



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

Igniting Sparks

MOTHER, MEMORIES OF YOU WILL ALWAYS BE ALIVE...

For us, the Helpers of Mary, the month of July is a special month as we celebrate the important events of our Founder. It is known as Mother's month! Mother Anna Huberta was born on July 31, 1909, her feast is on 26th of July and she was born to heaven on July 04, 1973. Her memories come alive to us as flash back and we cherish those beautiful and touching moments. Words fall short to delineate Mother who was undeniably, an embodiment of love, compassion, clemency and a bighearted. She was a visionary with far sightedness coupled with unflinching dedication and determination.

A special thanks to Melita Maschmann a German Journalist who was a close friend of Mother Anna Huberta who encouraged her to speak about her life experience. Whenever we listen to the audiocassettes of Mother, which were recorded years back, continuously motivate and inspire us. Mother spoke "we never used to think of tomorrow, we did not worry for the next year, we know that as much as God is alive today, He will certainly be alive tomorrow and next year, the same God, the wonderful God". And she continues, "the Lord raises up the humble..... we have seen him, experienced him, we believe not because others have told us, but because what we know, what we have experienced and seen. Jesus came to serve and Mary came to be the handmaid and to remind the people like at the wedding feast to do what He tells them to do. So we, the Marys love to listen to what He tells us. Therefore we, Marys cannot go about doing good as if we are benefactors. Mother says, while we give we receive, we are the beneficiaries not them".

Mother had seen God's love everywhere. Her holiness was so great. She was filled with the spirit of God and was always on fire. She says "I have given myself to God for life and death". I have witnessed it very closely from 1966 to 1973. She never spared herself. She had touched our lives and we have grown.

Mother, thank you for speaking to us from your heart and giving us Jesus, to give Him to others. Let us keep our hearts open to reach out to our brothers and sisters putting on the same spirit of the handmaid of Nazareth. Bless us Mother with the zeal, which you lived for Jesus. Dear Mother, words are few, thoughts are deep, memories of you will always be alive...

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Sr. Leela Sequeira shm, Generalate, Andheri

BLESSED IS THE ONE WHO IS GENEROUS TO THE POOR

Sometimes our own light fades out and then it is rekindled by a spark from another person. I am deeply grateful to Sr. Mathilda who has lighted this flame within me. I was troubled during the heavy rains as my room was leaking. Like an angel Sr. Mathilda SHM came to my aid by giving me a plastic sheets to cover the roof of my Home during this monsoon. It was a kind gesture of her towards me and the many other poor people in our locality in Oshiwara, I thank Sr. Stella Devassy the Superior General of Society of the Helpers of Mary and all the sisters for their generosity towards the people living in the slums of Oshiwara, Jogeshwari.

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Agnes D'Costa, Jogeshwari



TRANSFORMING LIVES OF ORPHANS AND HOMELESS

The Eyes of the audience in the auditorium became moistened when the children of Divine Providence Convent performed a dance by this song – “There is a candle in every soul, some brightly burning some dark and cold, there is a spirit who rains fire ignites a candle and makes his home..... 16th June we celebrated the African girl child day. The theme was “leave no child behind for Africa's development!”. We took part in the awareness rally from town to the designated place with slogans and carrying banners. This event witnessed around thousands of children and adults from the different orphanages as audience. These children have a lot of potential and talent which needed a platform of appreciation and our motive is to give each child the motivation they deserve.



Divine Providence Children's Home was registered in 2015, and we care for 62 children from the age of 0-12 years. The home exists to provide support and care for vulnerable and at risk children. Most of the children are orphans, others are from the street, abused and some others are the children of HIV affected single mothers. We get these kids through hospitals and District Children Offices (DCO) where the police or local government offices bring them to us.

It is most satisfying to serve these kids, as they are so happy besides we realize that they make us more happier than we make them! We believe that through working with the Local Church and the generous people of Kenya, together we can give hope, faith and love, and a chance for a happy productive life to the orphans of Kenya. The Church has 47 Basic Christian communities (BCC) and they make it a point to come and greet the children on Sundays and also pray and play with them. They never forget to ask about the requirements of the home and provide it to serve the needs of our children. Besides the BCC, the other groups like, Choir, Altar boys groups, Youth groups, Men and Women Associations, Vincent de Paul group, Legion of Mary, Prayer group, Parish council also pitch in. Our Indians friends continue to support us with weekly vegetables, eggs, fish, fruits etc for the kids. Indeed every day our hearts are filled with joy and gratitude along with our kids for His Providential care!

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Sr. Alphonsa & Sisters, Kitengela, Kenya

JIGNARA GRIHINI CENTRE

Jignara Grihini centre, in the North of India offers challenging programs to educate girls coming from deprived backgrounds for the last 40 years. The aim of the program is to lift the youngsters out of their poverty and give them a hopeful perspective for the future. In the year 2017-2018 batch; 18 girls successfully completed one year training in tailoring, bag making, cushions, health and hygiene, how to administer first aid and were learnt to read and write. After completing their training they become the earning member for their families. At the closure of their program we were informed that eight girls have taken a daring step to get out from the interior village of the state and go to Kerala to work in the Garment factory.



The parents want their daughters to learn the trade so as to earn their own livelihood and get income for the family, besides they would want their daughters to become good and mature women before they get settled in marriage. Sr. Shyamala the Superior of the community and the in-charge of Grihini girls helped them to find jobs and encourage them to explore their talents. Ms. Regina Kuldeep was from a poor family, her father was totally bedridden, he was the only earning member of the family and her mother too was unable to work. Regina was brought up by her aunt who was poor and so according to her ability she educated the girl until 10th class in a government run school. The quality of education was so poor, she couldn't read or write. After listening to her family background the sisters were with compassion and encouraged her to study well. In the beginning we found it very difficult to make her understand and grasp things. With the help of the teachers and through our constant guidance and supervision, at the end she showed much improvement and success. We could see the visible change taking place. Soon after her training she was married to a well-educated man Mr. Sandeep Kumar, an IT student from Don Bosco institution and working in Sharjah in UAE. Mr. Sandeep says he is very fortunate to get a loving wife and a respectful daughter-in-law to his parents. All that she is today is because of the loving and caring approach of the Sisters of Maria Seva Ashram. We are happy and satisfied to see that these girls return to their homes and earn their daily living by putting up a small shop or working in a tailoring shop to continue the trade and become responsible women in their homes and living a dignified life.

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Sr. Severine D'Souza, Jignara, Uttar Pradesh

FEEDING THE HUNGRY

People living in the interior villages of Maharashtra have limited access to electricity, transport, food and educational opportunities. Because food is scarce and the need for families to pool their resources for survival is great, there is tremendous pressure on the children to work. They are earning a few rupees a day in order to stave off their families' hunger. Education and literacy are put off as parents struggle to balance the immediate needs for food over the other need of a child to grow, develop and study in order to build a different life. For them it's a matter of basic survival.



Since last two years we, the Sisters of Mandvi have initiated to distribute cooked food for 100 families. The food is cooked at our home using fresh vegetables, pulses etc. Later, the Sisters take it in a rickshaw to Mandvi villages and serve it to the beneficiaries who queue up to receive it. This unique and selfless service is being widely appreciated among the community specially women, sick, elderly and differently abled. One of the beneficiary said; "I appreciate the effort by the SHM sisters to provide us with healthy and hygienic meals every afternoon. We don't have to stay on with an empty stomach,". Through our generous friends, we are able to distribute aid to our poorest brothers and sisters. Thank you for changing the lives of these desperate families. Through you, we have nourished the hungry and transformed the lives of the poor. Together, we make a difference.

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Sr. Suchita & Sisters, Mandvi

"I AM DIFFERENT BUT NOT LESS"



Umed is a specially designed centre for differently abled run by the Vasai Diocese. It caters to the unique requirement of individuals belonging to all faiths. It has a various vocational activities such as making hosts, candles, flowers, paper Plates and jewelry. I had the opportunity to work with these special children. Earlier when I heard the word 'disabled' I used to think people who can't walk or talk. I always felt pity for them but I realized it is nice to know their abilities rather than disabilities. I have experienced while working with them that they have tremendous power in them. They are so loving, caring, innocent and warm hearted. Though this is a centre for development for disabled however it turned out to be a place of learning for me. They are blessed with special graces by which they can transform and reform us and give us the best example to 'move on'. Everyone who come to visit Umed returns with an inspiration that in spite of their disabilities they can live happily, so why not we? Umed centre is heaven on earth where children celebrate their gift of life freely and enjoy every moment. They live by keeping their faces always towards the sunshine. They forget their disabilities and open their eyes to see their true abilities. I am grateful to Sr. Stella and Sr. Asha for giving me a wonderful opportunity to experience the love from these special ones.

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Sr. Arpita Macwan, Jalpuspha - Bhuigaon

Empowering HIV women

We have conducted a survey in Barut and we found many women are affected by HIV in Barut. Thus we have formed a group of 20 women and named this group 'Anna'. On 4th July the death Anniversary of our founder Mother Anna Huberta, we invited them to our home for a short gathering. We began with a short prayer and extended a warm welcome to them. Sr. Ujwala gave an introductory talk in which she focused on the vision, mission and spirit of Mother Anna Huberta and the life of the Helpers Mary. Sr. Lizzie gave an orientation to these women and explained to them the purpose of forming this group. She informed them direction for regular checkups, medication, and to intake nutritious food. Every month on 4th they will gather together and will get necessary guidance and medication. They were very eager and it gave them encouragement. On this special day of the death anniversary we distributed food to them. We thanked Mother Anna Huberta for the gift of our charism to reach out to the needy and helpless people in the world. May she pray and bless us that we may continue to live her vision.

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Sr. Ujwala & Sisters, Nakuru, Kenya



IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE FOUNDER



4th July of this year we observed 45th death anniversary of our dear Mother Anna Huberta. It is on this day in the year 1973 Mother breathed her last to enter the eternal vineyard of the Lord, leaving all her wards and offspring in tears. If we rewind for a while the scrolls of the past, what a beautiful time we had with our Mother with full of joy and joyous love which

she professed and loved for. Let us remember of those days when we used to walk in the hot sun on the gravel road of Versova and Veera Desai Road, when there was nothing. Those days we could not see any human beings even in daytime except few Marys clad in white sarees with veils with the small bags even without an umbrella and water to drink. Occasionally we could see some trucks carrying quarry ballast and nothing else. Many of the truck drivers used to give a lift to the Marys while returning empty.

Those were the days when Mother Anna Huberta contemplated and formed a group of a few young girls who came forward to sacrifice their life and became ardent disciples of Mother. A small seed sown by Mother on 27th March 1942 has now grown up into an imposing huge tree to give fruits and shade to thousands of poor and ill fated people and protecting through its many nests. Today, the sisters have fulfilled, the ambitions of our Mother through their enormous social activities viz. women's empowerment

through social – economic development projects, adult literacy classes, saving schemes, self help groups, credit societies, special care of girl children in the boarding and orphanages, Dispensaries, maternity homes, home for the elderly, dispensaries, hospitals, rehabilitation centre for patients with Hansen's disease and hospice for HIV/AIDS girls and women, etc. Through their 69 communities spread over in 12 states and 1 Union territory in India as also in other countries viz. Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Italy.

Mother was an extremely good person and loved everyone. She discovered the real meaning of love and served the poor. To Mother the slum was heaven and she found God's presence among the poor. She was very much available to the poor, sick, elderly, women and children. She said, "See the spotless lotus it comes from dirty water! Shouldn't the Helpers of Mary be, walking on the slum roads, spotless, walking with the goodness of Christ." She said, "Today I am sitting and speaking, tomorrow you will speak to others in the slum and villages". The Marys are taking the words of mother very sincerely and practically following, despite the drastic change in the modern living style and standard. Mother's ambitions were many and sky high, which the sisters of the Helpers of Mary highly regard and try to translate them into action. Some of us are indeed very lucky to have seen her, talked to her and to have been known by her and those who lived during her time.

Her immense love toward humanity, sacrifices unto mankind, her simplicity in practical life are admired by friends and serve as a beacon to guide the society. On her death anniversary, I join with you in union with prayers as one among her thousands of admirer friends and offer her our special prayers.

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Mr. R. A. Dass

(Master who assisted Mother to develop talents of children at Andheri)

Mission at Banda

The Helpers of Mary are rendering our service in the villages of Banda, Sindhudurg District since 2015. The people are originally migrants from Goa. Agriculture and fishing are their main occupation. The people are very simple, hard working and very much supportive. We live in a rented house and reach out to 9 villages through our social activities.

With deep faith and humble attitude we began to intercede to our founder Mother Anna Huberta to acquire a piece of land to build a convent and for our activities. We looked for it for a long time with the help of the local people. Finally we got a green signal through Rt. Rev. Bishop Alwyn Baretto, and Fr. Augustine SJ and acquired a suitable piece of land. After all the legal formalities on 13th July 2018 we got the land registered.

With grateful heart we render our thanks to Sr. Stella Devassy, our Superior General, who has been a driving force to

accomplish this long awaited dream to have a land for the Sisters' residence. We appreciate her keen interest and constant guidance. Dear Sr. Stella, your expertise and help have been invaluable during this process. We are grateful to Sr. Philomena, our Provincial Superior for the continuous support. Our sincere thanks to Sr. Amrita who visited us and prepared all the necessary documents to register the land. I cannot forget our former Provincials, Sr. Alphonsa, and Sr. Rohini who have taken the initiatives to begin this mission; their leadership and guidance have paved the way to reach out to more needy people. Thank you!!!

We believe that through the intercession of Mother Anna Huberta we received this gift. Mother, continue to intercede for your Marys.

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Sr. Sulochana Mendit shm, Banda