

SOCIETY OF THE SACRED HEART

PROVINCE OF INDIA

NEWSLETTER



15th November 2019

NEWSLETTER FROM PRERANA COMMUNITY, PUNE

Construction work at Prerana

The past eight months have been an education for me in what it takes to build a 2nd floor. Living on the 1st floor of Prerana while the second was being constructed above us brought us all sorts of experiences – pleasant and some not too pleasant. Sometimes I watched with admiration the ‘focused attention’ with which the different groups of workers, who came in at different times during the 8 months, carried out the activities they are skilled at – both young and old. In the past months, many, many workers have been at work on the site, mostly men; the women were few in number and mainly did the work of carrying ghamelas of wet cement, bricks, rubble which needed to be cleared away. It struck me, not for the first time, how hard those on the lowest rung of the economic ladder have to work to keep body and soul together. What happens to their dreams, hopes, aspirations for a better life – a life with just a few of the comforts and conveniences we enjoy and so easily take for granted? A line from one of Tagore’s poems comes to my mind – “in this laborious world of thine, tumultuous with toil and with struggle, among hurrying crowds.....”.

In a nutshell, here’s how the construction work began, progressed and is still on.

On 19th March 2019, the feast of St. Joseph, a couple of trucks rolled into our compound carrying long, narrow ‘patras’ which would in a few days’ time be used to barricade a section of the approach to the main door of the house and a part of the garden. Huge nets were fixed

from the terrace to catch the falling rubble from the drilling so that no one would get hurt. So as not to disturb the children, staff, community a 2nd gate needed to be made. For this a substantial part of the sturdy, outer wall near the road (some distance away from the main gate) had to be pulled down bit by bit and a large temporary entrance made for the huge trucks that would keep coming in every few days with all kinds of materials – cement bags, steel rods, pre-fabricated cement blocks, tiles, bricks, window frames etc.



The solar panels and the huge drums for hot water on the terrace were dismantled and by the end of May we no longer had access to the terrace where we used to put out our washed clothes for drying. Noise became a constant companion from as early as 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.,

some days till even later (except for an hour when the workers had their lunch break). The first five weeks of drilling were gruelling and nerve-wracking, the noise deafening. Occasionally I would stuff my ears with cotton and shut the glass pane of the window in my room to keep out the noise. Mr. Sane, the architect, had warned us that when the drilling was being done, at times we would think the building was going to collapse but to be assured that that would not happen. Besides the noise, we had to make friends with huge clouds of dust, messiness, rain water flowing down from the terrace (once the rains began in the 2nd week of June) which had to be mopped up every now and again.

Sr. Fatima was the link person with the Supervisor and Asst. Supervisor when they had to give us information or we needed to inform them about something, e. g. when fairly large portions of the plaster fell down in two of the toilets as a result of the drilling of the water-proofing of the terrace.

By mid-September when Srs. Anila and Jokina came to inspect the progress of the building and ensure that what was being fixed (e.g. wash basins, electrical points for various purposes, the height of the guichet etc.) was as per our requirements, more than half of the building work had been completed. We all went up to the second floor with the architect, contractor, site engineer and suggestions for minor adjustments were made by those in a position to make them (i.e. those who have good practical sense and experience of building work) so as to make the place more livable.

For Diwali, all the workers except the Mukadam and his wife, were given a week-long break and we were able to relish quiet, silence and peace. Now the workers are back at work. Much of the interior work remains and is in progress. The work on the lift has been long-drawn out and is still in progress.

The few RSCJ who visited us during the past eight months were able to see the building at different stages of its progress – Prisca, Vimala, Rita and Jokina, Kathy Conan, Anila and Shanti when they came on their visit to our community in August, Sophie, Marie, and Albina.

We are grateful to God that He protected the workers from accidents all this while and kept them safe and sound. As province we pray that in the years to come young women ‘after the Lord’s own Heart’ wanting to give their lives to God and His mission may spend time within the walls of these two floors learning what it means to ‘stay with the Lord’ and then be sent as messengers of the Good News.

Phila Gomes rscj

Meeting of RSCJ Novice Directors in Rome, 15th-20th May 2019



This International Novice Directors meeting which was held after a gap of 20 years was an opportunity for 8 Novice Directors (who had novices this year) to meet with the General Council to reflect on our ministry in our diverse provinces and cultures and also to hear about the various formation programs with their strengths and challenges. Those attending the meeting included – Gera Philips (INS), Ellen Collesano (USC), Noella Favet (BFN), Quena Valdes (CHI) Joanna Mos (POL), Pricillian Kampane (UGK), Marie Pascaline Ekosoni (RDC) and Venizia Fernandes (IND). Our work

was guided by two gifted facilitators, Filo Hiroto MMB and Mary Cavanagh RSCJ and our conversation was guided by the skilled interpretation of Margaret Phelan RSCJ and Mrs. Lucrecia Di Persia.

The goal of our meetings was articulated by the General Council in the welcome given by Sr. Barbara Dawson. She drew inspiration from General Chapter 2016 and helped us to focus our meeting on the call to be and act as One Body and the decision to restructure our Body for the sake of life.

- To revitalize our unity in diversity and to act as One Body, dynamic, interconnected, linked with other bodies, in the world and as Church, in order to share, collaborate and be in solidarity among ourselves and with others.
- For the sake of Life and Mission, to restructure our Body so that it could be more agile and dynamic, working with others at local, provincial, regional and international levels.

We shared what helps us in our ministry and what makes our work more challenging. We were struck by the richness of each programme and various contexts. While many of the aspects of the programmes develop organically and are influenced by our various cultures, the foundations of the novitiate programme had many similarities and we agree on the fundamental elements.

We reflected on our own experiences and the hopes and the desires of our newer members and we looked realistically at our changing demographics for the future. Rooting ourselves in our Constitutions, our Formation Documents and Life Unfolding, Offering the Gift we began to expand the possibilities and felt our mental models become more fluid. In a lively exchange we shared some possible “new models” for the future. The models took into consideration regions, cultures and the people joining us. While we did not come to any conclusions about new models, we did experience trust in each other, a desire to support each other and we sensed in the course of our days together a growing union.

I am grateful to Sr. Anila and her Council for sending me to attend this meeting. It was an enriching experience for me to learn from the experienced Novice Directors through their presentations, reflections and sharing, enabling me to get new ideas and insights. I was surprised that being an international Society in 43 countries we were only 8 Novice Directors having only 14 Novices. There will be challenges as we move forward. We remain committed to the One Body of the Society, to the Charism which we share; we felt a renewed call to do what we can to be creative stewards of formation for the future. As we set forward, we trust in God’s fidelity and the love of our sisters. There is already a bond created among ourselves and for the follow up we have planned another meeting in the coming year, to work on our common Formation Plan for the Novitiate.

Venizia Fernandes rscj

My Community and Ministry Experience

I had outstanding experiences in the K.P. Community and in Sadhana School. Only the first week was a little difficult, because everything was new for me and also three things happened that first week:-

1. I started going to Sadhana School and I was a stranger to the teachers as well as to the children.
2. I was responsible for Sr. Celia Braganza for one week to take her for mass and bring her back, because Sr. Pratibha was out for some work.
3. I badly jammed one of my fingers in the car door while taking Sr. Celia for mass.

Otherwise everything was good. I was thrilled and enjoyed both the experiences in community and in ministry. I do not know how the time passed and I think I spent my time very well each day.

Each member of the K.P. community helped me in different ways:-

- Sr. Annie guided me spiritually by giving me questions from the Bible or ones related with my life or community to reflect on every Saturday and met me every week.
- Sr. Archana took my class on the life of St. Philippine.
- Sr. Celia took my reading practice and encouraged me saying, “If you are reading God’s word, read loudly and confidently so that people may get the message. Don’t be afraid about how you read or pronounce words.” One day she prepared me to read the first reading in the Chapel. I read it and she was happy.
- Sr. Pratibha taught me to make paper stars and flowers and to stitch a sari blouse, salwar and khameez.
- Sr. Rosa used to ask me about my day – how I spent my day, what did I do with the children etc.
- I used to go with Sr. Poonam to the Chapel regularly to help her, as well as for an evening walk.

The community supported and encouraged me to grow in confidence and take up the challenges; so I conducted community prayer, shared about my life and vocation story with them, I felt free to talk during meals. I was allowed to visit the Malavni community and each community on Sophia Campus. They corrected my English too, whenever I spoke wrongly that I may speak well and helped me to follow my order of day. I felt comfortable and at home in their loving presence and with their daily life style.

I have learnt to respond to needs, to care for others, to be free and friendly, to use my time in proper ways, to help others, to trust and to express myself. Above all, I was touched by how they have divided the responsibilities in community among themselves and I saw that they were carrying them out faithfully, even Sr. Celia who is 92 years old.

I was in Sadhana School from 9.30 a.m.to 12.30 p.m. and again from 1.15 p.m.to 3.30 p.m. I was with grade one and grade two children. There are seven children in grade two both boys and girls and four boys in grade one. First of all I observed and tried to understand the children – what kind of work they can do and how they behave, what is their age? When I saw them first, I thought their ages may be 4 or 5 years because they look small, but their age range is 6-9 years. And also I observed the teachers, how they prepare for the classes, what kinds of things they use for teaching, what talents they have, how they manage to take the classes and children too, what kind of words they use etc. What I have experienced about the teachers is that they have lots of patience, courage, confidence, capacity to control their anger and to control children, and capacity to think creatively. They are supportive, generous, lovable, helpful, and are ready to do anything for the children, and they try to do well what they can do and give. They speak positive words to the children as well as to the parents. The children have many activities in the School in order to make them calm, peaceful and attentive.

During my two months’ experience I have learnt to have more confidence, to have patience, control my anger, to observe the capacity of children and teachers, to make friends, to build relationships, try to search for ways to teach and to respond to needs.

Anita Hamsroj nscj

Celebrations at Prerana Nursery School

On 17th October 2019 Prerana Nursery school organized its annual Diwali celebration. Diwali is a festival of lights, love and happiness. Keeping the feeling of love in our hearts along with the Staff, parent representatives and students together celebrated this joyous occasion. The programme began with a short prayer followed by an entertaining magic show that kept the children engrossed and spell bound. The magician was funny, interactive and entertained the children and the teachers. After the magic show the children enjoyed some delicious sweets like ladoos, chakli and karanji that were prepared by the parent representatives. Keeping in mind the environment and the safety of the children as the prime focus we arranged for noiseless crackers. This put a broad smile on the faces of the children. They were overjoyed to see these Diwali sparklers. The children went home happy with their Diwali class activity such as making diyas, lanterns, and greeting cards.



As 14th November is Children's day we at Prerana Nursery School will be celebrating Children's Day on 15th November. For this programme, the mothers of the children perform for the children. They dance, sing, recite a poem or do a fashion show portraying the traditional dress of their state. At the end of the programme the children get a gift and go home happy.

We all have an inner child within us so in advance 'Happy Children's Day'!!!!!!!!!!!!

Fatima Azavedo rscj