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> > NEWSLETTER <<<

SOCIETY OF THE SACRED  
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NEWS FROM THE PRAGNYALAY  
COMMUNITY

>>> **WHAT'S NEW IN PRAGNYALAY**

**Pragnyalay**, is a “House of WISDOM “, a HOME for the Elderly. Sr. Anila has a “soft corner” for the Elderly, and is ever wanting “the Elders” to be loved and cared for. On her visit to us in mid-July, she also mentioned to us that each one is responsible for herself, and that we have to try to do what we can for ourselves.



From June this year our numbers in community changed from 11 to 10, when, on 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2024. Sr. Shanti left us for Malvan; we were then from 10 to 9, when Sr. Fleurette entered Eternity on 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2024. We are now 11 again, with Sr. Marie and Sr. Charu who have joined us 2024. We also have Sr. Pratibha, who is a member of the elder care team of our community. She belongs to the Santa Cruz Community and comes to Pune on certain days. She has been busy these last months in carrying out various improvements, including renewing the walkway around the house. It is now a colourful path along the three sides of the house. Elisha and Ramina take a walk around in it every morning after Mass. No one ever thought that this change would happen. But we praise Him, in

Whose Hands we are!

Sr. Marie is the Co-ordinator of a Team, that comprises Sr. Charu and Sr. Kirti, and in which Sr. Pratibha is also involved, in making decisions about the community.

It's now more than one and a half months that we started our community year! During this time, we have met on several occasions. Once a week, on Monday, we meet to watch a video clip, "The Chosen", depicting the life of Jesus. Through this video He can be captured by our minds and hearts, and His image can stay deep in our hearts!

Twice a week, we watch and follow the "Chair Exercises", which are especially for the Elderly. It's optional, but most of us attend it. It is to help us keep well and fit. Besides, the "Chair Exercises", we also have the services of Zabeen, an ex-student of the Polytechnic, when Sr. Niela was the Directress. She comes once a fortnight, for one and a half hours. She teaches us numerous Yoga exercises, for our health benefit. Zabeen has been with us for a long time, even at the time Sr. Shanti was with us, with a break for about a year. She is a delightful person, who takes interest in each one. May we all respond well to the needs of our bodies.



Sr. Niela has had 2 Sessions with us, so far, for Community building. We look forward to Movies twice a month. Daily, Sr. Ramina and Sr. Elisha are entertained, by watching Animal Planet, Jungle Planet, and various other programmes on the T.V. from 11.00 a.m. to 12.30 noon. Some of us, keep our brains well and alive, by playing a game of Rummikub, whenever we are free, at 11 a.m. but we try to be more regular. We also have a Reunion – a Game of Housie, Singsong, puzzles etc. – on alternate Saturdays, which gives us life and energises us, and is very entertaining!

We are grateful to God and to all who have made it possible for us to have such a variety of wholesome activities, that help us all round.

"Praise Him! Praise Him! Praise Him in the morning, Praise Him in the Noontime. Praise Him! Praise Him! Praise Him, when the sun goes down." Amen.

*Phyllis (Anjali) D'Souza rscj*



## KIRTI BHUINYAN WRITES

The month of June was full of experiences of God's grace working within me. I am filled with both wonder and some fear. It came this way – somewhat threatening – but somehow strengthening and deeply consoling. Both fear and the strength coming from the presence of God deep within me. I lifted up my soul to God our Father knowing that He would make everything possible. There were many blessings and graces that came my way every moment through each person I met, whether in the community, ministry, or family and also through other things that are sometimes difficult to understand with my human mind. I experienced loving fear for this aging community so filled with understanding, religious/ strength, and affection for me. There were, of course, some new experiences difficult to understand. I was both deeply moved and also comforted.

I was being appointed to the Team of Pragnyalay community. My heart wondered what? How? Why? When? Will I be able? I asked myself. On 9<sup>th</sup> June the community year began with the newly appointed Pragnyalay Community Team of four. The Team of Four had their first meeting... to get to know each other; In the second meeting, we planned how to make life more interesting, more full, more responsible for each member of the community; each in her own way. We adopted a general plan of Reunion, Chair Exercises, movies, games, yoga, and many others, by which each one could relax. Our group of 4 members – Srs. Marie, Pratibha, Charusheela and Kirti – hopes to provide a really interesting new life for our older sisters who have given their lives building up our Society.

Lastly, there was Sr. Fleurette's home going, I believe that the Sacraments are a great source of strength and power. I rang our Parish Priest immediately after she had breathed her last and he very kindly came promptly and anointed her with holy oil. It convinced me that even in the last minute of our lives God provides us with His immense Love and fulfilment. The loss of Fleurette is great at this moment as she would have been an excellent adviser from the 80s age group – but of course she will do it from above! Thank you Fleurette.

It is a lesson to me to accept His call – even in death how to be composed. Having been with several RSCJ in their last moments, I have experienced their total gift of self to Jesus who called them to put their whole being into His hands. I beg Mary, my mother, to give me this same grace when I go into the hands of her Son.



*Kirti Bhuiyan rscj*



## LIFE AND ENERGY FLOWING IN THE MIDST OF PRAGNYALAY COMMUNITY

The new community year started in the month of June. Two new members joined the community, namely, Sr. Marie and Sr. Charu. As we were setting our goal and lifestyle, Sr. Marie, who is at present animating the community after Sr. Shanti's transfer, announced that Sr. Kiran would like to

bring our Seekers once week to Pragnyalay Community. She would like the community to interact with them and share their wisdom and knowledge, so that the Seekers can pick up the vibes of religious life as well as be inspired to strengthen their vocations. Sr. Marie who was in the Prerana formation house before coming to Pragnyalay continues taking them for English classes. The community was very happy and enthusiastic to welcome our young Seekers and help to continue the flow of life.



Seekers acting out 'Goldy Locks and the three Bears'

Sr. Marie takes the Seekers for English, Sr. Anjali for Calligraphic writing, Sr. Charu for small skits and plays and Sr. Niela teaches them singing. The English class will always continue for them as that is the main aim of coming here, but the other sessions may change according to their and our needs. They also perform what they have learnt, especially skits, for the community. In this way they gain confidence and get the courage to talk in front of an audience and overcome their fear. Besides this, their prayer and reflection on that day is also animated by Sr. Marie. After their dinner they also play games, i.e. Scrabble and Rummikub, with Sr. Marie and whoever is available from among the community members. This is good for them to increase their thinking and retention power, alertness and to sharpen their minds and focus their attention. They arrive here after their lunch at about 1 pm. and leave around 9 pm. after their dinner.

This exchange has helped both the communities and brought a lot of liveliness by sharing one to one at tea time or on the hop in the corridor. From time to time, they also perform what they have learnt and after their performance some feedback is given to them to improve. This exchange energises and refuels both the young and the elderly and relationships grow. Bonds are built. We are happy and thank God for this sharing. I am happy to do this small service and thank and praise God for reviving with them the relationships built in Torpa when I was in charge of them.

*Charusheela Gaikwad rscj*

## **>>> FLEURETTE'S HOME-GOING AND A FEW DETAILS ABOUT HER LIFE**

In the first part of this article, I will share briefly my experience of Fleurette in Pragnyalay in the past two years, during times when she felt well. She had many health issues but there were times and days when she felt better than at other times and when this happened what was remarkable was her spirit of service and readiness to help wherever and whenever she could. Regularly she would clean the vegetables sitting at the entrance of her room with a newspaper spread on her lap and the vegetables on it. When we were still doing the scullery ourselves, she was often at the first basin – the messiest part of the washing – and would then dry the dishes that had been washed. She rang the bell for the Angelus before lunch every day when she was well.

She loved to prepare the liturgy and when it was her turn, she did it with great





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care and attention. She also loved to conduct the rosary and when she felt well would give us deep reflections on each mystery of the five decades. The Eucharist was a very important part of her day. She minded missing it when she couldn't help it. Sometimes even after a bad night she would be at Mass the next morning.

She had a deep concern for young people, a deep love for the Society and these were often the subject of her prayer.

She had the joy and consolation of having her many nephews, nieces, and their families coming to visit her regularly and each of these visits meant a lot to her. On her ordinary phone she would follow the progress of the children of her nephews and nieces and the current situations of the different families.

She loved company and would often invite people to sit with her for some time. Niela used to visit her regularly and for some weeks Archana used to read to her from *The Spiritual Journey*.

From the beginning of this year her health began to go downhill. When we celebrated the Golden Jubilee of our Final Vows on 3<sup>rd</sup> February, she just about managed to pull herself up for the day though she had been unwell for quite some time. Every now and again her health would be in crisis and we would think the end was near but the next day or after a couple of days she would revive.

The last couple of months were a very trying time for her when she began to suffer recurring spasms of severe pain in her legs which she found difficult to bear. Also, the condition of her legs which had been a problem for years, began to worsen. Sometimes she would cry out in pain at different times of the day and night. At times she would sleep peacefully for hours.

We had planned an Anointing Service for Fleurette on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June at 10.30 a.m. with the whole community present; but it was not to be.

In the last fortnight or so there was someone with her all the time because she needed regular attention for different needs. From 20<sup>th</sup> June she was not so restless. She asked pardon from some individuals whom she had hurt.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> morning she was quiet, hardly ate anything, and her face looked pale and energy less. On 23<sup>rd</sup> June, Champa, a helper, was on duty from 2 to 8 p.m. We had finished our rosary and were walking towards the Dining Room. It was around 6.35 p.m. At some point Champa felt that something was happening to Fleurette. In panic, she ran to the kitchen to call our helper, Rita. By the time Rita reached and Marie arrived from Anandalay Fleurette had breathed her last. Rita and Marie kept rubbing her hands and feet for quite some time and Marie called out to her again and again. There was no response. She had slipped away quietly and peacefully.

We thank God for the witness of her presence in our midst and her courage in the face of suffering. She held on to God in moments of doubt, darkness, discouragement and pain. We feel sure she will pray for all of us with whom she shared life for so many years.

*Phila Gomes rscj*

(The following news report is meant to give you an idea of our daily life in Pragnyalay)

## **>>> NEWS.... PRAGNYALAY CALLING.....**

- June 8<sup>th</sup> Srs. Marie and Pratibha come to Pragnyalay.
- 10<sup>th</sup>. Sr. Charusheela arrives. With Kirti, the Pragnyalay animating Team is complete.
- 11<sup>th</sup>. The Team meets Jaya, our Nurse, Rita our Kitchen in charge, Manisha, our Cook, and the helpers, Laxmi, Kavita and Yamuna, and clarifies their work and responsibilities as well as whom they have to report to.
- 12<sup>th</sup> The Team meets the Infirmary team, namely Jaya and Kirti, and the Food Team, namely Marie, Jaya, Rita and Manisha.
- 13<sup>th</sup> Srs. Ananda and Jyoti visit the community on behalf of the Provincial Council. They meet the community and invite them to share their dreams for Community this year.
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Sr. Fleurette goes to God.
- 24<sup>th</sup> At 3 pm we begin the Mass for Fleurette's funeral. The Chapel is full with many of Sr. Fleurette's family, our Seekers and community from Prerana and Sisters from our neighbouring communities. His Grace, Bishop John Rodrigues, Bishop of Pune, himself officiates at the Mass. The singing is a fitting tribute to her who loved prayer and devotion. After the Mass, many of our Sisters and Fleurette's family accompany the body to the cemetery, where as usual they leave the grave covered with flowers and alight with candles.
- 26<sup>th</sup> Celebration of Sr. Celine's Birthday with a Get together for Singing and Games at 5.30.
- 22<sup>nd</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> Visitors: Sr. Annie, Sr. Prisca, and Bernadette Serrao who had worked in the Sophia College Kitchen for 13 Years.
- 30<sup>th</sup> Ceremony of First Profession of their Novices at Maria Assunta. Srs Marie and Kirti attend the ceremony.
- July 7<sup>th</sup> Golden Jubilee celebration of Sr. Mary at Maria Assunta, Sr. Anjali attends.
- 12<sup>th</sup>. Celebration of Sr. Elisha's Birthday at Breakfast, Fun and games at 5.30, then Supper.
- 14<sup>th</sup> Sr. Anila visits the community, meets each one and experiences our life under the new Team.
- 29<sup>th</sup> Srs. Marie and Charu leave for Shrirampur by the Pune Amravati Express, leaving at 11 am and arriving at Belapur at 3 pm.  
Sr. Pratibha arrives to represent the team for four days.
- 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Day at St Teresa's Girls High School, Haregaon.

Sr. Marie, as Chief Guest, at the Annual Day, has all the honours done for her along with Fr. Bhausahab Sansare who presides over the programme. The programme itself was of a high standard. The teachers had done their best to prepare the girls for the different dances, in just over a month. Invited guests, parents, teachers and all the students enjoyed the rich language and style with which each item as well as the Principal's report, the guests of honour and the Prize distribution were introduced. There was a special collection of dances in the latter half of the programme presenting the Maharashtrian culture. These were each introduced in great detail and made the students and their parents, almost all of them, local people, feel proud.



Sr. Marie shares: "In my Speech I remembered my first steps into the school more than fifty years ago. In 1973, we were sent as a team of five Sisters for five years to work in the Haregaon mission. We went there with the fire and zeal of the 1970 Chapter. Working with a young, enthusiastic group of teachers and under the guidance of the Rural Development Centre of the Ahmednagar College, and with the addition of the girls from the middle school of the Parish, it was truly the beginning of a new era in St Teresa's Girls' High School, Haregaon.

Together we set goals to define and focus our educational mission in the school with the particular social background of the students. Our efforts were to enrich the given Syllabus with games and hobby choices that widened the students' perspective and gave them first hand, experiential knowledge and skills. Today, this trend continues in the school as the Government is proposing these very activities to be part of the school programme today. I encouraged the girls to take advantage of all these activities, now part of their syllabus, to aim not at the 90% or 95% or even 99% that most students are aiming at, in order to take on further studies and get a good (i.e. salaried) job or go abroad, but to go deeper into all that the syllabus offers them to learn and experience. I invited them to ask the questions – the What, the How, the Why - at each stage of their learning and in every subject, so that they become truly 'educated' persons able to think, judge, act and live life fully."

August 1st Srs. Marie and Charu return by the same train, arriving in Pune at 11 am.

4th Aruna Gomes, the niece of Sr. Millicent from Kolkata, comes to visit her and stay two days.

8th Sr. Anjali's nephew and his family visit and stay to lunch.

*Marie Noronha rscj*