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>>> NEWSLETTER <<<  
SOCIETY OF THE SACRED  
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NEWS FROM KRISTPREMALAYA  
COMMUNITY

**KALEIDOSCOPE 2024**

Every year, for about a week, the students of Sophia College lose themselves, forget their problems, and enjoy their very own intercollegiate festival. Kaleidoscope 2024, with a footfall of about 30,000 people, was no different, with people coming from different colleges from all over the city, either just to enjoy the fest, or to participate in events organised by the different contingents. All in all, it was a festival

filled with excitement, joy and happiness.

This year, Kaleidoscope was centred on the theme “Cinecity”. Exploring the relationship between cinema, the city and the people in it, “Cinecity” aimed at capturing the essence of cinema in a vibrant city like Mumbai. Similar themes have been taken up in the past, but this time the focus was more on representation and portrayal of women and minority communities that hadn’t received much attention earlier.

This year, the elimination days, popularly known as “the Elims”, started on the 20th of August, went on for four days, and culminated in the main days, the 24th and 25th of August. But even before that, the pre-K team held a number of events (flashmobs, and other in-house events) to create a buzz of excitement which could be felt for months before the actual festival.

The festival itself kicked off with an opening ceremony, consisting of the lighting of the lamp and a speech by our principal, Dr Anagha Tendulkar, in the Multipurpose Hall of the College, followed by the ceremonial cutting of the K’Scope cake. The Elim days were hectic but exciting. The event teams (Performing Arts, Literary Arts, Informals, Fine Arts, etc) were the brains behind all the exhilarating events that followed – all centred around the common theme, cinema.

This year we had some very prestigious judges like Vikram Aditya, Milap Zaveri, Geeta Kapur, etc. We were also lucky to have sponsors like Myntra, Femina, Free Press Journal, etc. extending their support. The fest would not have been possible without the support of the college – all the faculty, administrative and support staff put in their efforts. The people behind the fest were the ‘workforce’ – about 500 of our own students working for weeks before the fest, and throughout the days of the fest, contributing their all.

K’Scope this year was more joy-filled than ever, with amazing events during and before Kaleidoscope, amazing food and amazing judges with whom the students could interact freely. As always, KScope was a splash of colour and emotion in their otherwise boring life. Having successfully wound up this year’s festival on the 25th of August, the students are hoping for even more excitement and vibrancy in next year’s K’Scope...



**Rosa Makil, rscj**

### **MY EXPERIENCE AS A CANDIDATE IN MUMBAI**

Very soon after we arrived in Mumbai from our pre-candidate house in Pune, we started preparing the rooms for the General Council members who were coming to visit. This was the first time I was preparing rooms for foreign visitors. It was a new experience. When the General Council members came I was very anxious because on the first day, when I heard them talking, it was very difficult for me to understand. Though it was difficult, I tried to understand. After two days I could understand something. We also met them together. When we met them, I found them very simple. I could talk to them without fear. I felt very happy to meet them and talk to them.

Here, from the beginning we started English and computer classes. We had many other classes also. At first, I found these a little difficult. Later I started understanding and enjoying the classes. I learnt many new things, little by little. Sushila and I started going to church when there was no mass on the campus, and going out for a walk on Sundays on our own, to different places, like Priyadarshini Park, Haji Ali, Amarson’s Garden, Hanging Gardens, Grant Road, Chowpatty etc. We went for a community outing to Marine Drive with the sisters. We went to Dadar flower market with Srs. Josephine and Agnes. I was astonished to see so many kinds of flowers of different colours there. I wondered who has planted so many flowers. We went to St. Paul’s bookshop with Sr. Vimala to buy some books for us. In St. Paul’s

bookshop I saw so many things which I had never seen before. I also went with the sisters to St. Elizabeth Hospital and Jaslok Hospital. After going to all these places, I got more courage to go out on my own.

Being on Sophia campus also gave us many new experiences, like the Polytechnic Exhibition, the Nursery School's sports day, Bharat Natyam and Kathak Arangetrams in the Sophia Bhabha Hall and Kaleidoscope at Sophia College. I saw all these things for the first time. I saw things which I had never seen before, especially the dress designing exhibition in the Polytechnic. Whenever I think about these, I am full of wonder that people can do so many things. God is so generous that He has given us different kinds of talents. He is helping us to use our talents in different ways. Sometimes I feel that I can't do anything and I find it very difficult. Then I think of the Nursery School's sports day where tiny children did so many difficult activities and the Polytechnic art department where the students through hard effort and thought have learnt to do so many kinds of art work. I think of them and I get courage to work hard and never to give up.

I go to Sadhana School to help the differently-abled students. I had never been with children like these. This is the first time I am with them. The first day I was worried and afraid. I wondered how the teachers teach them. Slowly I am getting used to being with them. I saw many activities there. The teachers are very good and loving with the children and teach them with love. I learnt from the teachers to care for and love the differently abled children and think of new ways to teach them. I am very happy to be with them and I enjoy being with them. I realized that the children are very loving and friendly.

When I look back, I realise I was very timid, shy and slow in my work at the beginning. Now I am becoming a little courageous in going out, talking to others in English, going to places with the sisters and going to Sadhana School. My knowledge is growing. I am also learning to meditate better. Through meditation my relationship with God is becoming stronger every day little by little.

**Jacinta Horo (Candidate)**

### **GROWING AS A CANDIDATE...**

When I came to Bombay I saw many sisters and a big campus and I was very nervous. I thought, "I don't know how to speak English properly. Will I be able to stay here or not?" I felt that I wanted to go back home. However, as I started mixing with the sisters and others and talking with them, I started feeling better.

On the Sophia Campus, I saw and learnt many things. In the Polytechnic exhibition, I saw dress designing, film making, art and bakery. I had not thought that people studied these subjects. Among all these, I liked the art exhibition the most. I like art. I thought, "If only I also had learnt to do art like this, how nice it would have been." I had not known about Bharat Natyam. When Sr. Vimala took us to see a Bharat Natyam Arangetram I realized that they dance to the songs about different deities. I realized that they use their hands, feet, and head to express what the song is saying.

In Bombay we got a chance to go to different places we had never seen before. I saw the Haji Ali Dargah where Muslims pray. It is in the middle of the sea. It was very crowded. We went to Dadar with Sr. Josephine to buy flowers. This was the first time I had seen a flower market. There were different kinds of flowers, of so many different colours. When I saw the flowers I was very happy. I thought, "From where do they get so many flowers? Where do they grow?" We went for a community outing to the Marine Drive. It was very crowded. People come there to walk and to enjoy themselves. There was a nice cold breeze. I enjoyed myself and was very happy.



Jacinta and Sushila

Every Sunday, Sr. Vimala gave us the chance to go out walking to explore the neighborhood. We went to places like the Priyadarshini Park, Amarson's Garden and Chowpatty. One day we took a round from the Peddar Road gate, around to Mahalaxmi, to Kemp's Corner and we came back to our campus through the same gate. We explored other roads also. One day Jacinta and I went searching for Grant Road and we asked for directions. After asking we reached Grant Road safely. Every week, on three days we go walking to the church for the English mass and one day every month we go for the Hindi mass.

Sr. Vimala takes us for different classes like Society History, the Old Testament, English, Meditation preparation and Church History. Every Saturday we have a class with videos on Indian History. When there are Hindu or Muslim feasts we study about the feast from videos. We have to write about the history and the feasts. We also had computer classes in the computer lab. We learnt Word, Excel, Power Point and touch typing. Sometimes I find these studies very difficult, but I feel very happy to learn so many new things.

I did not like English and History earlier because I couldn't understand these subjects properly. However, now I have started liking them. Sr. Vimala bought simple spiritual books for us to read. I liked reading the spiritual books and the newspaper. Before I didn't like to read these; now I have got a little more courage than before. I feel I am growing. I feel that I have grown in many ways.

**Sushila Topno (Candidate)**

### **TEREZITA WRITES**

When I went to meet my usual doctor, he examined the lump on my arm and said, "Sister, this is on a nerve, that's why there is shooting pain." After some tests, he advised me to go to some other nerve specialist. Then I went to Jaslok Hospital, where they did some more tests and explained to me that it was the left median nerve that was involved, and that it could be dangerous if not attended to. Dr Sharmila Agrawal advised me and gave me a referral letter for further treatment at the Tata Hospital. I was upset and afraid when I heard this, since Tata Hospital is associated in our minds with cancer, and rather than go for more treatment, I decided to put up with the discomfort and pain, and offer it up to God.

However, after almost a year had passed, I found myself in even more trouble, and was not able to concentrate on anything because of the increasing pain. After a lot of prayer, I found the courage to go to Tata Hospital, and told Sr. Vimala that I was willing to go there. So Sr. Josephine and I went to Tata's. After a week of examination and further tests, the doctor there told me that they would be able to remove the tumour and the affected nerve, and replace the nerve with another nerve grafted from another part of the body. It was finally decided that the operation should take place in Jaslok.

I had faith in the Lord, and I said to God, "I live because I have given my life to you – take care of me." As the day for the surgery came close, I was very nervous. I had informed all my family about the operation and when it would take place. The day I was to go to the hospital, I told Sr. Vimala that I wanted the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Fr. Clarence from the parish came to see me, heard my confession and prayed over me. After that, the Spirit took over and gave me courage and strength. I kept praying the prayer of Rose Philippine – "Jesus, I love you and live for you, my desire is only you. You in me and I in you. You are mine and I am yours. I trust in you. You take care of me."

I am grateful to my God and to my sisters for everything. The operation was a success, but complete recovery will take some time. With the grace of God, and the goodness of my sisters, I am back home in the community. May God be praised in and through me!



**Terezita Puthiampuram, rscj**

## THE HOLY SPIRIT AS FORMATOR

We are told that formation is “rooted in our everyday experience” and “it is always the Spirit who transforms us” and that it takes place throughout our life. How true it is! I particularly realise this in the case of my different “obediencies”, each of which has been transformative for me.

In Harigaon, as Principal, I had expected to continue for some years – there seemed to be no one else in sight at the moment, when suddenly, I was picked up and asked to be novice mistress. Very formative – for me! Luckily, I got a year to prepare. At the end of my second term, after 10 years, I offered to play a supportive role in our different educational ministries, but it was not to be.

The Spirit and the Provincial had other plans. I was asked to go to an indigenous village, Torpa, to our NGO there, to take over, in time, as directress! I had never thought of being directly involved in village work, nor of doing development work nor in an indigenous area; nor had I the experience of writing projects, raising funds for the ministry. I love being in education, but I started my work in faith, and in the process I found new sides of me developing. In my 60s, I was asked to develop our English medium middle school there, into a high school, affiliated to the ICSE board, New Delhi. Back to being a learner – work for registration with the Jharkhand government, affiliation with the ICSE Board, train our teachers from Hindi speaking backgrounds to teach in English at the ICSE level, raise funds for buildings and infrastructure and so on. In the process I developed and my formation continued.

At the end of 19 years in Torpa, I wondered, now what? “Mataji” in our Sadhana Kuttir in Rishikesh was the verdict of the Provincial and the Holy Spirit, who was still interested in my formation.

There I was, “Mataji”, clad in saffron, knowing no one in Rishikesh, and it was Covid times! No possibility of getting to know either, I thought. Only Josephine and I in the community, when out of the blue, 2 “seekers” were on our doorstep, as it were! They were older, more experienced and knew English. They could not be with the “seekers” and pre-candidates in Pune. So they were sent to “Mataji”! I found myself back in formation, this time, with no preparation and absolutely no materials or guidelines for their training. A program was improvised and formation started. I love education and formation – communicating what I know and am keenly interested in, seeing the spark light up in young minds, characters developing and growing. It gives me life.



“Mataji” & Nithya (seeker) - on the banks of the Ganga

At the end of the year, I was most unexpectedly transferred to the Sophia campus, Bombay, after fifty years! I had been mostly in communities on the periphery of the province and in rural areas. Now I was back in the centre of the province, in a metropolitan city. Our candidates needed more exposure and another kind of formation, which could not be given in Pune, to prepare them for an international novitiate. So our one pre-candidate came along with me from Rishikesh. A vast syllabus was also put in my hand. This time, there was no “one year for preparation”. It was a hand to mouth existence as it were. Back to the “drawing board”! Search for resource materials, daily prepare class and then take class. There were many other areas of formation to be seen to, besides the subjects given on the syllabus; also - be on the lookout for opportunities for “exposure”. All this helped to keep my mind active and this was formative. One may know a subject for oneself, but, when one has to teach someone, one understands the subject matter better as one analyses and puts it down the matter in a format that a candidate can grasp. It was a great help that Sr. Tureeya took a few of the subjects. Two more Pre-candidates joined after some months. The level of comprehension of the pre-candidates was a challenge. At the end of the first year, I felt that



now I was prepared for the next year. However, my formation must continue I thought. I must keep my brain active. What shall I take up for that? Perhaps brush up my French!

I needn't have worried. The Holy Spirit was following up my formation, through the Provincial. Tureeya was whisked off to Pune, and her subjects landed in my lap for preparation. Besides that, when the first 2 candidates went to the Philippines, it was found that we needed to give more attention to English. English had not been part of their studies with me in Bombay. I had taught English for much of my life as an RSCJ and to different kinds of groups. However, what was needed now was something quite different – not grammar, nor simple sentences for everyday use, nor the study of text books. They had to be able to converse and write correctly, have a good vocabulary of spiritual and biblical words and understand other accents. So I struggled to create a methodology for teaching English to the 2 new pre-candidates who had come. It took time. Luckily, Sr. Deodita volunteered to teach the Old Testament and finished most of it before she left for the Philippines.

All this has been a challenge, but I see it is the Holy Spirit forming me through each of these experiences – the different ministries and all that each one entailed. All these keep my own mind and spirit active. And it is a joy to see young people – the future of the Society – growing, and to have played a part in enabling it, cooperating with the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit that is working in their life and in mine.

**Vimala Verghese, rscj**

### **COURAGE ET CONFIANCE...**

The General Chapter of 2024 was a profound experience of transformation in the Spirit, as She spoke in our hearts through the whisper of the breeze and the power of the gale... Nowhere was this more apparent than in the moments of choice, whether these were the days of election, or the process through which decisions were made and recommendations suggested.

Each of us came to Nemi with our own thoughts and opinions shaped by our contexts and experiences. The powerful symbolism of taking off our shoes and washing our hands as we entered the chapter room for the first roll call, went beyond the gesture to invite us to leave our pasts behind and be radically present, listening and being in a different way. As we shared our responses to each stage of the process, at the home tables, in our provinces and our new provinces, and in the plenary sessions, we could feel defensiveness drop away, we could sense people transcending the tendency to follow one's own agenda, we knew that each one of us stood on sacred ground, and that the good of the Society at large was the primary concern for each of us.

Images from the Bible and from ordinary life illumined the path we walked. The journey through the desert and the tents of encounter, the sharing of Ruth and Naomi, the 'donkey' who had to be let loose because the Lord had need of her...all these helped us find inspiration and consolation in scriptural texts which are our anchor. And then there were the images from everyday living. Two in particular were deeply meaningful. One was the image of the acupuncture points. Areas of sensitivity that needed to be exposed and touched if wounds caused by insensitivity and/or ignorance (particularly in the areas of inter-culturality and sharing of resources) were to be healed. The process whereby these were articulated and addressed was so gentle and respectful, in an atmosphere of such profound listening and openness, that there was neither blame nor resentment left by the time we reached the ritual of reconciliation.



holy ground.

The other was the image of the ‘murmuration’ – the unspoken unison in the movement of large flocks of birds as they follow their migratory paths. We experienced this most notably in the election of the superior-general and the naming of her council, but it was almost tangibly a determining factor as we approached each of the decisions to be voted upon. We may have come to the election with other thoughts, other choices. But as we listened and responded in our hearts to the urging of the Spirit through the voices of our sisters, we could sense the movement in the group, and we knew that once again, we stood on

Little wonder then, that as we left Nemi, each to return to her own karma-bhoomi, we could hear St Madeleine Sophie whispering, not just to us, but to all of the Society, “Courage et confiance...”

**Ananda Amritmahal, rscj**