

24th February 2026

>>> NEWSLETTER <<<
SOCIETY OF THE SACRED
HEART
PROVINCE OF INDIA



**NEWS FROM THE MALWANI
COMMUNITY**

SR. SOPHIE'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE *LEGION OF MARY*

The *Legion of Mary* in Mumbai is a major lay apostolic organisation within the archdiocese of Mumbai, dedicated to spiritual growth and community service under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The legionaries are involved in pastoral care of several parishes and, as *Spiritual Animator* of the Kharodi English-speaking group for adults, I am privileged to participate closely with them in this ministry.

Activities: Members are engaged in visiting homes of the sick, abandoned and elderly, as well as orphanages and hospitals; they prepare patients for the *Sacrament of the Sick*, accompany study tours, and help in recruiting new active and auxiliary members.



**Members Visiting
(Orphanage) Versova;**



**The House of Charity, Andheri;
Vimala Leprosy home, Andheri;**



Study tour to Erangal Church

“STUDY-TOUR-CUM-OUTING” TO ERANGAL CHURCH

Once a year we have a “*Study-tour-cum-Outing/Picnic*” programme. This year, on January 20th, we went to **Erangal, for this purpose**. The **Church of St. Bonaventure in Erangal**, Malad West, is one of the oldest Roman Catholic churches in the region, established by the Franciscan priests during the Portuguese rule in Mumbai. The annual parish feast is famous in the nearby parishes and many devotees visit in hired buses, resulting in severe traffic-related problems.

Origin: Built in 1575, the church reflects Portuguese colonial architecture. **Construction:** Local basaltic rock was used, with a mixture of jaggery and limestone, creating a structure designed to endure the coastal climate. **Abandonment and Restoration:** The church was active until 1739 when it fell into disuse after the Maratha conquest of Salsette. However, it was restored and reopened for worship in 1976. The church stands as a testament to the area's rich history, enduring through Portuguese and British rule, and it remains a vibrant place of worship and community gathering.

Personal benefits of being in this Association: I feel challenged by the seriousness and passion with which the legionaries work *for the salvation of souls*. Personally, I have always been interested in reaching out to the poor, those whose human rights are violated or those who are deprived. After becoming part of the *Legion of Mary*, my whole orientation has changed. Often, I deal with those who are materially very rich and spiritually very poor. They are not connected with the Church, not in line with Church teachings; hence dissociated from the sacraments too. At the same time, they are categorised as “Catholics”. I feel inspired to accompany these people in various ways. As a group, we pray for them, especially during our monthly holy hour. This has been a spiritual enrichment for me and I take this mission very seriously. **It is a God-given Mission.** As **Jermiah 29:11** says: **“I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”**

Sophie rscj

A JOURNEY OF FAITH, SERVICE AND EDUCATION

Before I begin sharing the celebrations of our *Jubilee* year, let me take you back to the rich history of St. Anthony's School, which dates back to the year 1900. In those days, there were no schools in the vicinity. Realising the urgent educational needs of the locality, the school was started with a humble beginning in a single-room tenement to serve the local community. At that time, the village of Malwani was cut off from

the city due to lack of proper transport facilities.

With great vision and dedication, Rev. Fr. Remedios initiated regular primary classes. He was succeeded by Rev. Fr. D’Cunha, who further developed the institution up to the middle school level. Under his leadership, the school began to flourish. As admissions increased and the demand for education grew, it became necessary to construct an additional building. Consequently, the foundation of the new building was laid, marking another significant milestone in the school’s journey. As Jesus said, (Matt 19:14) *‘Let the little children come to me’*, St. Anthony’s School has always stood as a beacon of learning, faith and service. It is with immense pride and gratitude that I acknowledge that the academic year 2025–2026 was a very special *Jubilee Year* for St. Anthony’s School, Malwani. We celebrated our *Foundation Day*, commemorating 125 years of the old building and 25 years of the new building. I feel truly blessed to be part of this historic and joyful occasion.

To commemorate this milestone, the school organised various events under the able guidance of our school Manager, Rev. Fr. Cajetan Menezes, our Principal, Sr. Amala Jyothi, and the Heads of the three sections. Throughout the Jubilee year, several programmes were thoughtfully planned and executed. One of the most exciting events was the *Funfair-cum-Children’s Day* celebration which was organised for the first time in the school. It was heart-warming to witness the enthusiasm, teamwork, and dedication of everyone involved. As the day drew to a close, there was a deep sense of joy, triumph, and accomplishment.

Another successful initiative was the *“Running Marathon”* for all age groups, organised to raise awareness about environmental conservation. The event carried two powerful messages: **“Ditch Plastic: Save the Environment”** and **“Be the change you wish to see in the world”**. It was a meaningful way to instil responsibility of *Caring for our Planet*, reminding us that *“The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it”* (Psalm 24:1). The school also organised various inter-school competitions, including *Storytelling, Best out of Waste, Clay Moulding, Poster Making*, and a *Football* tournament. These activities provided students with opportunities to showcase their creativity, talents, and sportsmanship.

The *Annual Day* celebration was another highlight of the *Jubilee* year. The entire history of the school - from its foundation to the present day - was beautifully enacted through a dramatic presentation. It was truly a joyful experience to see students, teachers, and support Staff come together as one united *Antonian Family* living out the words: *“how good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity”* (Psalm 133:1).

In conclusion, the *Jubilee* celebration was not just a series of events, but a true testimony to God’s faithfulness, and to the unity and enduring legacy of St. Anthony’s School. It honoured the past, celebrated the present, and inspired the future. As the school moves forward, it remains firmly rooted in faith and dedication, continuing its mission of shaping generations through education and standing as a beacon of hope, service, and unity.

Poonam Gaikwad rscj

“FOR THE SAKE OF ONE CHILD I WOULD GO TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD.”

These words of St. Madeleine Sophie are laden with meaning, inspiration and challenge for me. Besides, coupled with a natural attraction to **children and youth** wherever I was “sent” on ministry, I did not lose time in framing my **‘Sophie project’** when I was transferred back to **St. Anthony’s Parish, Malwani**, in **mid-October 2025**, for recuperation following knee surgery this September... thus continuing a vision over many years ... now taking new forms as this article unfolds...**“Hidden in the heart of things Thou art nourishing seeds into sprouts, buds into blossoms, and ripening flowers into fruitfulness.”**– *R. Tagore*



The First Seeds: In 2018, a small **Children’s Council** was formed in the *Nativity of our Lady Community, Kharodi*, comprising about eighteen members – boys and girls – open to school children of any faith from Standards IV to XII – in our surrounding neighbourhood. We named this group the **Neighbourhood Children’s Council (NCC)**. While the initiative was mine, I was fortunate to have the collaboration of some of the Animators who were ready to support it and share responsibility as needed.

The aim of this project was to foster healthy, wholesome, and productive interactions among children, to train them in leadership, and to help them develop a harmonious unity of body, mind, and spirit, together with a spirit of social responsibility and national integration.

Sprouts and Flowers: The group was later subdivided into pairs that undertook different tasks known as **Ministries**, focusing on various aspects of personal growth and group development. The children in charge were called **Ministers**, for example: *Food, Sports, Spirituality, Cultural Activities, Environmental Awareness*, and similar areas. At the monthly meetings, a pair of children would make a presentation on an



important topic related to their area of responsibility. After each presentation, the children were trained to thank the presenters, ask questions where needed, and encourage the speakers by offering positive feedback along with constructive suggestions when necessary. This group

continued until 2023, when most of the children reached higher secondary levels or joined college. When I left the parish at that time, we attempted to remain connected through a *WhatsApp* group; however, communication gradually diminished and eventually became almost non-existent!

Some positive “Fruits” In October 2025, I returned to **St. Anthony’s Parish, Malwani**, to join our RSCJ community at the Nazarene Apartments. I was amazed to see how much the children had grown during this short transitional period. Most of them were now in college or pursuing professional courses as young adults. I met some of them casually and asked whether they would be interested in reviving our interactive group. To my delight, they readily agreed. I requested them to organise a simple meeting to begin with. Our first such meeting was held on **November 2, 2025**, with twelve youth present. To begin with a topic that interested everyone, we chose **“Artificial Intelligence - Friend or Enemy?”** – a topic suggested and conducted by one of our neighbourhood youth, **Shivam Gupta**, a final year student from the *Xavier Institute of Engineering*, Mahim, with a strong interest in technology, innovation, and emerging digital trends.

We spent a delightful, informative, and challenging *‘hour and a half’* together that Sunday morning. Shivam engaged us with an exciting quiz to begin with, based on information related to AI where each participant could also see their ranking within the group. The interactions, questions, and answers were stimulating and left us with many thought-provoking ideas to reflect upon. The youth group proposed that **we meet once a month**, which I gladly accepted. They also agreed to **prepare the meeting** venue and take care of other practical arrangements. The next topic suggested was **“Time Management”**, which



was conducted by me, with active group participation for almost two hours on **December 7th, 2025**. Eight youth were present. A meeting scheduled for **January 25th, 2026**, was announced on a topic chosen by the group: **“Growing in Self-Esteem”**, with a follow-up on February 6th.

Conclusion: I am deeply grateful to God that we could revive this initial **Children’s Council**, now renamed **“Youth Renew”** - a small seed that has grown and borne fruit today. I believe that now, more than ever, our youth need close attention through **synodality** – **“walking with”** them – accompaniment, marked by encouragement, affection, care, understanding, and support. My conviction is that this group has the potential to provide such “food and drink” for them on life’s journey.

Another seed that has just begun to burgeon is an enthusiastic group of younger children, aged six to twelve years. We had our first session on **December 19th, 2025**, as Advent preparation for Christmas, with seven children present. The session was deeply appreciated by both the children and their parents.

Manisha Gonsalves, rscj