



Mother Anna Huberta Roggendorf
Founder of the Society of the Helpers of Mary

Igniting Sparks

MONTHLY NEWS LETTER

FEBRUARY 2017

50 Years of Incredible Love of God

We are delighted to express the fabulous celebration of Fifty Golden Years of incredible love of God on 22nd Jan, 2017. It was a memorable day for the Society of the Helpers of Mary.



Fifty girls with lit lamps walked towards the stage resembling the 50 years of nurturing life. The celebration began with the Eucharist by Most Rev Archbishop Felix Machado, Bishop of Vasai Diocese. In his homely, he expressed that the founder, Mother Anna Huberta whose dream was carried on by the Sisters, planted this seed of new life. For the last 50 years, the home sheltered, protected, educated and empowered thousands of children of the Hansen's disease affected parents.

Today the pride of Naya Jeevan is to see the girls flying high in zeal and enthusiasm. It was a joyful moment to meet all the former girls along with their families.

The performance of the children with variety of dances added color to the celebration. It was indeed a touching moment to felicitate the dignitaries, pioneer Sisters and our loyal friends. The vibrant noble words of Sr. Stella Devassy, Superior General gave a glimpse of past memories and appreciated the dedicated work of the Sisters. The presence of the founder of 'Indienhilfe Wasser Ist Leben', Mrs. Gerda Geretschlaeger and her collaborators brought immense joy to the celebration. We appreciated magnanimous contribution in making Naya Jeevan a place of new life along with other friends.

We thank God for the successful celebration of the Jubilee. Many hands make work lighter. Our sincere gratitude to Sr. Stella for the guidance and support. We salute all the Sisters who served in Naya Jeevan. May Naya Jeevan continue to transform many more lives.

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Sr. Shanta & Commuity,
(Naya Jeevan - Assangaon)



INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COUNCIL,
NEW DELHI has presented to
Sr. Stella Devassy shm, Superior General

'Mother Teresa Sadbhavana Award'

on behalf of the Society of the Helpers of Mary for high repute and having outstanding achievements.



SOCIETY OF THE HELPERS OF MARY - GENERALATE,

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JUBILEE MESSAGE

I would like to Congratulate all the Sisters for the 50th Anniversary of Naya Jeevan, Assangaon to which I am closely connected for almost a quarter century. It all started in the early 1990s, when I got a letter from Gerda Geretschlaeger who had been reading my articles in the Newspaper. At that time I was living in India, working as a foreign correspondent for a number of German Newspapers. Through Gerda, I got in touch with the Marys for the first time. I visited Assangaon together with Sr. Karuna, and all the way we saw the water tankers, who siphoned off water from dirty ponds only to sell it to places like Naya Jeevan.



In those days there was no water during the summer. The wells would go dry, and there was no pipeline connection. The centre was desperately in need of water. After having seen this situation, we decided to help the children and Sisters in Naya Jeevan. Thus I wrote the first of my many articles to follow, about the situation in Naya Jeevan and asked for donations from the readers. Back in Germany, I met Gerda and we together invented the slogan 'Water is Life' for our campaign.

After quite a bit of our experience with the water-shed projects, we built a system in the compound to collect monsoon waters. And sure enough, it worked very well and were able to raise the water level. Now the wells never go dry. As a happy side effect we were able to rejuvenate the farm. Since I was living in India, I was able to visit Assangaon several times a year and inform my readers regularly about the problems and progress. With all the help, we were able to install a special fund for education, which is still serving talented girls, and the Sisters.

I hope you have a wonderful day when you celebrate your anniversary, and I would like to take this occasion to felicitate all the Sisters for their extraordinary and fantastic work. All the best to everybody and many good wishes for the next 50 years.

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Dr. Gabriele Venzky, Germany

(Letter written on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Naya Jeevan, Assangaon)



Congratulations

to our newly professed
Srs. Ayane Mosisa & Martha Gabriel

*We wish you blessings of God in
your calling and in your ministry.*



Heal the broken hearted

It was 5th Dec. 2016 when we were on our routine family visit to Rajpura Bhadohi, in one of the Musahar communities, which is 12 kilometers from Karunalay. While we were in one of the houses we heard painful cries of a child from the neighboring house and immediately we moved to find this child Kabuttera. She was a four years old girl lying on the muddy ground in a dark room yelling with pain. We enquired with the father Mr. Deenanath who is sick and mother Geeta who were broken and down hearted. They briefed us saying that Kabuttera is suffering from kidney stone from the age of two and cannot afford any treatment because of financial difficulties. Seeing the unbearable and helpless condition of the child and the parents we decided to take the child to the hospital. Upon investigation the report stated urgent operation. Since the case was too complicated and risky two hospitals refused to treat her. But we did not give up and in the third Sahara Hospital Dr. Rajkumar Yadava agreed to admit the child. On 9th Dec. 2016 she was operated and a 30 mm stone was removed. It was unbelievable to learn that the child was suffering for two years. Parents and relatives present in the hospital raised their hands in thanking to God for sending us to save the life of the child and said – Yes, God is alive through the merciful act of you, Sisters, it is a miracle. Yes today the child smiles again and is able to enjoy her childhood.

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Sr. Veena Chandra shm, Karunalay, Bhadohi

Voice of The Voiceless

When the State Transport facility stopped plying the Bhuigaon route, all of us struggled. The daily travellers who worked out, the children going to schools, farmers to sell their vegetables, were the most affected commuters. Travelling by bus in any part is secure but the buses running on Vasai route were halted. It caused inconveniences to the people. In silence the people sat in Dharna (silence) the whole day at Nallasopara Depot requesting the authorities to start the bus services. Sr. Arpita with other members assisted to the needs of the people.



Like Mary our mother who was sensitive towards others, we the Sisters lived our charism by being with these people. A huge crowd of people sat the whole day in scorching heat. It was tough and challenging. At 5.00 pm the authorities declared that this bus services of the State Transport facilities will be continued and people returned back happily.

United we rise divided we fall; once again these people got their bus service. "Ask and you will receive" is the assurance of our living God and He answers the cry of His people. People highly appreciated our presence.

.....
Sr. Vidhya Londe, Jalpushpa - Bhuigaon

Christmas Dhamaka

It was a memorable day to have a Christmas get together for the Marathwada Zone – communities of Tilaknagar, Shevgaon, Kinwat, Mandvi, Gulburga, Latur-Asha Deep and Latur-Ashishdhara on 28th December 2016. Asha Deep Community at Latur hosted the gathering. We had a thanksgiving Eucharistic Celebration. The Grihini girls performed prayer dance and put up a cultural program on this special occasion. We shared a meal of love. Sr. Jyotsna and Isabel organized games to charge energy and revitalize the spirit.

During the program we felicitated Sr. Kulkanti who was celebrating her Golden Jubilee. At end of the

Gathering of Alumni

Ma-Niketan - Thane organized its 3rd Alumni gathering on 26th Dec. 2016. More than 500 alumni attended the reunion with their spouses and children. They obviously were thrilled to be in Ma-Niketan and were excited in getting reconnected with the institution through interaction with the Sisters and current students, who are very proud of this Home.

The gathering began with a welcome dance by the Children; Sr. Indumati, Superior of Thane welcomed all the alumni and in her inaugural address emphasized the importance of the parental responsibilities and nurturing their children with love and care. She explained the significance of alumni reunion, it was to enhance support and stand with one another in times of happiness and struggles as a family.



They felicitated the Sisters and expressed their gratitude for organizing such a wonderful event and creating a platform to be reconnected and reunited. The evening was devoted to the cultural activities such as music and dance. Thereafter the celebration moved outside to release beautiful sky lanterns and created a memorable moment. The crowd was thrilled when lanterns were sailing in the sky conveying the message **Aim high and go ahead with your tiny light.** Thereafter, a delicious dinner was served for everyone. The whole Ma-Niketan family was seen chatting and sharing sweet memories of the alumni. And it was truly awesome moments for all of us in Ma-Niketan.

.....
Sr. Smrutishm, Ma-Niketan - Thane

program Sr. Bastina thanked Sr. Vimal and Ashadeep Community for arranging the program. It was a time of sharing success, joy and challenges. After the program we visited the Makhni Dam as a part of reflection and revitalization.

.....
Sr. Jyotsna Rodrigues -
Asha Deep, Latur



Passion leads to service

Karunalay, means a Home of Mercy, truly experienced by the people whom we serve. We are happy to share with you this information that our centre was awarded the 1st prize among 20 other centres at the Diocesan Social Welfare Centre, Raghapur, Varanasi, for effective, innovative and systematic work done in 15 villages and 7 Musahar Basties (areas) at various levels. Through Self Help Groups - we empower women, organize individual and family counseling, deal with family disputes, give special attention for the upliftment of the special community (Musahar) in the areas of education, health, hygiene and enabling them to obtain various privileges of government schemes.



For the last year and a half we have taken the responsibility of the education of the Musahar children, nearly 150 children of the 3 Musahar Basties are taken care of. It is amazing to see that every day 60 children come to study at Karunalay and a mid-day meal is served in the afternoon. Another 70 children gather at Jairampur for coaching classes. We thank God for making us an instrument to bring transformation in the marginalized community. It gives

us joy and satisfaction in serving them. We are blessed with the opportunities to be more compassionate towards the needy and are driven with passion to find ways and means to reach out.

.....
Sr. Shikha Michael shm, Karunalay – Bhadohi (Uttar Pradesh)

Experiences of the love of Christ

We, four novices had gone for the exposure program and were involved in working with families for 18 days. Being and living with the families in the slum was a great blessing. We thank God for this great opportunity. It was a privilege for us to know the struggles and the happiness of the people in the slum of Jogeshwari. We experienced that people *living* in the *slums* have limited access to electricity, clean water, sanitation and food. The parents struggle to balance the immediate needs of the family and specially those of children.

We were inspired and challenged by the life story of a woman, whose name is Flora, a 36 years old woman. She is a God fearing and committed person. Her husband is an alcoholic. The couple has two children. She earns her livelihood by selling homemade food



items. With her meager income she educates her children too. She has a compassionate heart in spite of her daily struggles and harassment from her husband. She always found ways and means to help the

poor, and she even donates blood for the needy patients.

Flora is most wanted and popular person in the area by the poor and the rich. She lives by the motto to bring joy in the lives of others. It was an inspiring moment while we listened to her life story and saw how she reaches out to the needy and offers hope. It has strengthened our faith.

.....
Sumitha, Sahaya, Anita and Priya
(Novices Vehloli – India)

Our Sympathy

We extend our heartfelt condolence to :

Sr. Lalita who lost her brother
Sr. Karuna who lost her sister.

May they enjoy eternal bliss.



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Thank you

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