



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

# Igniting Sparks

MONTHLY NEWS LETTER

JANUARY 2020

## Golden Years of Fruitful Service

Maria Seva Sadan - Dapada celebrated its Golden Jubilee (1969-2019) on 25<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2020. From very humble beginnings in 1969, Dapada mission has grown in leaps and bounds; it has grown from strength to strength under the able guidance of 58 sisters over 50 years.

Jubilees are occasions to be celebrated, to recall the marvelous ways in which the centre has fulfilled its mission in empowering and transforming the lives of the poor through various ministries. Casting a glance over the years that have gone by, we cannot but thank God for the blessings received by the sisters, children and the people around. We thank God for the visionaries who dreamt, the pioneers who launched, friends who supported the home and all those who laboured hard all through the past fifty years spreading God's love.

The pioneer sisters had to work hard, they went through difficulties in the initial stages; they walked miles after miles to spread the love of God and bring the poor to the main stream of society. Health was the most pressing need in the beginning and therefore a hospital was opened. Regular family visits enabled the sisters to have a close connection with people. Care for the widows, sick and elderly was a special hallmark of the sisters. The people were illiterate and the remote villages did not have school facilities. Therefore, a Care Home for Girls was opened and the children attended the school run by the Church and government schools. The sisters not only cared and sent them to

school or colleges and also imparted values among them. They were the missionaries of mercy. Down the line of 50 years, thousands of tribal children have excelled not only in academics, but also made a mark in cultural activities. It played a central role in educating generations of tribal girl children, many of whom have gone on to play an important role in society and in their family life. Most of them have taken professions as doctors, teachers, health workers, nurses, police officers and more over good housewives. Besides this the sisters helped to construct/renovate houses of the flood affected families, empowered women through women's groups, supported families through income generation programs, etc.

Presently we have 165 tribal girls in our home from the age of 4 to 18 years. All of them attend regular school/colleges. They are given training for their all-round development namely physical, social and spiritual growth. We continue to improve the lives of the poor through our social, medial and pastoral activities.

Congratulations for all that has been achieved within 50 years and best wishes for the future. We look forward to celebrating many more milestones. May God continue to bless our home!

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**Sr. Sarita Palankunnerl shm, Dapada**



# Christmas Joy

Where is the child Jesus born? We found Him on the street and in the hutments shivering with terrible cold. Giving a new dignity and joy to the poor people living around our home was Christmas for us. The sisters visited many houses and found widows, widowers, rickshaw pullers and orphans, and brought them together in our home to share the joy of Christmas. To warm them up we served tea and snacks for all. Later the Christmas message was delivered to the people by dance and skits by our grihini girls. Fr. Anand Prakash, parish priest expressed his joy and gave them a message that 'you are the chosen people of God to share the joy of Christmas with us'. Later we conducted games, which they enjoyed to the full. As it is extremely cold in North India, it is a very difficult situation for the poor people to protect themselves from the severe cold. Considering this season as a right time 125 families were distributed clothes and warm items. On receiving the clothes, the people had smiles on their faces and feelings of gratitude in their hearts for the sisters. A feeling of real Christmas joy was felt by all those who were present.

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**Sr. Shyamala and Sisters, Jignara, UP**



# Spreading warmth with blanket distribution



As the winter chill turns harsh with each passing day, the Sisters in the North communities spread warmth among the less privileged people of the society by carrying on blanket and warm clothes distribution. The sisters found numerous people who sleep in the open air shivering in the cold and who do not even have enough clothes to cover their body. From month of December the same additional activities were carried in our different centres such as Bhadohi among Mushar community, Jaffarganj and Jignara and it helped to protect them from the chill and freezing temperatures.



# Feeding the Poor

Sisters in Kinwat community been fighting hunger by feeding 200 people daily for more than 20 years. Every morning they are served cooked rice and dal in their respective



areas. The sisters and staff take the food by rickshaw and distribute it to deserving families, which helps the poor to have regular meals. The senior citizens, the sick and children in the villages wait eagerly every morning to receive homemade hot food. It's our hope that the warm food they receive from us gives them just a little bit more strength to carry on in their fight against poverty. I thank God each day for blessing us to be able to feed the hungry. During Christmas, the elderly women expressed their desire to get a sari each. With the help of our generous benefactor, Mr. Manoj we were able to give every woman a sari, pant and shirt to elderly men. I would like to acknowledge appreciation of all individuals who contributed towards this cause.

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**Sr. Shuba Salve shm, St. Mary's Centre, Kinwat**

# Award for Prison Ministry

Sisters of Premal Jyoti at Varanasi are involved in the prison ministry at the Diocese of Varanasi level. On 26<sup>th</sup> Jan 2020 Mukhyalay Karagar Prashasan and Sudhar Seva Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow along with other 10 organizations, Dioceses of Varanasi were invited to receive an award for recognizing people who have faithfully and courageously worked for prison ministry. I was asked to represent and to receive this award. It



was a great privilege for me to meet other dignitaries and witness Christ to others. I had the opportunity of speaking and expressing the work done in the jails and the support that we receive from the jail authorities. I was honored with a shawl and certificate of appreciation from the Director General of Police. I want to bestow this honor to the Helpers of Mary specially to St. Teresa Province (North). May God bless us so that we continue His mission and be true to our calling as Marys.

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**Sr. Meena Carvalho, Premal Jyoti, Varanasi**



# Touch of Joy

I remember the words of Mother Anna Huberta, "When you are sad, see where you can make others happy." It is a great joy for us, the sisters of Shraddha Vihar Hospital, to welcome each day bringing hope to the hopeless, joy to the saddened and health to the sick.

Mrs. Somal Baria was not able to conceive for 18 years of her married life. When natural conception failed she and her husband underwent treatment for fertility. Even though their economic status is very poor they managed with little income to go for in vitro fertilization (IVF). It was a great joy to the couple with their whole family when they got the news of Somal's conception. During her pregnancy, Somal kept regular visits to our hospital for her ANC checkups together with her husband. Because it was IVF conception the expenditure for medicine and sonography was extremely high, but with help of our Doctors we treated her with minimum expense.

Everything was going on well. But one day Somal came crying accompanied by her husband who was in bad health. Somal started explaining that while fishing a big fish spike penetrated deeply into his leg. It took a long time to heal and during the investigation they diagnosed him with blood cancer (leukemia) and prognosis was very poor. It was shocking news for Somal. She was completely broken and saying that God gave her the gift of a child but he is taking away the health of her husband. How can I look after this little child and who will support me? These questions were distressing her. The sisters and doctors helped her specially giving her psychological support and medicine free of cost. 18th of October 2019 was the great day for Mrs. Somal. She delivered a healthy baby boy. The whole family was happy.

On the day of discharge we educated her on the care of her baby and herself. Her husband was not present at the delivery since he was undergoing treatment. Seeing the baby boy, she started getting involved in taking care of their baby and her spirit revived. A month later she came for the baby's vaccination with the sad news of her husband's death. Although death is part of everyone's life, coping with grief is one of the most uncomfortable and difficult experiences a person will ever face. We tried to comfort her and with regular counselling she was able to take care of their baby and herself. With the continuous support and prayers of our sisters she is doing well and the baby is healthy. We could accompany Somal continuously, through our presence, kind words and assurance of support. We comforted her and were able to give a touch of joy in her life.

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**Sr. Meghna Irudayam shm, Shraddha Vihar, Andheri**



# Giving Joy

Underprivileged cancer patients who come to Tata Memorial centre for treatment are forced to stay in temporary shelters on footpaths because the hospital cannot provide accommodation to all of them. They are accompanied by their relatives. Most of them are from outside the State of Maharashtra. They wait endlessly for an appointment with the doctor, for a diagnosis or a result of a test, for their turn at an operation or at a chemotherapy session. Life on the footpath isn't easy for the patients. In January Mumbai daytime temperatures usually reach 30°C with moderate heat and humidity, falling to 19°C at night. Sisters in Shraddha Vihar and Generalate communities decided to reach out to them by providing blankets, bed sheets, warm clothes, saris and other food and household items.

Once a week the sisters reached there early in the morning and distributed the items in different footpaths. In one of the visits I met a mother who was taking a 7 year old child for chemotherapy to the hospital. It was so heartbreaking to see them. During the short time of outreaching programme, we met lots of patients, some of them with nasogastric tube, mouth cancer, breast cancer etc. They did not have a roof above their head, no proper food, and clothing, not even a mat to lay their head upon. While

receiving the blankets and bed sheets, there was a great joy on their faces enabling them to protect themselves from cold nights. It was an unforgettable experience for me. We are grateful to all friends and benefactors through whose generosity we could reach out to the needy persons.

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**Sr. Sahayamary shm, Shraddha Vihar, Andheri**



## Sweet memories of our beloved Sr. Indumati Pallikunnan

The sun had just broken through the clouds on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2019, evening at 8 pm when Sr Indumati breathed her last. Our beloved Sr. Indu who lived among us as a loving and dedicated Helper of Mary for the 49 years has become a treasured memory. She was born on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1950 to Mr. Joseph and Mrs. Anna in a beautiful village of Manallore, in the District of Trichur, Kerala. Her maiden name was Mary. She belonged to a family of two brothers and three Sisters. She was the 2<sup>nd</sup> among them. She heard the call of Jesus and decided to follow this call to be in an intimate relationship with God by entering the Congregation of the Helpers of Mary. Thus she made her 1st Vows in 1970 and made her Perpetual Vows in 1977.

She served in various positions. She was a gifted secretary and administrator and was privileged to work in the office of our Founder Mother Anna Huberta as a young Mary. Sr. Indu had great love and devotion to our Mother Anna Huberta and she never missed an opportunity to talk about her and her visionary spirit to the young sisters. Her heart loved the poor people of Vakola, Kanjurmarg, Assangaon, Madh Island, Vehloli and Thane. She was a dedicated formator for the young sisters and a loving mother to the many children whom she helped to grow and find joy and meaning in their lives. She was a leader and a visionary. She became superior soon after her office assignment.

She was elected Superior General during 4<sup>th</sup> General Chapter and served the Congregation 2001-2007. At this juncture, the rulebook of the congregation- the Constitutions was revised. During her leadership the mission of the Helpers of Mary extended to Italy and Ethiopia was constituted as a Region. She was General councilor for 3 times, until May 2019 she was in the council, in spite of her ill health she contributed generously for the growth and development of the Congregation until her last. Sr. Indu, went away ahead of us, but you remain always connected to us, in our hearts. **May you rest in the peace of your Lord!**



## Sweet memories of our beloved Sr. Jyoti D'Mello

Sr. Jyoti went home to God on Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2020. For all of us her death is an unexpected shock as she had no complaints or health issues. 3 days ago she went to visit her family and was at her niece's house. There she felt restless and felt uneasy, quickly she was taken to the nearby hospital and she was fine until morning. Her heart could no longer hold out and her breathing became heavy around 11 am and she gently and peacefully drifted into eternity, as she desired always for a peaceful death.

Sr. Jyoti D'Mello was born on 3<sup>rd</sup> Oct. 1935 to Mr. Michael and Mrs. Shantan in a beautiful village of Papady in Vasai. Her maiden name was Teresa. She had 3 sisters and 3 brothers and was the second of them. She grew up in a very religious and God fearing family. She joined the family of the Helpers of Mary in the year 1963 and professed her final vows on 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb. 1971. As we take a glimpse into her life we see the 57 years that she spent in service of the Lord in a divine mission that God had planned for her. As a young Helper of Mary, her mission was at Nirmal, she served at Borivali, Jogeshwari, Dharavi, Tilaknagar and Madh Island. Madh Island was the mission, which was closest to her heart, where she was transferred 3 times and where she served for 28 years. She worked with great commitment and dedication.

Sr. Jyoti was known for her hospitality and availability. She welcomed everyone with a smile on her face. The friends and donors of Prem Sadan called her Mamma Jyoti. She was more than a mother to every one who entered our home. She was a symbol of love, embodiment of sympathy and encouragement. She was both a spiritual and material helper, a companion to so many, beyond numbers. She radiated peace and love, she always had time to talk and bless them. Sr. Jyoti not only spoke out words. She transformed words into deeds. She was available right to the very end especially for those who had the most need of help, especially for the young girls, for widows and for those persons who had lost hope. Her life of prayer and deep faith in the Lord kept her very young and active in her service until she passed away. She was a shining example who literally lived the words of our founder, Mother Anna Huberta, 'serve the Lord until you die'.

Dear Sr. Jyoti, you will be greatly missed by all the children of Prem Sadan, the sisters, friends and benefactors, family members and all the parishioners of Madh Island. In you we have lost a Mother with a heart of gold, a Sister very dear to us more than wealth can unfold, a beloved aunt, always smiling, very content, and loved to the very end. **May God Bless Sr. Jyoti and may she rest in eternal peace!**

