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



NEWS FROM THE PRAGNYALAY
COMMUNITY

The Golden Jubilee of the Final Vows of Srs. Mary, Fleurette and Phila

Mary Varghese, out of the goodness of her heart, said she would come to Pune to celebrate this event with Fleurette and me and that two RSCJs from Sophia Campus would accompany her. She contacted Shanti and arranged that the menu for the lunch be prepared by her and that our helpers be included for the lunch.

Fleurette and I prepared the liturgy choosing the two readings we had for our Final Vows. Fr. Stanny Fernandes SJ agreed to celebrate the Eucharist.

Around 10 a.m. on 3rd February 2024, Mary, Teresa Pereira and Rajani Khandagale arrived at Pragnyalay. The finally professed RSCJ from the Prerana Community had been invited to the Eucharist and lunch. Fatima who is now an expert in cake making made a fancy cake for us. Besides this, Shanti had ordered a special cake for the occasion.

Since our probation took place in Susono, Japan, we had Mt. Fuji, or Fujisan as the Japanese respectfully call her, miles away from us, visible only when she chose to make an appearance, to remind us of God's steadfast rock-like love. Most days she was hidden by clouds or mist but there were a few times when we saw her in her Glory. This too was a reminder of God's love, hidden most of the time but ever present in our lives, and experienced once in a way in a powerful manner.

We were 25 probanists when we began Probation. Three decided to leave during probation; one made her Final Vows with us and later left our Congregation to join a Cloistered Order. Two of our co-probanists have died, Hamanna, a Japanese, and our dear Elizabeth Paulose. Since a few of our American companions had arranged a Zoom meeting on the Profession anniversary day, for those who could be present, we thought it would be good for the three of us to be present for most of it so we fixed the Eucharist for 11.45 a.m. Rajani had come with her laptop and managed the technicalities so the three of us could participate fully in the Zoom meeting.

The Zoom meeting was a grace for all of us to be able to see those present on the screen, some of whom have aged a lot and others who looked quite fit and well. A huge surprise for us was to see Sr. Brigitte Tribot-Laspierre who had been on our Formation Team (with Yayoi and Joan Faber), now 98, present at the Zoom meeting. As time permitted we shared briefly with each other where we are at this time in our lives.

Fr. Stan celebrated the Eucharist with great devotion entering fully into our sentiments of gratitude to God for all the blessings over the past 50 years. The chapel had been beautifully decorated with golden and red African daisies.

After the Eucharist, the communities gathered outside Anandalay to sing for us and to wish us. The cake was cut. The festive lunch followed. The items had been carefully chosen by Shanti and both we and our helpers enjoyed the meal.

Fleurette, Mary and I are grateful to the Pragnyalay community for hosting this event and grateful too for all the arrangements that went into the preparation of the chapel, the dining room, the meal, and the board which Anjali had prepared despite being unwell at the time.

Since Kirti had gone on home leave at the time, Nithya (candidate) had been sent to help with the community chores, the sacristy and caring for the sick members in the community. It was indeed a great help to have her around for all these services which she carried out very willingly and with love and care.

Phila Gomes rscj

Fleurette shares ...

Having moved from the Lenten Season to Easter time, I want share with you the following:

By Rabindranath Tagore

“The Man of faith moves on along pitiless paths strewn with flints, over scorching sands.....
They follow him, the strong and the weak, the aged and young.....
Some grow weary and footsore, some angry and suspicious, they ask at every dragging step,
How much farther is the end
It is night.
The travellers spread their mats on the ground.....
A gust of wind blows out the lamp and the darkness deepens like a sleep into a swoon.
Someone from the crowd suddenly stands up and pointing to the leader with merciless finger breaks out:
False prophet, thou hast deceived us!
Others take up the cry one by one,
Women hiss their hatred ad men growl
At last one bolder than others suddenly deals him a blow.
They cannot see his face but fall upon him in a fury of destruction...
Suddenly they become still and gasp for breath as they gaze at the figure lying dead.
The women sob out loud and men hide their faces in their hands.
A few try to slink away unnoticed, but their crime keeps them chained to their victim.
They ask each other in bewilderment,
Who will show us the path?
The old man from the east bends his head and says: The Victim.....
And they all stand up and mingle their voices and sing: VICTORY to the VICTIM!”

By Janet Stuart

“The flowers of yesterday are withered, the echoes of yesterday have died, the warfare of yesterday is over; the manna if it is not spent is decaying. Yesterday IS NOT, it was a stepping stone, safe for one moment, then engulfed and the floods rolled over it: today will follow; it is only the foothold of a moment, God’s most excellent NOW. NOW says the Spirit ‘tread firmly a moment, snatch the manna as it falls, taste it, then let it go, let all go, GOD remains.’”

Fleurette D’Souza rscj

Millicent shares

Can you grow OLD in Pragnyalay? Yes, in the sense of walking sticks, slipping shoes, unsteady steps, many hands large and small outstretched to lift you down and settle you in your chair, give you a fan (when no one else has one), suddenly stumbling over a small heap of building stones the workers have left behind yesterday evening... But these are not the only realities.

For, in Pragnyalay the whole reality includes the low steps, broad verandahs; inviting garden, carefully laid out wide walkways, the lovely chapel just a walk away, where the Lord I have known and loved for so long is waiting in HIS marble chapel?!?! (Thank You Mary Braganza for the lovely chapel)!

Sure, I am 96 – these have been wonderful years which showed me a part of the whole world! A marvelous creation of my Beloved Lord – this whole world with lands which I

have visited (during my work in Agrimissio). Yes, I saw the whole world while doing His work. Yes, it is His call, which I followed gladly. Just as now walking the quiet paths (which Mary Braganza built for the elders), I walk invariably to and from the beautiful chapel to the dining room for a cup of hot tea! Tea will always be my drink.

Thank you Lord for your glorious work in me – ONLY You could make something out of nothing.

Millicent Francis rscj

Anjali shares ...

“GIVE THANKS” with a grateful heart. **“GIVE THANKS”** to the Holy One. **“GIVE THANKS”** because He’s poured out His own **SPIRIT** on us.

“See, I am making something NEW”: In our Society, every province / district had their Provincial Chapters in 2023 & 2024, and in India we had ours from 28th to 30th December 2023. What was “NEW” here at our Provincial Chapter was that it was an Open Chapter and we were fortunate in having a few of our New Province members present for this Chapter, namely Sr. Beth Sulleza, Sr. Yuka Arita and Sr. Joy Luz from the Philippines and from Indonesia Sr. Maureen Glavin and Sr. Lulud.

Most of us from Pragnyalay were not able to attend the Provincial Chapter, but we had the joy of reading about it in our Province News. We were also very fortunate that our sisters from Philippines and Indonesia visited us after the Chapter on 3rd January, 2024. We sat in various groups, sharing and listening to each other, after which we met for lunch. It was an exciting time for us to be together.

I am indeed grateful to the Lord that since 18th November 2023 there are 2 Indians, 6 Indonesians, 1 Filipina, and 1 Vietnamese in the ASIANZ Novitiate. We WELCOME them to our NEW PROVINCE! Now a Directory of our New Province is being prepared to help us get to know each other. How wonderfully HE is guiding us.

The Lord is surely guiding us to enter into the forming of SOMETHING NEW, and promising us a NEW FUTURE.

Anjali D’Souza rscj

My Ministries ...

My ministries take up most of my life at the community and the parish levels. Yes, indeed! Hardly do I begin to yawn and awaken and stretch from side to side than I jump up thinking “I have to do the sacristy for mass today....” The awakening ministry! “Did I put out the right colour stole? (Deo Gratias, we do not use chasubles)? Is there enough wine? Did I count the hosts? Did I clean the chalice properly? Have I got a clean purificator? Will the priest be late today? Be absent?” I am soon absorbed in preparing the altar. Preparing for the 7 a.m. Mass daily for the community is a sacred deeply moving first work of the day. My service in the chapel and at mass for the community is my deep joy and satisfaction, giving me the graces I need to be true to my religious vocation and to the Christian life into which I was born in far-off Jharkhand.

It was in the open green of Jharkhand that I learnt to love nature and this love goes into the

Pragnyalay garden where I go soon after breakfast! To my horror, the roots of all the green plants and creepers have been dug up and eaten! The red leaves left, the roots are visible, green leaves have scattered! (Did God create bandicoots and rats to enrage Gardeners?!) I soon put aside my horror by recalling the beauty of the green leaves, pink, yellow, white roses, and the red poinsettia blossoms. I gazed at these in loving wonder!!! All the visitors who come to us nearly every day admire the garden and gaze at the many coloured blossoms in the sun. I thank God that this house still has a garden which all the visitors can enjoy. As we have several of the older sisters with whom our younger sisters have worked, many of the latter come to visit their teachers or professors and those who have helped them in their early religious life. We all enjoy their visits and through them hear how our province is doing. Our hospitality works both ways, enriching both sides!

This type of house happily caters to the needs of our older sisters. But it also requires special and constant maintenance ensuring the safety of these sisters. These are the people for whom it was built. All our visitors find it clean, bright, peaceful and welcoming.

This peaceful atmosphere makes it possible for me to be on the parish council and to do some parish work. Being on the parish council I am responsible to visit a certain number of families at least twice a month. I try to keep them connected to the parish and the Church. I have also extended my availability to the Hindi Speaking group, CAA (Chhotanagpur Adivasi Association), organized by De Nobili College, who carry out a similar work for the Hindi Speaking families in Poona diocese. Being on the advisory committee I can help to bring up small or big problems of the group. Several women need encouragement and help in small or big difficulties like making ends meet, finding an adequate house, getting children into schools etc. etc. The school authorities welcome them when I make known their needs. Our community has made it possible for me to extend my services to the Marathi, English and Hindi speaking groups in our parish. I am glad to represent our community in these ways and I am happy to know Sisters and Fathers from different congregations through the Pune CRI.

Through these experiences one thing that I have learnt is how to speak clearly and gently but firmly and also when and where I need to refuse a responsibility because of my own duties! I have increased in maturity by listening to others and understanding how to balance my religious duties with outside work.

Kirti Bhuiyan rscj