



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

# Igniting Sparks

MONTHLY NEWS LETTER

SEPTEMBER 2017

## Helpers of Mary as Prophets

The words of our Foundress Mother Anna Huberta whisper in our ears “My dear Marys, what a great vocation is yours to be another Mary in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century!” The Sixth and the final Renewal Program organized on the occasion of the Platinum Jubilee of the Congregation had been a captivating one. It was a moment of internalizing, revitalizing and igniting our spirit to live and serve for a greater cause, being Marys of our time. Forty Seven Sisters arrived from different directions - Ethiopia, Kenya, Italy and India. Everyone was excited to meet and share, as most of us met after many years.

On 20<sup>th</sup> Aug. 2017 the program began in the evening with an orientation. The Mother House community conducted prayer service and the Postulants staged a colourful entertainment program. According to the batches of our 1st Vows we were given different parts of a house, like foundation, walls, window, doors and roof. After a short reflection we were asked to arrange the structure. Each group was responsible to decorate it and prizes were arranged. Sr. Stella Devassy, our Superior General addressed the group and in her keynote mentioned the importance of keeping alive and passing on the spirit of Mother Anna Huberta in the years to come.



The sessions on Psycho Sexual Integration and Celibacy had covered a good number of topics such as stages of Psychosexual development, Human formation, Celibacy today, Sexual abuse and how to help the victim, Sex and Gender, Meaningful Celibate Life, Psycho Sexual Maturity etc. It was really amazing to learn and share our personal experiences on these topics. The inputs on Joyful giving and Graceful growing included religious life in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Millennium, passion for Christ, compassion for humanity and God’s personal radical love for me.

The post dinner programs were exciting with screening of films on daily topics, quiz on the life of Mother Anna Huberta, which helped us to draw closer to the life and spirit of Mother Anna Huberta and the Congregation. Extempore, Talent night, Debate and Group activities encouraged the participants to work in a team and become innovative. We, the Sisters of the 6<sup>th</sup> Renewal Group are deeply grateful to Sr. Stella Devassy our Superior General and General Council for facilitating an ostentatious program to renew our spirit and keep the flame burning. Our thanks to Commission for Formation headed by Sr. Leela Assistant Superior General and to Commission for Spirituality guided by Sr. Indumati - General Councilor for organizing the remarkable event for the energetic Marys.

Needless to say that the program was overshadowed by the sudden passing away of Sr. Shobna Saldhana in Italy who was associated with us as a Vocation Promoter and Postulant Directress.

Truly the renewal program has ignited us to work as Prophets and have charged us to go forth and transform the lives of the poor and needy through our ministries.

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**Srs. Shikha Michael shm & Joanita D’Costa shm**



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## Flame of Inspiration

Mrs. Pooja Kamble, who is 24 years old was born in a poor Hindu family in Latur, Ausa District of Maharashtra. She was a Grihini (Home Science) student of Asha Deep. At the age of 14 her parents got her married. She has two sons, one is nine years old and the other is seven years old. She was thrown out from her in-law's house because her husband has an extra marital affair.



She was physically abused by her husband's family; she was rescued from the village where she stayed with her husband and in-laws. She came to her mother's house and started working on daily wages. Her husband took her elder son and the younger son was with Pooja. During my visit to her house, her son explained to me how his mother was beaten up and the injuries she had on her body. Pooja's mother pleaded with us to give her employment so that she could make her future. Her own brother would fight with her and would harass her everyday. Looking at her miserable conditions, we employed her to cook food for the Grihini girls. She was indeed happy and her villagers highly appreciated it. As she had learnt Tailoring she started taking orders for stitching blouses, whenever she meets women, she exchanged her views, about how a woman should

## Medical Camp

It is said, prevention is better than cure. On September 24, 2017, Prem Sadan, Madh organized a free medical camp for our children. There were 81 participants. Mr. Mahindra Vasani introduced us to the Shriji Medical Relief & Charitable Trust and seeing the opportunities to promote health of our girls we initiated this camp for our girls. During the half day camp the girls and inmates of the home were given free Hepatitis injection and the follow up of it will be done in the coming months. Indeed it was a great blessing to our girls who live in our residential care home. We are grateful to Mr. Mahindra Vasani for supporting us to arrange this camp and benefit from it.

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**Sr. Shobina Dabre** shm - Prem Sadan, Madh Island



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speak for herself and motivate them to be strong. Now her son goes to school. She feels proud of herself that she can take care of her son, educate him and make their living. She is grateful to the Sisters that they have guided her and shown the way in her desperate moments. What makes her important, perhaps more than the success, is the flame of inspiration that she ignites in many women who are fading because of poverty and harassment from the family.

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**Sr. Yogini Renjar** shm - Ashish Dhara, Latur

## Celebrating 'GIRL CHILD' Day

Girls are the spirit of the nation. Save them and stop their exploitation was the voice of every one on the stage on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2017 when we celebrated Girl Child Day in Bhuigaon. The program started with a prayer service, seeking special blessings for girls and asking Mother Mary to save the girls of our Nation. On this occasion we were privileged to have Rev. Sr. Stella Devassy, our Superior General as Chief Guest and the guest of honors Fr. Baptist, Fr. Richard, Sr. Ujwala and Baby Seanna Mosses. Girls and teachers staged beautiful program. The focus was giving equal opportunities to girls as well as the boys. The children voiced that we need to give the girls the wings to fly not the pain to cry and die. Three hundred children, besides women and men gathered for the occasion. The program concluded on a joyful note, Sisters distributed snacks to the girls and all those gathered. Sr. Arpita thanked the Sisters, teachers and girls in carrying out the celebration wonderfully.

Sr. Arpita Macwan shm, Jalpushpa, Bhuigaon



## Empower Women Empower India

We the Ashadeep women's group of St. Blaise Parish, Amboli on August 3, 2017 were enlightened by Mrs. Vaishali Chawan, the Police Inspector of Amboli Police Station along with Police Officer Mrs. Martina D' Costa who spoke about how we need to know about our Police Station, how to file an First Information Report (FIR) and how to write a complaint when visiting a Police Station.

We women were eager to know the procedures, had few questions to ask the Police Officials as there were times when we felt that our issues were not considered and listened to. All our queries were answered by the Inspector Mrs. Vaishali Chawan and she promised that all the Police will help any women who approach them. Women are scared to enter Police Station because often they experienced lack of cooperation from the police.

Hence the next day on August 4, 2017 we visited the Amboli Police Station as one of our women was cheated and the Police assisted to resolve her issue. Many activities are being carried on in our Ashadeep CCO. Sr. Mathilda Fernandes SHM is the motivator in all these activities and she wants women to be empowered through her various training programs: Many women are taught Tailoring, provided Beautician Course and Basic Computer application thus helping these women build up their confidence in meeting everyday life independently. We are grateful to the Sisters of the Helpers of Mary for all their contributions to the society.

Joyce Pinto - St. Blaise Church, Amboli



## Eulogy to Sr. Shobna Saldhana

It is so hard to believe that Sr. Shobna is no longer with us. The shock of this tragedy has stunned the whole Congregation, her family and parishes that she served, plunging us into deep sorrow. We cannot believe what has happened. She was okay and spoke to many of us. For her sister Rita and brothers Edwin and Rocky, it's a nightmare. The suddenness of Sr. Shobna's passing away leaves us grieving.

She was very much part of our lives and now we have only her memories. All the little things that she used, all those photographs that you have seen, those souvenirs that she gave us, only gives us half a image of a loved one. The pain and the real image are carried in our heart. A year ago, when she flew back to Italy, she had so many dreams and plans for our Communities there. But now she herself is flying away to eternity. I spoke to her that morning of August 18, 2017 and that same evening she collapsed with a massive heart attack. Our hearts are broken; our spirits are crushed with the unexpected. It is only human that we should shed our tears and give vent to our grief. The presence, support and sensitivity of so many of you dear Sisters, Fathers, family members, friends, and Parishioners of various Parishes tells us how much she was loved.

We thank God, for having sent us Sr. Shobna who was with us for the last 36 years as a Helper of Mary, who gave us such joy and happiness while she was with us. Shobna Saldana (Gracy) was born on February 26, 1961 in Mangalore to Late Mrs. Emilia and Thomas Saldanha. She entered the Novitiate of Helpers of Mary when she was 19. And made her First Vows on October 4, 1981. She was committed to the Lord forever in the year 1989. She was a community member in Goa, Gundoli, and KanjurMarg and served as Superior in UttanChowk, KanjurMarg, Madh Island, Gundibala and Turin. She served as Candidate directress, and was elected General Councillor 2001-2007. Soon after that she took up an assignment in Italy and worked for Fratelli Dimenticati for the last 10 years. She was also the Delegate Superior of Marys in Italy. While she was serving there, she entered eternal life on August 18, 2017.



Sr. Shobna was simple, unassuming, silent and hardworking and yet touched so many lives. She braved to go to our mission in Italy and held it together for the last 10 years. She even facilitated the paper work for the upcoming Community even at the last moment, which was her dream. Sr. Shobna was running to all the places, to Rome, to Cittadella, to Turin, to Ivrea, to Cercenasco and to the places of the Mostra (Sale). She has not stopped running, only this time she ran into the arms of God.

Dear ones, to be a Christian is to be a pilgrim. To be a pilgrim is to go along the way of faith. The goal is certain - eternal life, but the way is uncertain. The way comes to an end for some in childhood, others in ripe old age. But for Sr. Shobna it happened in the prime of her life. How passing is the world we live in and how short a time we all have here on earth.

As we are giving our beloved Sr. Shobna back to God, I know it's a sacrifice. It's only in the context of our Lord's passion and death that we celebrate in this Mass can penetrate the mystery of suffering. We believe that Jesus Christ has gone through death before us, and has conquered the veil of death, so that we might have the strength to face it in our own lives. As we celebrate the sacrifice of the Eucharist, we lean on the love of one another. I know that the solidarity of our friendship in faith will hold us together in hope, hope of everlasting life. We're confident that she is enjoying fullness of life with God, which is beyond our comprehension. Good bye Sr. Shobna, Rest in Peace.

(Speech given by Superior General, Sr. Stella Devassy, during the Funeral service of Sr. Shobna Saldhana on August 31, 2017 at Andheri, Mumbai)

### Heartfelt Condolence

**Sr. Rakhini Jiwaji** lost her Mother

**Sr. Elsa** lost her Brother and Sister

**Sr. Preeti Kujur** lost her Father

*May their souls rest in peace...*

