



THE BETHANY CONNECTION

Volume VIII No. 2

A Newsletter of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany - Northern Province

July - Dec. 2017

Message From The PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR

I have a question in my heart. Is Jesus Christ relevant today?

2000 years have passed since the birth of Jesus Christ. We say His birth changes the world. Has He brought any change in the world? Is it true that even today Jesus cannot be ignored because He transforms us and transforms our social systems?



You may ask how this transformation takes place. Blessed Rani Maria says so with her blood. In the diocese of Indore, Udaynagar, hitherto an unknown village, is being visited by thousands of people. It was my privilege to experience the power of God flowing into this obscure village, when I visited Udaynagar with Sr Violet, Sr Laveena and Sr Navina. I touched the spot where Sr Rani Maria died with 45 stab wounds on 25 February 1995, and felt the power of Jesus covering the whole area with a new life. A Convent of Franciscan Clarist Sisters, Blessed Rani Maria School, Prayer House, hostels for girls and boys and a Church dedicated to Blessed Rani Maria silently yet powerfully bear witness to Jesus Christ, the Light that shines in the darkness of greed, violence and hatred.

Blessed Rani Maria, St Alphonsa, St Theresa of Kolkata and closer still the Servant of God Mgr Raymond FC Mascarenhas proclaim loud and clear that Jesus Christ is relevant today. He continues to be a change maker, a transformer, infusing hope in the despairing situations of our life bringing the message of peace, love and forgiveness. Bethany's entry into Tanzania, Mauritania, Senegal and Europe is a movement of hope and new life, making Jesus relevant through our love and service.

Bethany in the North is indeed a shining witness of the relevance of Jesus. Our Visionary Founder's words – "My Sisters will go where Jesus is not known and loved" have become real in Bhopal, Chomu and the newer areas of our service. Yes, Jesus is known and is loved because he gave a new meaning to our existence. He gave a new dignity to the poor. Jesus captures the imaginations of every generation.

As we celebrate the home-going of our beloved Founder and birth of our 'Life-Giver', some novelties may catch your imagination in favour of the last, least and lost ones as it does with Pope Francis! Could we expect some unique new stories of innovative ways of celebrating our Founder's Home-going Day on 23 December, and Birthday of Jesus on 25 December 2017?

I wish you a Joy filled Christmas and Hope filled New Year 2018.

Sr Jyoti BS
Provincial Superior

Message From The EDITOR

A wise leader is one who creates space for others in which others can do their own good work. Much more, a wise leader is a resource for others. She serves, supports and nurtures the people around her. This issue of Bethany Connection has umpteen indications of how the Provincial Superior and her team are training our Bethany Lay Associates, Office Staff, Domestic Staff, Accountants, Social Workers and others, offering them opportunities to update themselves and travel beyond their work place. Indeed travel is a way of acquiring first-hand knowledge.



This issue is also special for its highlights on Bethany Social Service Society, Punjab (BSSSP) and Bethany Convent, Delhi, on their entry into the Silver Jubilee Year. My participation in the Twenty fourth Annual General Body Meeting of BSSSP and Silver Jubilee Celebration of Bethany Convent, Delhi, was an opportunity to recognize and appreciate the tremendous service the sisters and their associates carry out. True love focuses on the total well being of others. Our service becomes more meaningful in the backdrop of Christmas, wherein, we celebrate the love of God for each one of us. You will be able to comprehend the spirit of our service as you turn the pages of this Newsletter.

Wish you the Peace and Love that Christmas brings and a blessed year 2018.

Sr Grace Maria
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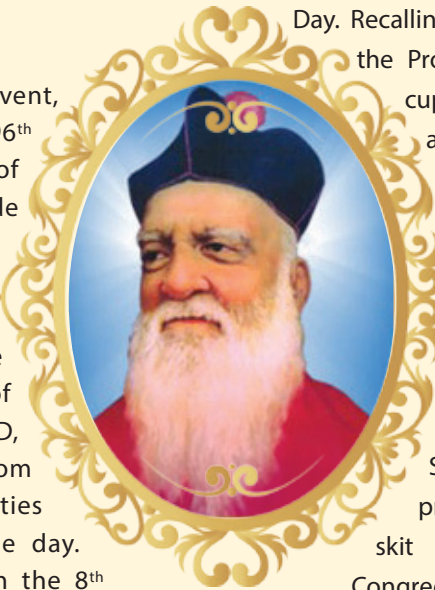
96th FOUNDATION DAY CELEBRATIONS

As of every year, this year too the Foundation Day of Bethany Congregation was celebrated all over. We give you certain pickups of 16 July, 2017.

BETHANY, KHANDWA, MADHYA PRADESH

*Sr Therese Antony,
Madhya Pradesh* ➤

The sisters of Bethany Convent, Khandwa celebrated the 96th Anniversary of the Foundation of Bethany, with joy and gratitude counting the blessings of God. The beautifully decorated altar, melodious choir and the delicious food added tint to the day's function. The presence of the Bishop A.A.S Durairaj SVD, priests and the religious from the neighbouring communities furthered the solemnity of the day. Foundation day coincided with the 8th anniversary of the Episcopal Ordination of our Bishop.



BETHANY, HAUZ KHAS, DELHI

Sr Cynthia, Delhi ➤

The sudden and unannounced visit of the sisters of Eastern Province was the surprise of the Foundation Day. Recalling the past days before the bifurcation of the Province, the sisters chitchatted. Sharing a cup of tea and snacks they danced together and renewed their comradeship as Bethany Sisters.

ST THERESA'S, KARNAL, HARYANA

Sr Ophilia Lobo, Haryana ➤

The entire celebration had an exuberantly mesmerizing effect because of the presence of Sr Jyoti, the Provincial Superior, and the Councillors. The students presented a well knit and equally interesting skit depicting the formation of Bethany Congregation by Mgr Raymond FC Mascarenhas. Sr Jyoti updated the group as to how miraculously Father Founder responded to the call of God, pioneering a way out for all the problems of the society through education.

JOURNALISTIC SKILL ACQUIRING WORKSHOP

*Sr Jeevan Lata, Punjab and Sr Maria,
Himachal Pradesh* ➤

"Journalism is the activity of gathering, assessing, creating and presenting news and information, and is the product of the activities such as speaking, writing, listening and body Language," commented Fr George Cheruvil to a group of eleven young sisters gathered at Ish Kripa, Karnal, from 19-21 July 2017 to attend a Journalistic Skill Acquiring Workshop. Fr Cheruvil tried his best to create a NOSE FOR THE NEWS in them. The Workshop enabled the sisters to unlock the hidden talents of each one. Sisters were trained to write Stories, Notices and Messages. Each one came up with their spontaneous and creative ideas in writing.



Pope Francis says: "The internet, text messages and social net work are a gift from God and are fully human forms of communication". They help us to be better citizens and can be used wisely to build a society which is healthy and open to sharing. This Workshop enkindled in the sisters desire to communicate with each other and unlock the hidden talents by participating actively in writing articles, news, events of the communities, provinces and congregation in order to spread God's message to the people.

Sr Jyoti, the Provincial Superior, highlighted Fr Founder as the Apostle of the Print Media and familiarized the group with the large number of books he has written. The interventions by Sr Grace Maria on updating our language skills motivated the group to improve their reading skills.

THE PEARL ASSEMBLY

Sr Grace Maria, Punjab ➤

The XXX Provincial Assembly of the Northern Province touched the core of the thirty six participants who had assembled at Ish Kripa from 23 -27 September 2017. The Provincial House was all decked up with the symbols of welcome and the theme of the assembly- 'Building Eucharistic Communities'. Thirtieth Anniversary is called Pearl Anniversary. This assembly connected us to the Pearl of our life –Jesus.

Our own theologians, Sr Erasma and Clare Toppo, the brand new postgraduates, in unsullied terms revealed to us the role of Eucharist in our community life. One of the gifts we have in community life is accessibility to spiritual resources. This assembly was an invitation to leave the surface and plunge into God.



In Eucharist, the sacrament of transformation, Jesus asks us to be transformed, receive, give thanks, break and share. We are transformed by the community and we contribute to the transformation of the community by seeing and living the interconnectedness among us by receiving, thanking, breaking and sharing. Community life and our ministry provide ample opportunities for us to live this Eucharist. Sr Jyoti, the Provincial Superior, reminded us to imitate our Founder who was a Eucharistic person.

The vast expanse of our service that stunned each one of us was presented by the Provincial councillors Sr Chantal, Sr Arpan, Sr Helima, Sr Violet, the Provincial Procurator Sr Gracy D' Souza and Sr Grace Maria, the Media co-ordinator of Northern Province.



Sr Jyoti, Provincial Superior

Sr Clare Toppo



Sr Jyoti, Provincial Superior

Sr Erasma

A ROYALTY WITH A LASTING APPEAL

Sr J Nancy, Delhi ➤

Our life is a constant service to the needy. To share the compassionate love of Jesus to all especially the poor and the marginalised is the Charism of Bethany. To participate in this Charism and join us in our good works we have the Bethany Lay Associates.

The first of its kind, a Convention of Bethany Lay Associates, was organized by Sr Chantal, the co-ordinator

for Pastoral Ministry, at Sneha Sadan, Karnal, from 29- 30 September 2017, at the behest of Sr Jyoti, the Provincial Superior. It was indeed a blend of lively, enthusiastic and pious eighty seven Bethany Lay Associates from Bathinda, Ramdas, Ludhianda, Delhi, Faridabad, Mohali, Karnal and Samalkha. Fr Rony IMS offered the Holy Eucharist expounding the life of Fr Founder. Sr Arpan, the Provincial Councillor, Sr Diana and Sr Veronica were the



resource persons and Sr Lyra the facilitator. Un-noticed, many other sisters rendered their help.

Sr Jyoti, the Provincial Superior, warmly welcomed all the participants and explained to them the purpose of the convention. She made the participants understand the Charism and Spirituality of Bethany at the backdrop of Bethany Anthem. The resource persons shared and discussed topics such as the life of Fr RFC Mascarenhas, the Founder, the Founding Members, the birth, growth

and the mission of the Congregation, importance of family prayer, faith formation of children, witness value of families, togetherness to celebrate each other's faithfulness in the family and their generosity and willingness to carry on the Charism and Spirituality of Bethany and be active members in their respective parish.

The group dug their heels into the new assignment and the call they received. The get-together thus was a royalty with a lasting appeal.

HIMACHAL KI GUDIA WE ARE WITH YOU

Sr Niti Maria, Himachal Pradesh ➤

The quivering news of a seventeen year old girl who was gang raped, killed and thrown into the forest on 4 July 2017 in Kotkata, had shocked not only the people of Shimla but also all those who value human dignity and compassion.



The Vocational Training Centre of Bethany Social Service Society, Solan, responded to this tragic incident by raising their voice against this crime. On 21 July 2017, the ladies from all over the villages, and the students of St. Luke's School took a Peace rally from the School ground to the Office of the District Commissioner. The second rally was held on 25 July at Dharampur Block. Hundreds of our ladies holding banners and shouting slogans, moved from Dharampur to Kasauli Chowk, met the civil authorities and submitted a memorandum.



CHANGING FACE OF RURAL RAMDAS

Sr Helima, Haryana ➤

It was indeed a wonderful and nostalgic moment for me when I happened to visit two villages of Ramdas, Punjab, on 15 Sept 2017. My visit was made more special by the traditional welcome I received. 25 years ago I had served in this place and now I am delighted to observe the remarkable changes that has taken place since then. I still have the satisfaction of pioneering the Punjabi Medium School which today has changed its medium to English. The children from the underprivileged families have an opportunity to study in this school. Some of the past students are working in reputed companies. The women have become self reliant and the girls more educated and resist early marriages. The committed service of the sisters

has transformed many villages. Some of the girls and boys have opted for religious life and are spending their lives in service to God and humanity.



REGIONAL YOUTH CONVENTION AT KHANDWA

Sr Therese Antony, Madhya Pradesh ➤

Sophia High School, Khandwa, was the venue of the eighth Regional Youth Convention of M.P region in which 1800 youth from eleven dioceses participated. With the theme 'Touched

by Jesus and walking in His ways,' this mega event began on 17 October 2017 at 5:00 pm with an inaugural procession and Eucharistic celebration by Most Rev Dr Leo Cornelio SVD Archbishop of Bhopal and Chairman, ICYM, M.P Region.

The various sessions, motivational talks and activities conducted by the resource persons enabled the youth to be active, energetic and enthusiastic. Opportunities were given to exhibit their talents through cultural programmes, music, animation and action songs.

This youth convention left us with unforgettable memories. Fr Philip Kunduthaman, the Vicar General of Khandwa diocese, the convener of the programme, and the Manager of Sophia Convent Sr Sec School, and Sr Priya Therese, the Principal of Sophia Convent School, played a major role in organising this event.

BE TRANSPARENT AND VIGILANT

Sr Gracy D'Souza, Haryana ➤

Two words, "Be Transparent, Be Vigilant" echoed in the Generalate on 14 August 2017 when 70 sisters with seven Provincial Superiors, five Provincial Procurators with Sr Rose Celine, the Superior General, Sr Lillis, the Asst. Superior General, Sr Shanthi Priya, Sr Mariette and Sr Lelitta participated enthusiastically in the conference on 'Temporal Administration' organised by Sr Christine Noronha, the diligent and committed Procurator General.

Northern Province was represented by Sr Jyoti, Sr Gracy D' Souza, Sr Delicia, Sr Rositta, Sr Elfreeda, Sr Stella D'Souza and Sr Nalini.

Dealing with the Spirituality of 'Temporal Administration,' Sr Dona reiterated saying spirituality is a way of life. When we speak of the spirituality of temporal administration we examine our attitudes towards human and material resources and how

we function in our role as trustees and stewards of these resources and our accountability to the prime owner of these gifts. Further, she explained the understanding of our Constitution on temporal administration with reference to the canon law, moral and juridical persons, trusteeship, stewardship, Biblical stewardship, the principle of ownership, responsibility, accountability and reward. Transparency and accountability are the two watchwords we need to become aware of.

Mr Giridhar Kamath, the CA of our Congregation clarified the queries on GST and its implications. At this juncture, we salute the sisters of Northern Province who manage the financé in our Province.

The Province Financial Managers



Sr Gracy D'Souza



Sr Jacintha Herold



Sr Delicia



Sr Shirley



Sr Amabel



Sr Immaculate



Sr Eugene



Sr Elfreeda



Sr Juliana



Sr Gracy Pinto



Sr Natal Patil



Sr Emeilda



Sr Reena



Sr Monthi



Sr Veronica Monteiro



Sr Basanti



Sr Jospha



Sr Sabina



Sr Amira



Sr Reshma



Sr Emerentia



Sr Savita Flavia

ADMINISTRATION AND STEWARDSHIP OF THE TEMPORAL GOODS

Sr Rose Margaret, Punjab ➤

The four characteristics of Stewardship - Ownership, Responsibility, Accountability and Reward were given emphasis during the opening prayer and all through the seminar of the Local Superiors, Procurators, Principals and School Accountants of the Northern Province, held at Ish Kripa, Bethany Provincial House, Karnal, on 5 November 2017.

Sr Christine, the resource person, referring to Can. 635/1, said that the Temporal Goods of the Religious Institute are Ecclesiastical Goods, and they are governed by the provisions of Book V of the Code of Canon Law, on the Temporal Goods

of the Church. Transparency and Accountability are the hallmarks of Temporal Administration. Hence there is an urgency to practise greater sense of transparency and accountability by all of us especially by those who hold responsible position in our institutions to be credible witnesses of the Gospel.

The topics on basic concepts of accounting, TDS and salient features of GST and its implications, purchase of property, audit observations, tips on recurring and non-recurring budget were made interesting through quiz, group discussions and hands on experience.



SILVER BELLS OF AN EMPOWERING JOURNEY

Sr J. Nancy, Delhi ➤

With a solemn Eucharistic Celebration officiated by Rev. Archbishop Anil J. T Couto; Archbishop Emeritus Rt. Rev. Vincent Concessao and Fr Vincent Crasta, the Parish Priest, and concelebrated by eleven other priests, Bethany Convent at New Delhi entered into its Silver Jubilee Year on 4 October 2017.

The Bethany Champions and members of Bethany Lay Associates along with Sr J Nancy and Mr William led the melodious choir. Sr Jyoti, the Provincial Superior of Northern Province, her councillors and two of the pioneers of Delhi mission- Sr Grace Maria and Sr Erasma, the priests,



sisters, parishioners and well wishers gathered to celebrate the occasion with prayers and cultural programme held at Sahoday Senior Secondary School.

Archbishop Dr. Anil J.T Couto lauded the services of Bethany Sisters in Delhi Archdiocese in the field of Education and Pastoral Ministry and expressed his gratitude to the sisters on behalf of his priests.

The cultural programme by the students of Sahoday School depicted the Charism and Spirituality of Bethany Sisters.

The parish priests, assistant parish priests, the superiors, a few well wishers and the pioneers were specially honoured by the Bishop and Sr Jyoti. The service rendered by the past superiors- Sr Nicoline, the incharge, late Sr Agnes Sequeira, Sr Winnifred, Sr Lina, Sr Benedicta Castelino, Sr Elsy and at present Sr Sudha, was appreciated and thanked for.

Sr. Jyoti, the Provincial Superior, expressed her gratitude to the Bishops for giving Bethany Sisters an opportunity to serve in Delhi Archdiocese. She specially thanked Archbishop Emeritus Rev Vincent Concessao, for inviting the sisters to the diocese during his tenure and for his presence during the Jubilee celebrations.

The first Bethany Sisters to serve at Sahoday were Sr Grace Maria and Sr Nicoline. Ever since, the school has succeeded in boosting the morale, sharpening the life skills and building confidence in the students. Today with Fr Vincent Crasta as the Manager and Sr Sudha, the Principal, Sahoday School offers opportunities for the middle class students to shine in the global scene. Congratulations to HauzKhas community-Sr Sudha, Sr J Nancy, Sr Cynthia and Sr Reshma for their great contribution in the field of education and pastoral service, an Empowering Journey in Delhi.



DING DONG BETHANY SOCIAL SERVICE SOCIETY, PUNJAB (BSSSP)

Sr Grace Maria, Punjab ➤

Bethany Social Service Society, Punjab, held its 24 Annual General Body Meeting on 9 September 2017 marking its entry into the Silver Jubilee Year.

The goal of Bethany Social Service Society is to help and facilitate the development of the poor, marginalized and the oppressed sections of the society through healthcare, skill based teaching, literacy, works of public utility and the empowerment of women.

Bethany Social Service Society, Punjab, has the following fifteen Units

1. BSSSP Jeevan Jyoti Centre, Ludhiana, Punjab.
2. BSSSP Sacred Heart Vocational Training Centre, Barnala, Punjab.
3. BSSSP St. Joseph's Vocational Training Centre, Bathinda, Punjab.
4. BSSSP Ashadeep, Ramdas, Punjab.
5. BSSSP St. Theresa's Vocational Training Centre, Karnal, Haryana.
6. BSSSP St. Luke's Vocational Training Centre, Solan, H.P.
7. BSSSP Bethany Jeevan Dhara, Tanakpur, Uttrakhand.
8. BSSSP VTC, Paradip, Odisha.

- 9. BSSSP Bethany Girls' Hostel, Badibahal, Odisha.
- 10. BSSSP St. Theresa's Tribal Girls' Hostel, Maluka, Jharkhand.
- 11. BSSSP Shanti Ashram, Berhampur, Odisha.
- 12. BSSSP Bethany Health Centre, McMandro, Jharkhand.
- 13. BSSSP Disha - Bethany Vocational Institute, Greater Noida, U.P.
- 14. BSSSP Karunalya - Human Life Centre, Karnal, Haryana.
- 15. BSSSP, Regional Unit Samalkha, Haryana.

The service of the above fifteen centers is focused on the areas of Health Care, Education, Social Work and Works of Public Utility.

Spelling out the details of the activities, unfolds a vast arena of service such as treatments through alternative system of medicine like magnet therapy, massage therapy and physiotherapy; promotion of low cost medicine; ayurveda, yoga; herbal medicines; home remedies; T.B eradication programmes; pro-life programmes; gender sensitization; ambulance services; school health programmes; home nursing; formation of self-help groups, federations, senior citizens' group, village vigilant groups, auto drivers' group, kishori groups; capacity enhancement training programme;



seed bank; promotion of kitchen garden; vocational training-stitching, weaving, knitting, beauticians' course, fashion designing; mid-day meal; children's parliament; non-formal education; English speaking course, remedial classes; study centres; hostels, scholarships; ITI, and leadership training programme.

Hostels for the poor and rural girls at Ludhiana, Bathinda, Ramdas, Karnal, Badibahal, Maluka, Dumka, MacMandro and Susni enable the village children refurbish their lives and be at par with the city children.

Kudos to our 15 Sister coordinators and the 64 animators serving in various Northern states and are trying to be tender, compassionate, caring and life giving to the weak and deprived.

SNIPPETS

THE BRAVE HEARTS MEET

Sr Niti Maria, Himachal Pradesh and Sr Gracy Vaz, Haryana

Eleven Sister Socio-medical coordinators and 33 animators from nine centres of Northern Province, had a Capacity Building Programme at Sneh Sadan, Karnal, from 26 -28 November 2017. The resource persons were Sr Shanthi Priya, the General councillor, Sr Dr. Jessy Maria from Eastern Province and Mr Khilesh Chaturvedi. Sr Shanti Priya emphasized the XVIth General Chapter's mandate very clearly to launch into the frontier ministries with the migrants and the trafficked persons. Human Migration and Trafficking was the topic of Sr Jessy Maria while Mr Khilesh Chaturvedi dealt with the 'Right based approach.'



The reports presented were of a rich magnitude and made us realise how powerful we are in bringing God's unconditional love to the poor and the needy. Sr Arpan, the Province coordinator, deserves applause for organising this enriching programme.

OUR DOMESTIC HELPERS ARE IMPORTANT

Sr Reshma, Delhi

Imagine a day in our lives wherein the service of our domestic staff is not available to us. The day indeed will be a chaotic one. They do play a prime role in our lives. Bethany in fact is a home for our assistant staff who come from faraway places to serve us and provide us time for our important mission. In an affectionate gesture for their service Sr Chantal organised a two day Self-enrichment programme for the domestic staff of Northern Province, from 27-29 November, 2017 at St Theresa's Convent, Karnal. For the 21 domestic staff this programme, much different from dish washing, cooking, laying the table and cleaning the house, was an occasion to gain self knowledge and recognise their self worth.

SANGAM OF HOSTEL CHILDREN AT RAMDAS

Sr Shalom, Punjab ➤



7 October, 2017 was a gala day for the hostel children of Ramdas, Punjab, as the parents of these children gathered for the hostel day celebrations. It was an occasion for them to showcase their talents through the cultural programme. The Parish Priest Fr Scaria gave some useful tips for the girls to make their lives better. The hostel warden Sr Savita Flavia and Superior Sr Diana Serrao were the inspiration behind this festivity.

GRANDPARENTS' DAY AT MOHALI

Sr Tara, Mohali, Punjab ➤

Infant Jesus Convent School felicitated and honoured Grandparents on 10 August 2017 by celebrating the occasion to create a spirit of togetherness and fun with older generation.



Students in their colourful attire showed various dance performances. The play put up on the occasion highlighted how youngsters are becoming dispassionate and irresponsible towards their elders at home.

CHARTING THEIR GROWTH

Sr Grace Maria, Punjab ➤

The most prized locality of Delhi was the venue for the Office Staff of the Schools of Bethany Educational Society in the north to update their skills through a seminar on soft skills and personality growth. Executed by Sr Chantal, the coordinator of Pastoral Apostolate, this opportunity



unfolded a rare chance to the Office Staff to become aware of themselves and thereafter to build their personality and secretarial skills.

First December 2017 evening saw 22 office staff attractively decked in their winter dress ready to plunge into action for three days. Sr Chantal made use of the resources of Sr Helima, Sr Grace Maria, Fr Stanely, Fr Sandeep, Sr Joyce, Sr Reshma, Sr J Nancy and Sr Amrita Tete to make this interactions a successful one. Topics on office etiquettes, love, I am a gift, relationship, self-awareness through meditation were sources of honing their skills.

The hospitality given by Fr Vincent Crasta, the Manager of Sahoday School and Sr Sudha and community at Delhi has no parallel. The Office Staff hope to harvest rich dividends from this capacity building programme.

SILVER BELLS AT PITHORAGARH

Sr Lina, Uttarakhand ➤

23 November 2017 marked the celebration of Silver Jubilee of Don Bosco School, Pithoragarh. The fantastic show gave the audience a trip down the memory lane. Graced by Bishop, Most Rev. Ignatius D'Souza, the event saw a cluster of many more distinguished dignitaries from the diocese and the locality. Kudos to Sr Lina, Superior and Principal, Sr Rosaline and Sr Emeilda who serve at Don Bosco School Pithoragarh.

KINDLY PRAY FOR THE DECEASED RELATIVES OF THE SISTERS

* Sr Severine	Grandmother
* Sr Shirley	Aunt
* Sr Cynthia	Aunt
* Sr Vanita Veena	Uncle
* Sr Alodia	Brother-in-law
* Sr Stella D Souza	Brother
* Sr Preeti Margaret	Nephew
* Sr Norilla	Sister-in-law
* Sr Martha Nancy	Cousin
* Sr Veena D' Souza	Mother
* Sr Janet Carvalho	Uncle
* Sr Gracy D' Souza	} Brother
* Sr Rosaline D' Souza	
* Sr Prema Carvalho	Uncle
* Sr Clarice	Nephew