



**Mother Anna Huberta Rogendorf**  
Founder of the Society of Helpers of Mary

# Igniting Sparks

MONTHLY NEWS LETTER

JUNE 2017

## *Basking in the Platinum Glow*

23<sup>rd</sup> April 2017 was an awesome day for the Helpers of Mary. The early dawn began with praise and thanksgiving to the Lord at Atmasadhana, Andheri. We rejoiced in the love of Christ that encircled us together to celebrate Platinum Jubilee with gusto and were overjoyed to look back into the Chronicles of 75 grace filled years.



The day began with the inauguration of new Generalate building by Dr. Fr. Ernst Pulsfort, Founder - President of Bartholomaeus-Gesellschaft e.V., in the presence of Andheri Friends' Group, Superior General Sr. Stella Devassy, General Councilors, Provincials, all the Sisters, Mr. Abhijeet Samant - the Architect, Mr. Shoyeb Baroudghar - the Contractor and the laborers who worked hard to construct this building.

On this joyful day Mr. Werner Martini unveiled the plaque. Dr. Fr. Ernst Pulsfort cut the ribbon and the contractor handed over the key of the house to Sr. Stella who in turn appreciated, felicitated and expressed her gratitude towards all those who helped, designed, implemented and brought this edifice into completion.

In the afternoon, the celebration began with the solemn procession from Mother House, Shradha Vihar with more than 100 Marys in white sarees lining up accompanied by the dance of 75 girls depicting the seventy-five years of Society of the Helpers of Mary. Sr. Stella Devassy, the Superior General of SHM carried the Platinum logo and Sr. Carmen carried the Jubilee candle to the altar.



The thanksgiving Eucharist began with introductory note by Sr. Joanita D'costa in which we remembered the glorious years that God gave us to reach out and to transform the people whom we encountered. Rt. Rev. Alwyn D'Silva - Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Bombay celebrated the Eucharist, along with 28 Priests. Srs. Priya and Smita read the Word of God and Bishop Alwyn in his homily appreciated the works and approaches of the Helpers of Mary of being with and empowering the poor and living simple life like the poor. He had personally worked with the Helpers of Mary in the slums of Mumbai (Bombay) and in particular Jerimeri. Srs. Tadelu and Maria our Ethiopian Sisters together with our friends from Germany carried the offertory and presented our aspirations to God. Sr. Amrita thanked the Lord for His abundant graces, providence and sustenance that helped us to see this memorable day. The grand choir led by Mr. Joe Mendonca, sung by the Sisters, formees and children added life to the Liturgy.

After a short break, the curtain was raised leading us to grand evening, with the Congregational Anthem and a welcome note by Sr. Leela - Asst. Superior General. Sr. Annie and Sr. Anshumala anchored the program.

To mark the grand finale of Platinum Jubilee, we released a balloon sending out praise to God and spreading vibration of joy around. Sr. Stella Devassy, the Superior General of the Society of Helpers of Mary, Nehal Sahi



**SOCIETY OF THE HELPERS OF MARY - GENERALATE,**

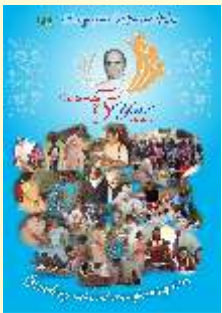
Shradha Vihar, Veera Desai Road, Andheri (West), Mumbai 400 058 Tel. 91-22-26766845 E-mail : sparksgeneralate@gmail.com

representing our benefactors, Mr. Rio and Maria Fernandes representing our beneficiaries released the balloon.

The classical dance performed by Ma-Niketan children truly set the tone for the evening. This was followed by the traditional lamp lighting ceremony. Our Eminent Guests - Rt. Rev. Bishop Allwyn D'Silva, Sr. Stella Devassy, Fr. Franklyn Parish Priest of St. Blaise - Amboli, Mrs. & Mr. Amshoff - the founder of Kinder Und Leprahilfe Duermen e. V., Mr. N.S. Rao, Dr. Sunali Vaidya, Sr. Jyoti D'Mello senior most Sister representing the Marys participated in lighting the lamp of God's wonderful presence. On this auspicious occasion, guests from India and abroad were accorded a special honour with a shawl and memento. As a Platinum Jubilee remembrance, Sr. Shalini Kamath released '**Treasure Chest of Memories**' a book in which the senior Marys recalled memories and experiences of the founder Mother Anna Huberta. Sr. Anandlata our Former Superior General released a book titled '**The Stolen Piggy Bank**' written by Sr. Sulochana P., published by St. Paul Publications. This book can be accessed



from St. Pauls which will be very handy for those teaching moral science in schools. The occasion also saw release of the special **Jubilee Souvenir** with messages from significant people from India and abroad. As a part of the jubilee action plan, a Promo named '**Witnessing love**' was also produced by the Documentation team which captures the calling, life and impact of the work of the Marys.



The attraction of the grand finale ofcourse was mind blowing with musical '**Ignite and Glow**' that depicted Mother Anna Huberta - a fiery ember, ignited 75 years ago, today, setting aglow, a million corners, on the face of this Earth! Mother Anna Huberta, a German Nun, went out into the streets, with her Helpers of Mary and took Jesus out into those very bylanes, uplifting the

poor, giving hope to the homeless, life to the dying and happiness to those in pain.

The musical showed the Lands she traversed, obstacles overthrown, bridges crossed, RIPPLES OF LOVE, sent off, in different directions that have helped, numerous girl children, all over the world to become ENERGIZERS of a BRIGHTER FUTURE!

The Marys with their timely interventions and Legal Action with some gumption, force and fight, with might and right, have freed the masses, from being chained up, leaving each human spirit free, living out fully, His promised divinity!

The Marys have reached out to those places affected by NATURE' S WRATH, bravely fought, have taught survivors to never say die! We must arm ourselves, to make good, all that we have lost, be it Tsunami, floods or earthquakes!!! This was the mantra of the action. THE HELPERS OF MARY have indeed helped, to rebuild the hopes of many!

Mother Anna Huberta, that spark that once was, is now a hearthstone, spreading, love, warmth and inspiration, to many more, who choose to live out our motto, **LIVE FOR LOVE!**

The Holy Spirit continues to walk with us, from the beginning of time to another 75 years and more, towards THE KINGDOM' S SHORE! As the STORY OF LOVE unfolded, it invited everyone TO BE COJOURNEYERS.



*Produced by Mendoza Muzikals for Helpers of Mary*

*Script speech and drama Nellita Goes*

*Choreographer Mr Mahesh Gole and team*

*Costume design and make up Simona Alemao*

*Video production and Led walls Mr. Rocky Fernandes*

*Stage Mr. Benny, Lights Mr. Nats Carlos,*

*Sound Mr. Ryan Ibuquere*

*Music composed produced and Directed by Joey Mendoza*

Towards the end of the musical, Sr. Stella Devassy Our Superior General thanked all those whose help and support was instrumental for the success of the celebration of the Platinum Jubilee event. It was 8.45 pm and curtains came down for the Platinum Jubilee Grand Finale. All enjoyed the sumptuous meal of love. The whole day was captivating with an aura of friendliness, hope, peace and love. We will continue to treasure those beautiful moments for many years to come.

## Platinum Actions of Mercy

*Special Projects were accomplished during the Platinum Jubilee Year*

Built **75** Anna Homes poor families

Fed **1000** poor people

Organized Alumni gathering for **155** girls

Conducted gathering for the **1457** Elders

Organized gathering for **3200** Widows

Visited **750** persons through Prison Ministry

Distributed Sewing Machines for **350** young girls and women

Distributed Blankets for **1104** poor people

Distributed essential food items for **10500** poor people

Distributed essential food items for **550** differently abled persons

Distributed School materials for **1700** poor students

Organized awareness program for **2500** women

Planted **350** saplings

Organized free Cataract operation for **266** patients

Conducted General Medical Camps for **2010** patients

Conducted Yoga Classes for **350** people



# Obituary



## **Sr. Anandi Fernandes**

*November 6, 1919 - May 6, 2017*

Sr. Anandi was born on 6<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1919 at Mangalore and was baptized as Gertrude. She joined 5<sup>th</sup> April 1957 and made her Final Profession on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1962.

As a Helper of Mary for many years she took care of the infants in the cottage and loved them dearly. She was in charge of non-formal education of the children from the surrounding slums at Andheri. To them she personally prepared nutritious food and served them with great love and joy. She desired to give them a meaningful and better future.

Today they fondly remember her as a beloved mother who educated and prepared them for a potential and progressive life. Sr. Anandi had a deep faith in God and was a very strong and committed in her consecrated life. She lived a simple and devout life and was faithful to her prayer. She was graceful and shared the same spirit with all those who passed by. She had a miraculous recovery from the fall that had almost nailed her to the bed. Most of her ministry life was spent at Shraddha Vihar Andheri.

She was close to nature. Even during the twilight years of her life, one could find her moving about plucking flowers, feeding birds, preparing garlands, watering garden besides peeling and cutting vegetables when she felt well.

Our hearts throbbed to bid farewell to our beloved Sr. Anandi on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2017. In the morning on 6<sup>th</sup> June when sisters were in St. Blaise Parish attending mass they got the news that she is serious. So they rushed back to Shraddha Vihar. She had got up as usual and got ready to receive the Holy Communion. She met Jesus who called her to His heavenly home at 6.30 am. She appeared peaceful and serene when sisters reached her room.

We highly appreciate the magnanimous contribution of Sr. Anandi to the Congregation and her life of simplicity and humility is worth emulating. To us the Marys, she will remain as the icon of joyful sharing. Her memories live on in the hearts of the poor and in the life of the Helpers of Mary.



## **Sr. Prabhukanti Thottakara**

*September 11, 1935 - May 6, 2017*

Helpers of Mary fondly called Sr. Prabhukanti as Sr. Prabu. She was born on 11<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1935 at Palai Kerala and her pious parents Mr. Varkey & Mrs. Annamma Thottakara baptized their daughter as Aleykuty. She joined the Congregation on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1966 and made her Final Vows on 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb. 1974.

As a Helper of Mary, she worked hard without sparing herself as a caring Mary rendering her loyal and dedicated services as a nurse in different communities as an effective and efficient Religious at Dharavi, Nirmal, Waliv, Dapada, Bhuigaon, Assangaon, Shraddha Vihar - Hospital, Sulcorna, Rivona, Ma-Niketana Thane. At the evening of her life from - 2008 she served at Shraddha Vihar - Andheri.

Her heart always moved out to the children in our homes who were sick, weak in studies, poor and orphans. She was a loving sister to thousands of children in our homes. Many former girls admired her zeal and commitment.

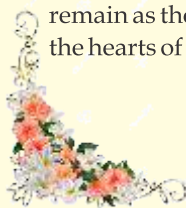
She was very brave and stood firm in all her hardships. She promoted many vocations to religious life and was a spiritual mentor to the young ones. She was one of the first vocation to join Marys from Kerala. She was indeed a special gift to our Congregation and to her family and to her loved ones.

For almost one month Sr. Prabhukanti was in semi-coma. On 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2017 Saturday all the Sisters came to meet Sr. Prabhukanti in the hospital who was admitted 6 weeks ago for health care and attention, and found her feeling uncomfortable and becoming serious. Sisters gathered around her and continued to pray. Her breathing became rather faint and slowly at 10.30 am she gently surrendered her beautiful soul into the hands of her Master and Lord whom she loved and served all the days of her life. We miss her presence in our midst and cherish her affectionate memories.

**Sr. Joanita D'Costa** - Secretary General, Andheri Mumbai

*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.*

*- Psalms 116:15*





## **Sr. Aster Jarso**

*June 10, 1991 - May 20, 2017*

Return, O my soul, to your rest, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you. (Ps 116:7)

Death is an inevitable fact of life and it has always been a mystery. Some people think that death is the end of life. But we Christians believe and live in expectation and joy of the Resurrection. It was with great sorrow and

deep pain in our hearts we bid adieu to our beloved young Sr. Aster Jarso whom the Lord called. She was 26 and had just begun to bloom in the family of the Helpers of Mary.

Sr. Aster was gifted by the Lord to her parents, Mr. Jarso Bullo and Mrs. Dharoo Xodhi on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1991 at Gosa in the Apostolic Vicariate of Awassa - Ethiopia. She grew up in a loving large family of 9 siblings. When she was a second-year Novice, one of her younger brother passed away in a tragic motorbike accident. This tragedy affected her very deeply. Gradually with prayer and counseling she recovered from the shock and was able to accept the reality of life. She made her First Profession on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

Soon after her First Vows, she was sent to Kenya with 3 of her companions for the Catechetical training for 10 months. Upon her return in November, she was assigned to the community at Arramo - Awassa Vicariate. Since last four months, she was not keeping well and underwent treatment. Later she was advised by the doctor to undergo a surgery for the uterine fibroids. She was successfully operated with the consent of the family on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2017 at the Medical Mission Sister's hospital in Addis Ababa. After a week she was discharged and was gradually recovering and regaining her health. On 20<sup>th</sup> May at 7.15 am as she was walking from her room to the refectory for the breakfast, she felt dizzy and fell. Immediately she was rushed to the hospital and the doctors tried their best to save her life but all their efforts resulted in vain. She suffered a Massive heart attack. At 8.00 a.m. she returned to the creator leaving us in great shock and sorrow.

Although the burial was to take place at Addis Ababa, at the request of her parents and family members her body was taken to her home. On 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 at 2.00 p.m., with a solemn Eucharistic celebration presided by the Emeritus Bishop Lorenzo Ceresoli MCCJ - Bishop of Awassa, she was buried at Gosa Catholic Church.

Sr. Aster had gifts of simplicity; cheerfulness, prayerfulness and she especially loved little children. She served generously and had love and concern to those entrusted to her care. She lived the Congregation's motto 'Live for Love'. She was a channel of God's love and served with compassion. Her loving concern, prayerful support, spiritual uplift was appreciated and treasured.

We believe that Sr. Aster is not simply dead and gone into nothingness; she is alive and with our creator enjoying the blissfulness of the Heavenly Kingdom and interceding for us.

We thank you Sr. Aster that we became part of your life journey and you touched our lives within a short span of time. With grateful hearts we, thank God for the wonderful witness of your loving and cheerful life. We miss you; and you will continue to live in our hearts and memories. May her soul Rest in peace. Amen.

**Sr. Suma Kurian**

Regional Superior - African Region



## **Sr. Fatima Lewis**

*July 12, 1926 - June 4, 2017*

Sr. Fatima known as Alice was born on 12<sup>th</sup> July 1926 in Mangalore. She made her first vows on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1957 and Final Vows on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1962. Her country roots were strong in her and her character displayed those traits - strength, perseverance, openness, generosity and simplicity.

Sr. Fatima is the most accomplished Marys who headed the Congregation in the capacity of Superior from 1964-1971. She stood like a rock to support the growing Congregation in the infancy stages and she undertook begging expeditions together with Mother Priscilla. She went to Kerala with our Founder Mother Anna Huberta to recruit vocations. During her tenure we received the status of Pious Association, Registered under the Societies Registration Act and Bombay Public Trust Act. The foundation stone for Mother House was also done at this time. Sr. Fatima was sensitive, good listener, enjoyed art and beauty, reached out to the poor especially her service to the famine stricken victims at Bihar will always be memorable. She served at Andheri, Madh Island, Assangaon, Nirmal, Bhuigaon, Thane, Vehloli and Waliv.

In spite of her hard work that she put in, in the growth and guidance of the newly founded Marys, Sr. Fatima was never sick. Last August she had a fall while at Waliv and since then confined to bed at Shraddha Vihar, Andheri and was lovingly cared by the Sisters.

On the day of Pentecost, the 4<sup>th</sup> June 2017 at 3.00 pm God put his arms around her and welcomed in His heavenly abode. Today Sr. Fatima has become a memory. In the passing away of Sr. Fatima the Helpers of Mary have lost a great Mary and a loving person for the poor. May the lovely soul of Sr. Mary Fatima rest blissfully in the garden of heaven.

**Sr. Stella Devassy** - Superior General, Andheri Mumbai

