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



**NEWS FROM THE SANTACRUZ  
COMMUNITY**

## *Called to be “Pilgrims of Hope”*

The theme for the Jubilee Year 2025 was "Pilgrims of Hope." We included it in our community goal and I have tried to live it in my daily life. Each member of our community is actively engaged in ministry. However, every evening, we meet to pray together as community. This helps us to see how God is working in our lives, and increases my faith and trust in the Lord. Having supper together and playing *Rummikub*, after scullery, helps in bonding and building of relationships. We sometimes have differences of opinion but these do not hamper our relationships.

Besides this, I have a class with our candidates on the Sophia Campus in the morning. After that, I work in the Polytechnic with Sr. Mary Varghese, to learn what this work entails. This part-time ministry gives me hope and joy as I interact with the students and Staff. It makes me feel young at heart. I experience how the Holy Spirit leads me to do good by reaching out to the youth just by being an RSCJ presence among them. These conversations I get to know their difficulties, struggles, and joys of life. I appreciate, support, and encourage them to move ahead. Just a smile makes them feel at home as they realise that they are recognised for their worth. It evokes a sense of belonging to the Polytechnic family.

For *Vocation Promotion* work I go to *Madh Island* on the 3rd Sunday of the month to attend the youth Mass and session. I interact with the youth and visit one or two families. I am happy to see those who were youths in 2002 flourishing today as adults. My desire is to get more youth involved, so that they can benefit from the sessions and develop their personality and character to become the persons God wants them to be.



*Youth meeting at 'Our Lady of the Sea' Church, Madh*

Finally, being a *Eucharistic Minister* in our *Sacred Heart* parish has given me the opportunity to serve the local Church. This happens once a month for a week from Monday to Friday. It's a joy to bring Jesus to others through the Eucharist. Standing outside the Blessed Sacrament chapel, where I wait for conveyance to Sophia campus, I make it a point to smile and interact with the people who visit the Blessed Sacrament. They feel good and happy. In these ways I see how God is using me as a pilgrim of hope to others.

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***Venizia Fernandes rscj***

## *Prerana Nursery School – An Inspiration*

When Sr. Daphne and the Provincial Council asked me to spend some time at the *Prerana Nursery School* in Wagholi, Pune, during October and November 2025, I gladly accepted. Sr. Fatima Azavedo was away attending a course, and I stepped in to offer my support.

From the very first day, I was reminded of the joy that comes from being surrounded by little children. Their friendliness and affection quickly made me feel at home, and before long, we were friends. Though I had been away from early childhood education for some time, I found myself once again guiding teachers in preparing lesson plans and terminal examination papers.



The Staff knew me only as the person who came each month to do the community accounts. They had heard I was a disciplinarian, but they were surprised to discover a different side of me — someone approachable and friendly. This shift opened the door to deeper collaboration, and our relationship grew richer because of it.

I was touched by the wholehearted welcome I received. The teachers showed great openness to learning, and they appreciated the suggestions I offered. In turn, I admired their dedication and the beautiful bonds they had built with their students. Each classroom radiated warmth, and the children’s eagerness to come to school each day was proof of the love and care they received.

*Prerana Nursery School* has grown tremendously over the years. Today, it is a nurturing space where children’s holistic development is encouraged through a blend of structured learning and play. Creativity, curiosity, and critical thinking are woven into the curriculum. Parents, too, share in this joy. Many of them spoke of the positive changes they saw in their children: a new-found confidence, enthusiasm, and pride in cultural activities. I met a few parents personally and was able to counsel them about their role in supporting their child’s growth at home.

One of my happiest memories was being present for the Diwali celebration. Netris, PTV from Indonesia, joined us during this time to experience the nursery school. The children’s excitement was contagious as they played with firecrackers, danced, and left with packets of sweets, their faces glowing with happiness.

*Prerana Nursery School* is more than just an institution. It is a place where children blossom with joy, creativity, and confidence. My time there reaffirmed something I deeply believe: **“Education, when rooted in love and care, has the power to transform lives.”**



**Jokina D’Mello rscj**

### *My Mission Experience in the ANZ Province*

After a challenging experience with *Australian Immigration*, - despite support of the *Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office* - I was finally welcomed in February 2024, after twelve months of trusting that



God was present in every event and circumstance of this journey. I remain deeply grateful to the ANZ Province for their openness, generosity of heart, and patience, which sustained me through the difficulties of obtaining my visa.

Belonging to the *Claremont* community has been a privilege. Living in a multicultural group of sisters of the ANZ Province, now NEANZ, enriched my experience of community life. I was also delighted to connect with the students of Grades 9 and 11 of the *Kincoppal Rose Bay* school, sharing with them my passion for JPIC, climate change, and the mission of our RSCJ UN-NGO Office in New York, where I had previously served. Their eagerness to learn more about the UN and our Sacred Heart mission was inspiring.

As a member of the Provincial Leadership Team of the ANZ Province, I was privileged to participate in the process of forming the **NEANZ (North East, Asia-Australia New Zealand)** Province, together with the provinces of Japan and Korea-China. This involved many meetings, visits, opportunities to build relationships, as well as exploring governance structures for the new province.



Although I initially joined the team via *Zoom* from the United States, and later from India, I was able to contribute as commitments and time zones permitted. The *Province Leadership Team* carried significant responsibility, serving as the *hands-on* administration in the absence of sufficient personnel. This journey was not without challenges. Each member brought unique expectations, and balancing teamwork with self-sufficiency was demanding. At times, the workload felt overwhelming. Yet I was continually inspired by the dedication of our sisters, their commitment to the mission of the Society, and the collaboration of our Partners in Mission who enriched our leadership team.

With many sisters now ageing, the capacity to visit those in **Aged Care** has diminished. Nevertheless, they are lovingly cared for by *Facility staff*, *Health Care Coordinators* appointed by the Society, and the *Link person* on the Provincial Council. Visiting and accompanying our sisters in **Aged Care** was one of my greatest joys. Weekly visits to the homes in Sydney allowed me to listen to their wisdom and stories of ministry, which filled me with awe and admiration. I miss each of them deeply.



I also felt warmly welcomed by Fr. Christopher Slattery, parish priest of *Mary Magdalene Church, Rose Bay*. My involvement in the parish choir, especially during Advent and Lent, and in preparing children for their First Holy Communion, gave me a sense of belonging to a wider community. Through these interactions, I experienced bonds of love and friendship that grew quickly and deeply.

I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to serve in the ANZ Province. The friendship, warmth, and hospitality of our sisters touched me deeply. Their commitment, passion, and wisdom have enriched my life and given me hope for the future.

This mission experience has been an extraordinary journey of learning, service, and growth. It has been a privilege to witness and participate in the Society's mission in another province, and I carry these blessings with me always.

**Rita Pinto rscj**

*“For the sake of one child.....”*

When I was asked to move from Bhokar to SPJ Sadhana School in **2016**, there were mixed feelings in my heart ... *I do not have any training in special education ... can I embark on such an unknown trail at the age of 70? ... leaving the rural areas is heartbreaking ... and so on ...*

Today, in **2026**, I am at a different point .... Asked to move out of SPJ Sadhana School is also heartbreaking. The only way to integrate these feelings is to look back and recognise the Lord's mysterious hand at every



moment of the journey. What became more real to me during these last ten years is St. Madeleine Sophie's testimony: **"For the Sake of One Child I would go to the ends of the earth"** There were innumerable ways in which I saw this lived at Sadhana.

I was asked very early in my ministry at Sadhana to provide a chair for one of the children in the *Formative Years*. Knowing that each class is equipped with enough furniture, and coming from a ministry (rural Maharashtra) where we make do with what we have, there was a question in my mind. I went to the class to enquire and was told that one of the children was not able to sit still for more than a few minutes – he keeps running around – so he needs a chair that can be locked!!! **I saw and believed!** To my amazement a few months later, on *Sports Day*, this little chair was taken to the sports ground at the *Priyadarshini Park*, several kilometers away, for this child!

We had a student who was visually impaired. He had to run the obstacle race – step into a hoop, jump over some bricks etc. He could not see the obstacle but had to be guided to it - not by holding his hand, but by making a sound with a tambourine just in front of him to help him know which way he had to go – he was visually impaired, but his hearing abilities were intact; so, the teacher used this faculty to help him participate in the sport.

The bi-annual concert is another highlight where every parent has the joy of seeing his/her child on the stage. I had often wondered how this could be possible. But, as the school song emphasises, Sadhana can **"make the Impossible Possible"**.

I was amazed to see the skill of the teachers in putting every child on the stage. The one who needed the special chair in *Grade II* had now graduated to a stand that could be locked – so there he was on the stage! Another student, who was excellent at cycling or skating was given the role of cycling or skating in the park - on the stage. Another who was quite "special" was appointed as a "*channawala*" - a vendor selling gram in the park. So, he just had to walk through with his ware. What a joy for the parents who dream of seeing their child perform on a stage someday!

I carry these memories with me and know that as I look forward to continue living the mission of the Society, Sadhana's heroic efforts to *make the Impossible Possible* will surely give me the courage and inspiration I need in the years ahead. I have learnt how God walks with me each day and reveals His love and challenge in mysterious and unexpected ways when He calls me to the unknown.

**Pratibha rscj**

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