

# IN-TOUCH



Bethany Sisters  
Northeast Province



*Creating Synergy*

**A Newsletter of the Northeast Province of Bethany Sisters**

Volume VI Issue 2

July to December 2017

## MESSAGE



Dear Friends **In Touch**

The year 2017 has flown by! Plenty of events have occurred in the last 6 months. IN-TOUCH brings you here a glimpse of the landscape of half the year.

The Provincial Team started the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the 2<sup>nd</sup> innings, with reflection, evaluation and a planning with the revised Pastoral Plan which has given them a strong footing to carry on their responsibility as well as a road map to guide the Sisters of the Province.

The emphasis is laid on two areas – personal growth in holiness as desired by Jesus, “Be you perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect” [Mt 5:48].

Secondly, Sisters are to share this gift of holiness and compassion with all those who come into their circle in their ministry wherever they are.

All the Apostolates were given a boost by updating knowledge and the infrastructure, providing training to Staff and Sisters.

- Pastoral ministry received a much needed enhancement by guiding Sisters towards ‘Home mission’.
- Educational ministry has kept improving a lot, E-care (Smart Pro2) is introduced in all BES Schools, the setting up of every Classroom in all schools as Audio-Visual Rooms is underway. The campus is made attractive for children and Parents.
- Our Hostels are made child friendly, a home away from home for the children who come to the Hostel with much expectation.
- Socio-Medical ministry has kept pace with changing circumstances.
- So also in other ministries updating is the ‘key’ to keep ourselves up and going.
- BIRD in Umsning of Meghalaya is beginning to fly and we wish and pray that it takes full flight by the time next ‘In-Touch’ touches your hand.

I am heartened to witness the zeal and enthusiasm of the Sisters in carrying out their responsibility in the given mission. Certainly God’s grace and blessings will flow on each and everyone.

On the National and International scene along with many new developments, we have witnessed plenty of violence, fires, collapse of buildings, bridges, accidents all causing terrible loss of innocent lives – these events are a tragedy and very saddening. We need to cultivate love and respect for others. Sometimes we wonder where is that humanity which is supposed to be in every heart gone, leave alone the divinity endowed to human beings. We pray and hope that better sense will prevail in our sisters and brothers in the New Year 2018.

The Year 2018 is leading Bethany Sisters to Centenary celebration of the Foundation of Bethany Congregation in the year 2021, July 16<sup>th</sup> to be exact, and many programmes are in the pipeline which will be unfolded year by year.

In the meantime let us continue to deepen our humanity and divinity making us true to the dignity of being created in God’s own image and likeness. [Gen 1:27]



**Sr M Joy BS**  
Provincial Superior



**EDITORIAL**

**Standing Tall In Waters Deep**

Every great Individual or Organisation that matter has reached that height not because the paths were smooth but because they were tough! One reaches the point of remarkable significance when one stands on determination and unstoppable divine courage in odd times.

Rosa Parks a national icon of civil rights in America is an African-American pride. She was an ordinary seamstress. It all began on Dec 1, 1955 when she refused to give up her seat in a bus for a white man while she returned from her day's work. And then, Martin Luther King Jr., a hero for all time, took forward her daring act and successfully shaped an anti-apartheid march.

Remember, all humans are born equal. The paths and processes on the timeline may be unique and different to each one. But that freedom as God's children is everyone's right! We've got to enjoy that freedom and support those in want of it in their struggle.

Today, in the context of our country we will continue to uphold the truth, and live that sense of justice and liberty enshrined in our Constitution! It's a life time labour! Bethany Sisters has a history of wading through the troubled waters, be it in the life of our Founder the great RFC, or our pioneering sisters. We can't but continue to remain energetic for a fresh gallop of relevance to our people!

Our thoughts and actions that reflect in this In-touch are a little effort to come to the light and walk against corruption, manipulation and communal hatred. As institutions and individuals we will support everyone in this cause to make the vulnerable of our society live too!

**Sr Clara Mendonca BS**

**A prayer for our departed family members**

- |                          |              |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Sr Genevieve          | Brother      |
| 2. Sr Sapientia          | Sister       |
| 3. Sr Benny D'Silva      | Cousin       |
| 4. Sr Mary Grace Bhengra | Aunt         |
| 5. Sr Rose               | Father       |
| 6. Sr Hildegard          | Niece-in-law |
| 7. Sr Rincy Kurien       | Grandmother  |
| 8. Sr Joy                | Uncle        |
| 9. Sr Severine Pinto     | Mother       |
| 10. Sr Assumpta Maria    | Brother      |
| 11. Sr Alice Thomas      | Mother       |



**CAPACITY BUILDING FOR BETHANY HMs AND PRINCIPALS**

Being focused on the goal of Excellence in Education the Province organized a seminar on Counselling Skills for the sisters heading the Schools at Bethany Institute of Resource Development (BIRD), Umsning. It was from



18th to 23rd July 2017. The sisters grabbed this opportunity to excel in their administrative skills and to be effective leaders. There were a total 22 participants including Sr Joy the Provincial Superior.

The seminar began with a captivating inaugural function. Sr Edleburgh the Education Coordinator of the Province accorded a warm welcome to the Resource person Fr Philip Thomas msfs, PhD, the expertise in Counselling and the Resource person of the Seminar, and Sr Joy the Provincial Superior. She warmly welcomed everyone with fixing a badge each as a gesture of welcome. Sr Joy in her key note address expressed her vision for schools which is to promote all-round excellence and this set an apt ambience for the seminar.

Fr Philip Thomas in his introductory topics on Pastoral counselling, Psychological approaches to counselling, its goals and characteristics, brought the inner self to the lime light. Furthermore deepening, the course on Basic counselling skills enlightened the learners' eyes to see the invisible in the other. The Diagnostic Test to assess



one's ability to be empathetic and to be listening, and relationship inventory helped the group to make an inward journey. The practical sessions on the last day helped the individuals to actualize the theory into practice bringing quality to one's own self.

Indeed this was the first group of Bethany Sisters as trainees at BIRD !

**Sr Mable D'Silva BS**  
Bethany Convent, Behala

## AN INTROSPECTION AT THE PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY



The 33rd Provincial Assembly of the Bethany Sisters in North East Province was held from 3rd to 5th November 2017 with the theme 'Formation of Conscience for Transparency and Accountability'. All the Superiors and Formators, 39 participants in all were present for the Assembly. The members were welcomed by Sr Sandhya the Assistant Provincial Superior.

Sr Joy, the Provincial Superior in her opening address called upon the participants to focus on the theme and urged the members to be the 'change' which they wish to see in others. Input sessions were by Br Abraham Anthony sdb who focused on the topic 'The Challenges of Authentic Leadership in Religious Communities Today'. The Provincial Assembly became a booster to those assembled in their consecrated life and mission. Superiors were open in their participation and were ever willing to learn and update.



This Assembly was followed by Annual meetings of Pastoral, Formation and Education ministries. Though these annual meetings were short, they were of great help in re-orienting and renewing the particular apostolates.

*Sr Sandhya BS  
Bethany Provincial House, Guwahati*

## SAMOGURI MISSION GETS NEW BUILDINGS

With gratitude, we recount the blessings of God on Bethany at Samoguri for the past seven years and now we have a new house as a gift from Most Rev. George Pallipparambil, Bishop of the Diocese of Miao. Bethany was hosted in a simple house all these past years, so also was the hostel.



The sisters had pioneered in running a school for the diocese in the area.

A lovely Bethany Convent cum St Mary's Girls' Hostel building for the cause of Education was inaugurated on 1st July 2017 by Sr Joy BS the Provincial Superior. Bishop George blessed the building and invoked God's protection on all who will dwell in this house. The presence of Fathers, Sisters, Teachers, Parishioners, hostel children and benefactors added blessings to the event.

The sisters will make every effort to create a 'Home away from Home' for the little children at the hostel. May they be the light and salt in this land of Arunachal Pradesh.

*Sr Shalini Mary BS  
Bethany Convent, Samoguri, Namsai Dt, Ar. P.*

## IN KEEPING WITH SCIENTIFIC TEMPER

St. Maria Goretti's School Kolasib is the Province's first mission. With all its high tides and low tides it has been on progress with regard to number and merit. This is another event that makes the School feel proud when the team of 5 students mentored by their teachers took part in the District Level Children's Science Congress 2017 held at Kolasib on 26 September.

The team of St. Maria Goretti's School stood first with the outstanding presentation of Ms Awmpuii Khenglawt of class VII. She was selected for the state level on account of her Project wherein she was again qualified for National Level which was held on 28 December 2017 at Ahmedabad Gujarat. Kudos Awmpuii!

*Sr Shanti BS  
St Maria Goretti's School, Kolasib, Mizoram*



*Awmpuii Khenglawt,  
At National level*

*District Level Children's Science Congress 2017 - 1st prize- St Maria team*

**SILVER AND GOLD... HERE THEY COME**



Bethany Provincial House, Guwahati shimmered with Silver and Gold from the evening of November 4 until the last hours of November 5, 2017 as the Province celebrated the Golden Jubilee of six sisters and the Silver Jubilee of three, of their Religious Vows. While the Golden Jubilarians Sr Joy, Sr Canisia, Sr Cleopha, Sr Imani, Sr Ottilia and Sr Assumpta Maria had their names written in gold in the annals of the Province, the Silver Jubilarians Sr Sabina Uchoi, Sr Harsha and Sr Mavis had mastered the art of seeing a silver lining in every cloud they came across.

A special jubilee prayer hour was held on November 4 at 6.30 pm. A solemn Eucharist was celebrated at 11.00 am, on November 5, by Rev Fr Maxim Rodrigues SVD, Regional Superior of the SVD Fathers along with Rev Fr Cletus sfx, which marked the climax of the joyful event. The nine Sisters renewed their vows during the Eucharistic celebration which was attended by the heads of twenty nine communities of the Province, the members of the local community, Provincial team, Formators and other sisters.

After the Eucharist a grand felicitation followed, during which each of the jubilarians was greeted with apt symbols and particularly honoured with a memento inscribed with her qualities. A family meal capped the first half of the day's celebrations. The Sisters of the Province made sure that the jubilarians had a pleasant evening by putting up a variety entertainment programme at 8.00 pm.

*Sr Mary Naulak BS  
St Theresa Convent, Mamit*

# **Congratulations Dear Sisters**



Sr Assumpta Maria BS



Sr Canisia BS



Sr Cleopha BS



Sr Imani BS



Sr Joy BS



Sr Ottilia BS

## **THE GOLDEN JUBILIARIANS**



Sr Harsha BS



Sr Mavis BS



Sr Sabina Uchoi BS

## **THE SILVER JUBILIARIANS**



## A PROUD MOMENT FOR BETHANY COLLEGE, MANMOW

Venerable Uktara Bethany College Manmow (VU Bethany College), an institution under the Bethany Charitable Trust® of the Province has been developing at a steady pace in rendering the light of knowledge to the blooming youth of the region. It is affiliated to Rajiv Gandhi University Itanagar. The first batch of the college with 54 students from Arts and Commerce streams passed out in May 2017 with 100% results. There were a total 12 ranks to this College. Under BA the ranks were- 3 in History, 3 in Political science and 1 in Sociology; while B.Com stream garnered 5 ranks.

This outstanding performance of the first outgoing batch of the College has been a boost to the Sisters and the Management in hoping for the better despite the hurdles that kept cropping up from the very start. At present there are a total 270 students with a hostel facility for both girls and boys. The Bethany Sisters cater to the hostel girls who are 85 in number presently.

Indeed we recommit in humility to the mission of education for the people of the state. Congratulations dear students for making us proud!



### The outstanding achievers of the Final semester May 2017



Tojam Mossang  
1<sup>st</sup> rank



Jishma Nair  
2<sup>nd</sup> rank



Bogen Boruah  
7<sup>th</sup> rank



Promita Manphai  
1<sup>st</sup> rank



Sunzing Wangsu  
5<sup>th</sup> rank



Toniya Tangjang  
7<sup>th</sup> rank



Molika Lohan  
10<sup>th</sup> rank

#### BA - Political Science

#### BA - History

#### BA - Sociology



Sunantrani Mantaw  
4<sup>th</sup> rank



Thana Mounghang  
5<sup>th</sup> rank



Yashodha Mounghang  
7<sup>th</sup> rank



Leo Dhan  
8<sup>th</sup> rank



Christina Mossang  
10<sup>th</sup> rank

#### BCom



## UPDATES ON WOMEN POWER IN BARASAT VILLAGES

20 years of Bethany Sisters' intervention among the rural communities around Barasat, West Bengal, has brought remarkable changes in the lives of women through Self Help Groups (SHGs), Skill-training, awareness programmes and Community health programmes. Initial years were challenging, yet the persevering efforts of sisters have enthused the women to learn gradually. Today they have leadership qualities galore and are open to change.

At present, there are 72 SHGs. Most of the groups are very active and generative. They are able to generate income for their families through activities like Stitching, designing, running petty shops and supporting their men for small business, carpentry, Auto-rickshaw services etc.

As a result of varied awareness programmes, they have improved environmental hygiene in the locality. Early marriages of young girls are on great decline. All the girl children are sent to school just as the boys are. The women animators network with Government health centers, and volunteer to conduct their programmes like Pulse-polio in different villages. Classes on alternative systems of medicines have borne some results; most families have started to grow a few medicinal plants in their home-surroundings even though they have very limited land area in many cases.

During the recent outbreak of Dengue in the area the animators coordinated with the local PHCs. As a result necessary arrange-



ments were made. About 250 women were taught precautionary measures by the sisters and animators which helped in reducing the number of fatalities.

Our gratitude to all our benefactors and especially to Fr Pat and his team of volunteers from Ireland whose support has been steady over a decade!

*Sr Therese Simon BS  
Bethany Jan Vikas Samiti, Barasat*

## BIBLE-CAMP AT HOLY CROSS DIMAPUR

To give a sensation of oneness and to analyse the knowledge of our children in Bible, a Bible camp was organized at Holy Cross Church Dimapur on 21-22 October 2017 at the parish level to Classes from IV to X. Nearly 250 children participated in the camp. Fr Philip



Magh the Asst Parish priest, Bethany Sisters, Brothers from the Good Shepherd Seminary and Sunday catechism teachers were the resource persons to conduct the programme.

It included the enthroning of the Bible, followed by prayer, Bible Quiz, Bible Skits, Learning of Bible quotations on the spot, and Singing Bible Songs. It was good to see the children exhibiting a lot of interest and initiative to be acquainted with the Bible, their treasure!

*Sr Leena Miranda BS  
Holy Cross Convent, Dimapur*

## ADDRESSING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Bethany Social Service Center Silchar and Department of Social Work Assam University, Silchar jointly organized one day consultation cum panel discussion on the Topic 'Human trafficking - A Threat for the Society' on 14th Oct. 2017 at Holy Cross School auditorium. The purpose of the consultation was to create a common platform for all stakeholders in Cachar district, to jointly discuss the gravity of the issue and identify strategies for action.

The day's programme began with a brief introduction by Dr Aditi Nath the Asst. Prof., Dept. of Social Work, Assam University and Welcome address by Sr Mavis B.S. the Director of Bethany Social Service Center. The Chief Guest Mr A.S. Laxmanan, the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar Dist. was honoured in a traditional way by Dr Albin Joseph, Prof. Dept. of Social work Assam University and Sr Ordilia BS, the head of the Bethany Sisters, Silchar.



The chief guest Mr Laxmanan while referring to the problem of young children being employed, and the women trapped into sex work in Silchar brothel, urged the organizations and community at large to cooperate with the administration in tackling the crime of trafficking. The following were the speakers of the day.

- Ms Ramandeep Kaur, the Additional Superintendent of Police, Cachar
- Dr Amitab Singh, Faculty, dept. of Law, Assam University Silchar
- Ms. Sujata Dutta, Secretary, District Legal Services Authority, Silchar
- Mr. Pranabananda Das, Journalist, Dainik Jugashangha.
- Ms. Archana, Child Welfare Committee
- Mr. Shraban Guala, Child Line Programme Coordinator
- Ms Anuradha Singh, Project Director, Ujwala, Barak Valley Welfare Society
- Ms. Tania Laskar, member, Barak Human Rights Protection Committee
- Mr. Jyoti Prasad Bhattacharjee, Advocate
- Mr. V.K. Jain, Social Activist.

Among the other invitees were media persons from various news papers and television, Silchar Municipality representative, medical



doctors and members of Civil Society. There were also guests representing a few Schools and colleges of the area. The panel discussion was moderated by Mr. Albin Joseph, Faculty of Social Work. The discussion was held on various components of the problem, causes and target groups, identifying services available to victims, legal aspects of human trafficking, and most importantly how civil society collectively fight this issue. As part of the outcome, a few strategies to fight the problem were also elicited. On conclusion, Dr. Aditi Nath proposed the vote of thanks.

*Sr Mavis BS*

*Bethany Social Service Center, Silchar*

## BETHANY PROMOTIONAL SCHOOLS MEDIATING IMPACT

The intervention in the slums of Guwahati is kept going towards education of the children and women development. In addition to giving mainstreaming education in the 14 Bethany Promotional Schools (BPS), very many awareness building activities were held during the period to make the intervention more effective. 385 children have passed out from 20 BPS centers of Guwahati and Silchar who will be admitted to different classes at the formal schools for the year 2018.

After almost 15 years of long time association with this programme which also included the intervention at Silchar slums, the SOIR-IM (Swedish Organisation for Individual Relief) has phased out in end 2017 with respect to funds. The province is deeply grateful to SOIR-IM for being such a supportive humanitarian donor marked for its integrity, compassion and competence in the field of development.

### International Girl Child Day

International girl child day was celebrated by Bethany Social Service Centre(BSSC) on the 11th October 2017 at 2 government schools namely Datalpara Lower Primary School and Ittabhata Lower Primary School. At Datalpara 280 children and at Ittabhata 130 students of the respective schools participated. 6 Teachers of BPS, 10 students from Children Parliament (CP), 15 current students of BPS and 7 staff were in the organising team. 3 CP students- Sapna Begum aged 14 years, Banita Baniya-9 years, and Shelzali Sultana aged 13 years spoke on gender equality and the urgency of the protection to girl child. Various placards held out spoke stronger than words. After addressing the students, the teachers, CP members and staff



of Bethany joined together to paint the wall with symbolic messages on the occasion. The captions written on the wall in Assamese meant –‘Educate the girl child’, ‘Ban girl child marriage’ and ‘Give the Girl child wings to fly’.

### Annual day of Bethany Promotional Schools



Students of 14 BPS centers of Guwahati celebrated their Annual day on the 11th December 2017. The Students, their parents, Self help group members, passed out students and members of children parliament organized 2 hours of cultural programme at the Bethany School premises Guwahati. Around 460 people were present. Ms Sharon Jacob the programme officer at SOIR-IM which had supported the programme for past 15 years was present on the occasion. It was also a day of thanksgiving for their generous support. Sr Joy the Provincial Superior and her Council, Sr Rosia the headmistress of Bethany School and sisters of Bethany Convent Garchuk were present.

Students presented dances, action songs and Success story of the Children's parliament activity. SHG members performed a traditional prayer song and displayed their hand-made products. Success stories were narrated by one of the handicapped BPS past student who is pursuing his education and has received scholarship from government, one of the SHG members who has successfully started an IGA in tailoring, and a BPS teacher. It was a joy to see the performance of children who are deprived of the right to education otherwise, due to poor economic conditions.

### Awareness on human trafficking

An awareness programme on human trafficking was done through a 10 min. street play at 3 places from 27 July to 29th July 2017 by the members of children's parliament. The Resource persons were Nasir Hussain -teacher at Nayanjyoti Jatiya Vidyalaya of Katahbari, Kalpa Kalita- Social worker & member of Dhirenpara Nagarik Samiti and Biru Singh- teacher at Hindi Harijan L.P. School. They spoke about the types of human trafficking and some preventive measures. The children in general had a great learning as they enjoyed the street play. It helped the students and the participants to understand the kinds of trafficking and prevent themselves from being trafficked or to reduce such type of cases in their locality. In each place about 250 people were present.



*Sr Benedicta Aranha BS*

*Bethany Social Service Center, Guwahati*

