

SOCIETY OF THE SACRED HEART

PROVINCE OF INDIA

NEWSLETTER



September 2022

NEWS FROM THE TORPA COMMUNITY

In June 2022, we began our community life with Charusheela Gaikwad, Agnes Guria, Mukta Bhengra and myself in development work (CWD) and Sushma Topno, Neelam Hemrom and Lily Kullu in Children of the New Dawn School (CND).

The CWD ministry includes agriculture activities, non-agriculture activities, womens' empowerment programs and elementary education programs in village government schools. The CND ministry includes an I.C.S.E. English medium school with classes from 1 to 10. A year ago, we enthusiastically began the 'Come & See' program to nurture vocations to our Society. The program is designed for young college students aged 16 years and above.

The five key practices of JPIC have greatly motivated us to plan the road map for future readiness for CND and CWD with a community driven development approach. The question we often ask ourselves is "Where do we see possibilities for transformation in our personal lives, community, and in our apostolic engagements? (Pg 15-JPIC document)

In this newsletter each of us has shared our joint efforts "to transform and be transformed".

Mariaelena Figueredo rscj

A glimpse of my life in Torpa.

I am part of the CWD livelihood team of 12 staff. During the past two months, the team is actively involved with giving trainings on zero budget natural farming techniques (ZBNF) to the farmers of Torpa and Rania. For these trainings simple methods with natural resources are used e.g., cow dung, cow urine, water, bitter leaves and seeds in order to prepare bio-pesticides, bio-fertilizers, vermi-compost, etc. Through this exercise the farming community is made aware that natural manure is far better than the chemical fertilizers like DAP and urea. I personally feel responsible to raise awareness and share knowledge of the abundant natural resources that are available in order to improve the quality of life of the tribal community. Trainings are also conducted on climate smart agriculture practices (CSAP) e.g., machan kheti method used for the creeper variety for vegetable cultivation.



I often visit a few villages using a two-wheeler scooty. It has enhanced my confidence to face the daily task of meeting women and men farmers and convincing them to adopt new techniques of farming practices. I do face some challenges as I have limited knowledge of agriculture, government schemes, rights and entitlements of the tribal community, etc. which is so necessary for the work of rural development. Overall, I feel that I still need to grow in this field.



Some Glimpses of our 'Come & Sees'

At present we have three students of class 12 and one student of class 11 who are our extended community of possible vocations. They attend classes regularly at the St. Joseph's College Torpa. So, there is a flexible program for them so as to help them to gradually adapt and feel at home in our community. They are learning about our Society of the Sacred Heart, some common devotional prayers and some conversational English (as they speak the local languages of hindi and mundari). It is a joy for me to share with them my experiences of being a 'Beloved of God'. It also is a joy to motivate and to walk with them in their own search for God. We have many opportunities to be together in our learnings and in our programmes.

Agnes Guria rscj

Our Campus Programmes

August 15, 2022, was a proud moment for us Indians as the nation celebrated Amrit Mohotsav - 75 years of Independence Day. Every year, from the state of Jharkhand a huge number of young men join the armed forces. So, it was an honour to have an ex-army man (parent of a Bal Niketan child) as the Chief Guest. He paid a wonderful tribute and praised our military forces for their bravery and courage in difficult situations at the border, always alert, safeguarding the country. In spite of heavy rains, the previous day and a very wet day the next morning, a large number of children, parents and guardians attended the Independence Day. The teachers had prepared the children for the parade and a short programme.

Parenting Skills and Creative Teaching Skills in a post Covid-world:

"Every child counts". To ensure this philosophy, we invited a child psychologist Salony Priya, the founder of an organisation called UMEED. On 20th August 2022, Salony Priya conducted a workshop on parenting skills in the CWD multipurpose hall. 252 parents pro-actively participated to make the workshop a great success. Salony addressed the parents from 9.30 am till 12 noon. She has a magical way of talking to the parents and inviting them to respond. She counselled the parents and the teachers. She also shared simple creative methods to handle the children so that learning and teaching becomes a joyful experience for both the teacher and the child. The workshop for parents ended on a note of wanting more - in the form of a follow-up session.

The post lunch session was for the Bal Niketan teachers, the supervisors and trainers. Sisters Sushma Topno, Neelam Hemrom and Lily Kullu also joined this session for teachers. Teaching pedagogy was the main focus.



Tailoring Skills Training: After 1 year of the pandemic, the tailoring skills training class re-opened in June 2022 with 23 women for an intensive course of 3 months. Most of the participants were housewives and a few women were school drop-outs. The tailoring teacher taught the group cutting, sewing, embroidery, flower making and handmade decorative articles. Once a week I took a class on personality development and family values. And I met each trainee individually to guide them in order to explore opportunities for a future in tailoring and garment production. At the end of the course, an exhibition was held and all their products were displayed. On 31st August 2022 each trainee was awarded a certificate for completing the course successfully.

Charusheela Gaikwad rscj

My Ministry Experience

I began my ministry at Bal Niketan on 25th July 2022. I am the class teacher of Upper K.G. class with 41 children aged 5. I was a little nervous at the beginning because this was my first experience of being a class teacher. Every day I begin my class by welcoming the children. Their smiling faces makes me feel good. But there are some children who are cranky. I take them to the grotto and show them Our Lady and tell them that Mother Mary is watching you while you run, play and eat your tiffin. She is your Mother. And they smile back at me and feel reassured. The children find their own group of friends to play and to eat their lunch during the break.

I was very happy to teach 1 child to give the Independence Day speech in English. She speaks the local language Mundari at home, so she needed help. I also taught my class a dance for Teachers Day. I enjoy teaching small children. It gives me life and positive energy every day.

I also help out in Sunday school at the Sacred Heart Church Torpa. I began from August 2022. I am very happy to offer my service in my own local Parish. The Sunday school children actively participated for the Vianney Sunday programme for priests, St. Monica's Feast Day for Mothers and most recently Teachers Day.



My first offline exam experience in Mumbai city.

It was a big challenge for me to write an offline exam in English. In order to be nearer to the examination centre I lived with the Santa Cruz community. The sisters were very kind to me. The place was quiet and I was able to study well. But I was anxious whether I would remember all that I studied. I prayed to the Holy Spirit before I began writing and I was able to answer the paper calmly.

Mukta Bhengra rscj

School Day at the Children of the New Dawn.



22 July - SCHOOL DAY, is a very special occasion for the students and staff of CND as we remember our patron Saint Madeleine Sophie. This celebration has begun only recently from the year 2019.

We began with the eucharistic celebration by Fr. John Topno. He gave a very good message to the students. He motivated the students to work hard in order to go ahead in life – giving the example of a sculptor who forms the statues by cutting and hammering. After the meaningful liturgy, the students performed different programs. I was surprised to see them work in teams, displaying their talents with great confidence through an entertainment of music, songs and dances. This day is a day filled with much joy and peer learnings. The School Day is also a day of many memories for the children when they hear about our Sister and Saint Madeleine Sophie. She believed in the holistic development of every child. For her, each child was so important. The children are always happy to hear her life story and the mission of our Society of the Sacred Heart.

I enjoyed writing about this special Feast Day. I wanted to share with you how a program can touch one's social life. On this day the whole Torpa community participated making this occasion special and memorable for the staff and the students.

Lily Kullu rscj

Some Life-Giving experiences

The beginning of the academic year 2022-2023 at the Children of the New Dawn School brought lots of joy, hopes and dreams. We could see the enthusiasm among the teachers and the students. Since children missed co-curricular activities in the school for the past two years, we decided to organise some activities for them which could give them an opportunity to develop their talents. All the teachers shared lots of ideas and great plans. So together we planned for a year which could lead us accordingly. This year I.C.S.E. Ranchi Zone has organized many competitions for students to develop their talents. After the summer vacation, the students were taking much interest in sports and so two football teams were formed. As the students came to know about football matches, they began to practice football seriously so that they could participate in the forthcoming matches. As the day came closer, the children were getting excited but at the same time they were anxious too. Finally, the day arrived to go to Ranchi, and on the very first day, they were able to defeat the defending football champions. This gave them lots of encouragement. But the next day, they lost the match and came back very sad. As they reached the school, Sr. Sushma was waiting for them, and she consoled them. The following day when I met those students, they were sharing their experiences as well as their strengths and limitations. They also shared what they learnt during those matches. It helped them to recognize their strengths. I was really touched by their shared experiences and their self-discovery. Now they are super ready to face the challenges that lie ahead.



After a few days, some students participated for various competitions like painting, drawing, quiz and declamation. Two students from the Junior Category came first. They will go on to participate at the regional level competition. These students too have shared their wonderful experiences. Now many more students are getting inspired by them. There are other students wanting to know more. These competitions have really been a big eye opener for them. This is certainly giving them an opportunity to build a healthy competitive spirit. It is also helping them to gain confidence. I really feel happy that these activities are attracting the hidden talents of the students.

I thank God for this school ministry, for the spontaneous, enthusiastic and always interested children. All of this gives me a lot of hope and a lot of excitement.

Neelam Hemrom rscj

My interactions with parents

Meeting with the parents of the New Dawn School gives me a new insight towards my family life as well as my personal life. This year I had many opportunities to meet the parents. Some of the parents' sharing has given me great joy. The sharing's of both parents taking extra care to nurture their child's life. This sounds very simple, but I feel that wise parenting is very difficult today. Often, we have seen and heard of how many sacrifices the mother has made for the child from the time the baby is born. This means that the mother leaves behind all her interests and desires. Truly we all know that mothers are great. Even a young mother learns to cope with so many problems and difficulties without a grumble. From where they get all the energy and wisdom to run their family.

Presently, in class 9 there is a boy who is a cancer patient. It is a suffering not only for him but for his family too. When the mother came to tell me about her son's condition, I could sense her deep faith in God. Her capacity to accept the painful reality of her young son and at the same time her ability to console her son that he will soon be well again is tremendous.



My ministry at the New Dawn School puts me in touch with many parents coping with so many difficulties. Sometimes I only listen to them. At times I am able to support them in their struggles. I want to thank God for this ministry and for the many parents that come to me with so much hope and trust.

There are times, when some children grow up, they have little respect for their parents. How hard it must be for the parents to see their children's behaviour. In spite of this the parents love and accept their children even when they do wrongs. I feel enriched when I meet the parents in the school for various reasons. It helps me remember my own mother. Many times, I have disobeyed her and have not respected her even though she has done a lot for me. I owe my mother so much for all that I am today. She would be so very proud of me today. These sentiments help me to offer my life to God and to listen intently to him. I see God as a mother who is full of love, care and understanding and will fulfill all my daily needs. I ask God to grant me the gifts of patience, understanding and generosity in my day-to-day life.

Sushma Topno rscj