

SOCIETY OF THE SACRED HEART PROVINCE OF INDIA NEWSLETTER



July 2019

NEWS FROM THE BHOKAR COMMUNITY AND THE MINISTRY AT ASHANKUR¹

They Live among Us

A smile can be a symbolic way to light up someone's world. Or you may say a kind word and offer a sign of hope to someone who is suffering.



One such woman was our venerable foundress, Mother Veronica. Off she went into a hostile world making obedience her surest guide. There was winter all around in the land. She cared not what folks would say, the road lay rough and long before her. But Mother Veronica's face glowed with determination. They called her a fraud, an adventuress, shut their doors against her face branding her 'a nun on the run' and she endured pains most bitter. This passion of hers gave birth to the 3rd order of the Carmelites. She faced trials, but God continued to bless her with peace and fulfillment.

Our co-foundress, Mother Elias, who was also known as an Irish Lilly, was also a valiant woman who ensured that the dream go on. She walked the path opened by Mother Veronica, in spite of all the challenges and difficulties that she had to face, she kept the light lit and showed the path to the next generation.

The extent of their humility was such that they would never have recognized nor even acknowledged the fact that it was through them that generations of girls received the light of education and still continue to do so in a country, namely India, which they had grown to love.



As we the CCR (Congregation of Carmelite Religious) family celebrated the Sesquicentennial Jubilee of the foundation of our Congregation, I am proud to have been called to walk in the footsteps of our dear Mother. From my very early days as a student, I was privileged to be under the patronage of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Mother Veronica, our foundress.

We firmly believe in reaching out to the needy and educating the girl child. Through little acts of kindness, through integrity in our work, through building wholesome relationships, the spark

¹ The Bhokar community and the ministry at Ashankur is a collaborative one. The community and workgroup comprises two RSCJ, one CCR sister and one lay woman who not only share life together but also work together in this ministry. The Ashankur property belongs to the Jesuits and the Trust that runs the ministry is a Jesuit one with RSCJ on its Governing Body.

within us will light up into a glowing light which will shine out and give glory to our creator. Yes 'they live among us' as we live our lives by the path shown to us by their very lives.

Sr. Gracy Arokiadass CCR

A Day with the New Born Babies and their Mothers

For this month of July, I have been going for my field work with another NGO called S. M. Dhanukar Trust (SMDT) which works in various areas; one of them is Nutrition mostly for babies and mothers. One day we went to give an input session to the mothers of the new born in the Prawara Medical Hospital Loni, Ahamadnagar. There were many new born children with their mothers and relatives there.

One of the wards was with malnutrition children; they looked very small, tiny. Their mothers too looked very thin, they didn't even have enough milk to feed their babies. It was pity to see them in that condition; as we talked to them we realized they had some fears or superstitions regarding what mothers should eat and what they should not.

The session that the workers of SMDT provided them was valuable as per how to breast feed the baby, how much and what kind of food the mother should take, what is the benefit of such food and ways of feeding the baby. Then there came other little older children too; who were guided as per their needs.

For me it was the experience of learning something very new. And I came back with joy, yet acknowledging how little I know.

Deodita Godinho RSCJ

My Experience in Bhokar

In the beginning I found it difficult for myself to adjust to the new atmosphere. Every phase of life is a learning experience by itself and I realized this when I came to Bhokar. In the beginning, I was not happy and I felt homesick, but as the days passed I realized that it was all a learning experience because I got plenty of opportunity to know how to face life courageously. I also learnt to observe and understand the people and the situations.

Happiness is one of those words that can be found in today's life in the experience of being loved. It is very easy to know when people are not happy; it is when they don't feel loved. Everyone wants to have happiness and smile, but life is difficult.

My experience with the hostelites has been priceless. I wouldn't want to let go off any memory with them, for anything in the world. The good and not so good times will never be forgotten. It was a struggle, but in spite of it, I learnt much more from the girls and the sisters. I thank the Almighty for each and everyone. It is by the grace of God, the support of the sisters and the staff that I go on.

Rita D'souza

Strengthening our Networks and Collaborations

All over the world, Jesuits are celebrating their SJES (Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat, Rome) Golden Jubilee. The 50th year commemoration of the Social Justice Ecological Secretariat is an occasion to celebrate the past, strengthen the present and discern for the future.

The objectives of the Commemoration are:

- To gratefully acknowledge, understand, reflect and highlight a) the activities of the **PAST**; b) the charisms, spirituality, principles and liberation strategies followed/lived out and c) understand and adopt them to the present and disseminate the good works done.
- To create opportunities and strengthen the **PRESENT** networks and collaboration strategies in our social institutes and centres.
- To take up ecology related activities and initiate inter-ministerial collaboration.
- To discern and strengthen social action ministry at various levels for the **FUTURE**



To celebrate this event meaningfully and as a preparation for the assembly in Rome, we had a meeting on 7th of May 2019 of all the Social Action Units of the Pune Province of the Jesuits at the Social Center, Ahmednagar. At that meeting, we came up with an idea to bring the staff of all five units (Ashankur, Ashakiran, Nandanvan, SADDAC and the Social Centre) together and have a common orientation programme for all of them. And so, there was an orientation programme on 16th June 2019, at Social Centre, Ahmednagar.

The theme of the programme was social justice and Ecological Justice. Fr. Tony Dias SJ from the Bombay Province was the resource person. Fr. Siju Verghese SJ, the director of Social Center, welcomed the resource person as well the participants.

Fr. Tony spoke on environmental justice. He focused on how to take care of our common home. He encouraged the staff to do tree plantation and do it for nation building. He asked the participants to find out the difference between social justice and environmental justice. He also shared how Jesuits have walked with the poor and thus are building up the nation with justice and peace.



I was happy that we the members of the Social Action Commission came together and networked with each other for this event. We appreciated each other for the work we are doing for the poor and marginalized. It was a good opportunity for our staff to mix with the staff of other organizations. It was the first time that we were able to organize an orientation programme for all our staff in common. At the end of the programme, there was an

evaluation by the staff and they said that it was good for them to come together and learn from each other. I am grateful to Fr. Siju Verghese for his cooperation and for bringing us together.

Prisca Tirkey RSCJ