organised by the Parish was the visit of the Parish Council and heads of Cells and Associations to Veloli a large mission complex at Asangaon where the Helpers of Mary have a Home for the Aged, a Leprosy Centre and a boarding for children of AIDs patients. As these parishioners spent time with the children and the older inmates in all the three centres, they were very touched and moved by their stories as well as their joy and peace at the loving care and treatment they receive at the hands of the Sisters. Meeting someone immediately on their return from this visit I realised how powerful the experience had been in making an attitudinal change in the group.



Part of the 'mission' activities overflowed into November. On the 17th November, World Day of the Poor, the Sisters of Charity in our Parish managed a large food distribution programme for those they had contacted. November 5th saw the inauguration of the 'Fridge Project.' A large 'fridge' has been donated by the Rotary Club of South Mumbai as part of their effort to eradicate hunger in the city. It is a project to encourage parishioners to cook extra food regularly, pack it and put it in the fridge to be distributed to the hungry at given timings. It impresses upon us the need to respect the poor, give them their dignity, not just passing on leftovers or stale food. On the 21st November our local SCC sponsored a meal for the poor registered under Mother Teresa's Roses at their center in Bandra. In all these 'mission' ventures which encouraged by Fr. Franklin, our very innovative Parish Priest, one senses the mission thrust to express our Faith and commitment in concern for those less fortunate than ourselves, through no fault of their own and the call to accept them as brothers and sisters, giving them the dignity that is theirs as human persons.

Marie Noronha rscj