

# THE BETHANY CONNECTION



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



*Congratulations to  
St Joseph's Punjabi Medium School,  
Bathinda, Punjab*



# From the Provincial Superior

At the onset I wish you a very happy Christmas and a grace filled year 2020. At Christmas the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. The best gift Jesus gave us is to be with us. He is with us even today and accompanies us in a way we fail to comprehend. The gifts that we give during Christmas is also a sign of relationship with one another.

Fifty years ago, the Bethany Sisters gave the gift of a Punjabi Medium School to those who could not afford education in an English Medium School in Bathinda, Punjab. This gift of a value based education has benefitted a large number of marginalized who have risen high in life. On the occasion of the Golden Jubilee, I congratulate the Principal and staff of St Joseph's Convent Punjabi Medium School and recall with gratitude all those who gave a direction to the school. A bird's eye view of the growth of the school has the spotlight in this newsletter.

We have just finished celebrating the 59 Death Anniversary of Servant of God RFC Mascarenhas on 23 December and his values were recalled by all our institutions and efforts are made to live it in depth. He was a Gandhian at heart and believed that education in the villages can transform our country. Celebrating the 150th birthday of Gandhi we noticed much similarity between the Founder and Gandhi. Bethany Sisters have followed the footsteps of the Founder bringing fullness of life to all sections of the society. People of good will must come together to light up the lives of the downtrodden especially in the year 2020.



Sr Erasma BS

## In favour of the Poor

Sr Nalini, Samalkha, Haryana

An unimaginably large number of 633 migrant children are beneficiaries of Bethany Social Service at Samalkha. Our focus group in social work consists of the migrants who are construction workers, rickshaw pullers and factory workers. In the year 2018 a project was sanctioned by Arise Foundation for the prevention of human trafficking. Through this programme, the children are drawn to positive behaviour through education in the eight remedial centres close to the brick-kilns. The adolescents who work in various factories attend classes twice a week. Eight groups of migrant women receive skill training and participate in adult education.



The rickshaw pullers and construction workers receive their legal aid and updates on Govt. schemes time to time. The children participate enthusiastically in the 'Children's Parliament' gaining insights into their rights and privileges. Guided by twenty animators covering twenty two villages, eight centres of remedial classes, eight children's parliament, ten adolescent girls, six adolescent boys groups, ninety five kitchen garden, eight senior citizen's groups, shine bright motivating others to make their lives better. Along with Pragati Social Service Society of IMS Fathers, Bethany enlightens forty seven self help groups. Home remedies, herbal medicines, and massage oils prepared by Sr Lancia are a much sought after source of healing. The undying enthusiasm of Sudesh Rani, the long standing animator, is a strong prop to Sr Nalini, the director of social work at Samalkha.

Bethany aims at contributing its share in creating improved literacy, peace, harmony, justice and a pollution free environment.

# Editor's Note



The New Year will have dawned in its entire splendor by the time this Newsletter reaches you. I pray that for all of us New Year 2020 may be full of blessings filled with positive relationships, strength to face the ups and downs of life, never failing hope, deeper family bonds and opportunities for doing good.

Bethany Connection July to December 2019 issue has much to celebrate. The first to mention is, the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of St Joseph's Convent Punjabi Medium School, Bathinda, Punjab. Fifty years ago, the compassionate heart of Mother Gemma gave birth to this lofty project because of which thousands of underprivileged could profit from quality education. We remember with gratitude this noble soul and all those who followed her footprints.

Service Weeks, Provincial Assemblies, Educators' Meet, Diwali, Guru Nanak's 550th Birthday, 98th Foundation Day of Bethany, 150th Birthday of Mahatma Gandhi and Christmas were some other inspirational moments during the segment of July to December 2019. Compassion and love permeated the lives of the personalities mentioned above.

Jesus took a human form because of Compassion. I am inspired by an article on Christmas by Reverend Valson Thampu, the former Principal of St Stephen's College, Delhi. He says that the most significant feature of Christmas is the conspicuous absence of everything explicitly religious and ritualistic.

Commenting on Christmas Event he said that it is situated in the barest ingredients of life - a newborn baby, a woman in pain, a man in bewilderment, an inn shut tight against human need, a cattle-shed, shepherds, a star in the sky, three wise men and singing angels.

At the heart of Christmas is a universal insight. What human beings need is not religion, but God. Religion gets overrun by rituals, traditions and customs. It becomes progressively blind to the human predicament. God's core concern is for the individual.

Jesus is God revealed as person-specific love. As the Bible says, "God knows you by your name." Not only that. "He has seen you from your mother's womb." He invites you to abide in him and he wishes to abide in you. Christmas inaugurates a reassuring state of intimacy between God and human beings.

Jesus represents the counter-paradigm predicated on the greatness of serving, rather than in being served. The chasm that no political philosophy or model of government known hitherto has been able to bridge lies between serving and being served. The political good news in the Christmas Event is that good governance is indeed possible. But, for that to become real, rulers have to be servants and have to be ruled by God, the God of love. In Christmas, God as love takes on the form of a servant and rejected power.

The proof that God is in our midst is not that there are imposing temples and churches, but that strangers are transformed into neighbours; and neighbours into sisters and brothers. Christmas is, therefore, a festival of the neighbour - a sort of godly Diwali or festival of lights in which we light up life as neighbors to each other.

I wish a very meaningful Christmas to all of you. May the year 2020 be filled with Peace, Contentment and Love.

**Sr Grace Maria BS**





# A REASON TO REJOICE

St Joseph's Convent Punjabi Medium School at Bathinda, buzzed with the festivity of Golden Jubilee and the curtains came down on the year long celebrations on 23 November 2019. It was indeed a showcase of what one can do with the poor, because the school offers admission to the underprivileged.

The celebrations began at 10:00 am on 23 November, with a thanksgiving Eucharistic celebration offered by Rev. Dr. Angelo Rufino Gracious, Administrator of Jalandhar Diocese, along with 12 other priests. The prayers articulated God's fidelity and blessings of past 50 years.

In the evening at 4:00 pm, a well rehearsed flawless cultural programme presented, stole the heart of every one. Sr Rose Celine BS, the President of Bethany Educational



Society (BES), Sr Erasma BS, the Corporate manager and Dr Amrit Sethi were the Chief Guest and Guests of Honour respectively. Safar-e-Khwab, the main item, showcased the journey of beloved Father Founder's dream of educating the poor and the marginalized, especially the girls. As a tribute to the humble beginnings, the testing times and glorious achievements, five hundred students enacted the beginning and growth of Bethany Congregation, and the birth of the Punjabi Medium School. Watching the show every one heaved a sigh of gratitude and appreciation.

In her speech, Sr Rose Celine, the Chief Guest, recalled the marvelous ways in which the school has fulfilled its mission in imparting education, discipline, moral and spiritual values in the last 50 years. She honoured the former Principals and pioneer teachers and acknowledged the service of Mrs Harjit, the first teacher. The programme concluded with a grand finale signifying the need to foster the culture of peace and love. Many dignitaries, guests,

sisters, fathers, parents special invitees, former students and benefactors, who had in their own way contributed to make St. Joseph's Punjabi Medium School rise and shine, decorated the galaxy of audience.

## Remembering the Past

It was in the cold winter of January 1961 that the Bethany Sisters came to Punjab where St Joseph's School, Bathinda, was started on 12 January. Admissions poured in from all over Bathinda in quick succession, and the surrounding villages profited by the hostel that accommodated almost 300 students. The school shot to fame within a couple of years. But Mother Gemma, the Principal, was far from being happy as she observed the economically backward children grazing animals with no opportunity for good education. We must admit that unlike today, in 1961 Bathinda was considered backward in education. In 1969 moved with compassion and love, Mother Gemma started a Punjabi Medium School with 15 students on the verandha of the English Medium school. Her restless spirit saw that soon a building was constructed for the Punjabi School and the school was upgraded to Std X along with hostel facilities. Several Sisters- Sr Agnes Sequeira, Sr Gleva, Sr Melvis, Sr Leena D' Mello, Sr Tara, Sr Savina Nanda, and Sr Natal Patel shepherded the institution with full devotion as Principals. The onus of celebrating the Golden Jubilee was bestowed on Sr Jeevanlatha, the present Principal, with a great support from Sr Veena D' Souza, the Principal of English Medium School, and the staff.

The alumnae of the school spread all over and placed high is a proof that given the opportunity any one can shine and that



with good education the destiny can be changed. This was exactly what Fr RFC Mascarenhas, the Founder of Bethany Congregation, wanted his sisters to do. We can transform India only by transforming the villages and the prosperous Punjab is a witness to this. Bethany Congregation has contributed a drop in this transformation and this drop indeed is a significant one.





## THANK YOU OUR DEAR SISTERS

### Mr Rahul Aggarwal

(The Annual General Body Meeting of Bethany Social Service Society, Punjab, was held on 24 August. The vote of thanks at the General Body Meeting of 2019 was delivered by Mr Rahul Aggarwal. Here is an extract of his speech).

Distinguished guests, sisters, ladies and gentlemen, Having come to the end of today's General Body Meeting of BSSSP, it is my privilege to propose the vote of thanks. First of all, my heartfelt thanks are to Sr Erasma, the President of BSSSP and Sr Reshmi, the Secretary of BSSSP, for giving me the honour of delivering the vote of thanks to this august body of Bethany Social Service Society (Punjab) who is committed with indomitable courage to promote values and focus on dissemination of knowledge based education and service.

The BSSSP has left no stone unturned in creating a true paradigm shift and becoming a role model for this world to help the less fortunate brothers and sisters to be lifted out of their misery and be a useful resource. Indeed it is an inspiration for all of us. Compassion is a byword to be emulated.

Little did I know that the institution which has made me today one of the top corporate lawyer and auditor, is because of the embedded slogan 'Through Duty to Glory,'

the motto of Sacred Heart Convent School, Ludhiana, my alma mater. The reports presented shows how the Bethany Sisters and the animators are serving the poor without any distinction of religion or caste. The privilege given by inducting me and my senior



Mr Gunjeet Singh to this Society by Sr Chantal and Sr Maria Leena, will be cherished for lifetime. I thank all the members present for making this evening an eventful one. Let us carry on the tenets of the BSSSP -Compassion-with additional vigour and zeal.

Let us all give a thundering round of applause to Sr Erasma and her team and all those who are working hard to transform persons, society and institutions prompting them to take challenges, to move beyond themselves, imparting fullness and holistic growth to the poor in all dimensions . Thank you, dear Sisters, for your dedicated service to humanity. Good night.



## NUMBER 33 IS SIGNIFICANT

### Sr Prema Carvalho, Jaipur

The single digit number- 3 indicates an increase, expansion, spontaneity, encouragement, assistance, broad-minded thinking, skills and talent, communication, self-expression, and manifestation. The double three - Angel number 33 -shows the energies of blessings, companion, honesty, inspiration, courage, bravery, and discipline.

The 33<sup>rd</sup> Provincial Assembly of Northern Province held from 11 to 15 August 2019 at Provincial House, Karnal, was an expression of our spiritual vibration, broad minded thinking and expansion- a real number 33. Sr Erasma, the Provincial Superior, cast her spell on the thirty five participants, while she explained how important personal and communal discernment in the life of a Bethany sister is. In our daily life discernment and spiritual conversation can contribute to the increased quality of life, emphasized Father Keith, the resource person of the second day.

The meaningful and systematic presentation of the working report on each apostolate helped the group to count the blessings which our sisters share with the people in our ministry. It is an amazing and total self-giving by them without counting the cost. We firmly believe that we can always grow in alignment with our divine creative source by practicing discernment.





## A GLIMPSE OF THE ETERNAL CITY

Sr Arpan, Delhi

“Rome is the city of echoes, the city of illusions, and the city of yearning.”

It has been my greatest joy to walk the streets of Rome and pass through the myriads of unspeakable visual treat of the paintings in the Basilicas and the testimonies of faith in the lives of the martyrs depicted in Vatican, in and around Rome. The unfathomable history takes us back to the time of Jesus. Our mere eyes and limited mind cannot comprehend the elegance and vastness of the Basilicas. One stands in amazement in front of these mighty churches unable to explain in full what one saw at the end of the day. Meeting Pope Francis, the living saint of our time was a life time experience. I was speechless in front of him. Holiness beams through his pure smile. Inexplicable was my delight when I held his hand and beheld his saintly face.

It was a rare privilege to represent India as the President of AMRAT to attend the first General Assembly of Talitha Kum (The International Network of Consecrated Life Against Trafficking in Persons) in Rome with the 86 delegates from 52 Countries representing 48 National Networks. I felt Women Religious have the greatest power to network for a great cause. Sharing a special togetherness with members from across the globe and standing up for those who are choked under the burden of human trafficking, the modern slavery evoked in me greater commitment for the



## IGNITING CHANGE

Bethany Convent, Buradi, vibrates with new energy and a new field of ministry. Green and colourful medicinal plants and varieties of vegetables seem to be an apt prelude to the ambience that pervades the campus. The premises are blessed by being given an opportunity to serve the people in search of holistic health. On 4 September 2019 Sr Erasma, the Provincial Superior, inaugurated the Holistic Health Centre and Bethany Jeevan Dhara Counselling Centre. Marriage and family concerns, Child behavior and parenting concerns, Domestic violence, Anger management, Depression management, Unresolved grief, Sexuality issues, Stress related disorders, Communication skills, Geriatric issues, Substance addiction, Compulsive gambling, Financial stress and Medical issues are some of the areas of this Counselling Centre. The Centre, headed by Sr (Dr) Preeti Margaret and assisted by Sr Eugene and Sr Sukhesini, is a boon to this area. A beaming Sr Preeti narrated how meeting with Dr Ravi Balachandran, the Family and Child Care Minister, at her residence and presenting a copy of her thesis to the minister was a rewarding experience to her. Buck up Sr Preeti, Sr Eugene and Sr Sukhesini.

The service of our Sisters at Burari is indeed *Igniting Change*



## CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME

Sr Priyanjali, Karnal

It was a rare chance for the 35 Sisters and animators of Socio-Medical apostolate of Northern Province, to attend a Capacity building programme in the capital city- Delhi- from 4 to 6 September 2019. For the already experienced leaders and animators this workshop was a strengthening of their knowledge and skills on topics such as Children's parliament, Domestic workers rights, Child protection policy, Documentation and Health talk. The credit for organizing a superior quality workshop goes to Sr Stella D' Souza, the coordinator of this ministry. The ten minutes of report presentation by each Centre enriched the participants by gaining a bird's eye view of the tremendous service each Centre renders.





# DECENNIAL CELEBRATIONS OF TALITHA KUM

## Sr Arpan BS, Delhi

"Together against human trafficking, weaving a web in Love," was the theme of the first Assembly to mark the 10th anniversary of Talitha Kum International, held in Rome.

From 21 to 27 September 2019, eighty six women religious representatives of different networks of five continents and forty eight countries and regions, along with a few men religious, gathered in Rome for the decennial celebrations of Talitha Kum International. This first Assembly of Talitha Kum under the aegis of Union of Superiors General (UISG,) was a time of praying, singing, reflecting, socializing and sharing dreams in order to strengthen the ministry for another decade. It was a time to recognize the work they have already accomplished and celebrate the lives of the survivors of trafficking, whom they had helped and supported. Moreover, this meet offered opportunities to be acquainted with the best practices of others through group work and exposition of their work in their countries.

Together they met the Pope, who commended their work and met them individually urging them to continue their commitment. According to Pope Francis, Talitha Kum, by uniting congregations in the shared ministry, is an example for the whole church.

Talitha Kum in 10 years has coordinated fifty two religious networks in ninety countries with 2000 workers, more than 15,000 survivors, reaching out to 2,00,000 people, preventing trafficking and creating awareness.

Sr Arpan BS, President of AMRAT, Sr Meera RGS, Executive Member and Sr Jyoti BS, Founder-President, participated in the meeting as the representatives of AMRAT Talitha Kum, India.

It is a matter of pride that Sr Jyoti Pinto BS was one of the 10 Sisters who received recognition for pioneering the work of Talitha Kum in South Asian countries (Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) in 2009 when she was the Superior General, Vice president of CRWI and Executive member of UISG Council.



In pursuit of this endeavour, the birth of AMRAT took place in November 2009 in the first workshop held from 18-25 Novemebr 2009 at Raia, Goa, under the leadership of Sr Jyoti. She became the Foundress of AMRAT - Talitha Kum, South Asia. The Network was named AMRAT in the second workshop held in May 2010 at Dhyana Vana, Kolkatta, West Bengal. Began with forty four Sisters from twenty Congregations in 2009, AMRAT has reached out to seven hundred sisters of seventy congregations and inspired them to join in the struggle of the vulnerable people of our society.

It is worth mentioning that Pope Francis names human trafficking as a 'crime against humanity,' because it denies the human dignity of the victim, seeing him or her only as a piece of merchandise to be used to enrich or give pleasure to another.

Human trafficking, "in its multiple forms, is a wound in the humanity of those who endure it and those who commit it," said the Pope, on 11 April, 2019, addressing the closing session of a Vatican Conference.

I feel humbled to be the Indian President of AMRAT and to be actively involved in this ministry and inspire my fellow sisters to rescue and assist the victims of trafficking.





## EFFORTS AFOOT TO BOOST ACCOUNTANCY SKILLS

### Sr Sujata, Solan, HP

A seminar on Financial Management and Legal Affairs organized by Sr Gracy D' Souza, the Provincial Procurator of Northern Province, at Ish Kripa, Karnal, from 30 September to 3rd October was indeed a time of learning and reviewing the past learning on the administration of temporal goods.

The resource person Rev. Fr Alex Gnanapragasam SJ, Sr Christine, the Procurator General, and Sr Gracy, guided the Sisters to get acquainted with the changing account pattern and updating the accounts accordingly. A doyen in accounts, Fr Alex G. SJ, enlightened the Sisters on legal affairs especially on Trust and Society registered under 12A, 12AA, its benefits and conditions. He also dealt with GST, FCRA, TDS, and related topics to the Society/Trust like corpus fund, donations, 80G, budgets, new laws on Income tax applicable to Society and Trust, cash transaction flow, and changes in FCRA regulations.



The area of accounting poses many challenges and we have to be ready to face the new challenges keeping in mind the vision and goal of our Congregation. The seminar was a clarion call for us to be the good stewards of the temporal goods entrusted to our care.

## EDUCATION IS A MISSION

Today Education is politicized, industrialized and commercialized. The shadows of our governing system affect our schools but we need to hold on to a value based and skill based education. This point was the theme picked up for an Educator's Meet held from 9-11 August 2019 at Ish Kripa, Karnal. Our schools need to attend to the seven levels of consciousness in order to reach our goal- Transformative Education for Fullness of Life for All. This transformation is to evolve from the lowest levels of consciousness starting from Survival and moving to Relationship, Self Esteem, Transformation, Internal Cohesion, Making a difference and Service. The 40 participants discussed ways and means of Character Building and Nation Building as a part of our education. Organized by Sr Helima, the co-coordinator of Education and animated by Fr. Stanly SVD from Bombay this seminar had much to offer to the participants.

In a second workshop conducted by Fr Paul Pudussery, on 30 November 2019, the New Educational policy and its implications were highlighted. Education is mission for us because it forms the men and women of our country.





# PILGRIMAGE TO BETHANY

For the staff of Barnala and Ludhiana Sacred Heart Convent Schools, keeping foot on the sacred land of Mangalore was like revisiting the time when the Founder RFC Mascarenhas lived and treaded the nook and corner of Mangalore, the birth place of Bethany Congregation. Fifty five teachers from Ludhiana and hundred odd students and staff from Barnala, visited Mangalore in the month of September 2019. Teachers of Ludhiana have deep and significant memories to share with us. Here is a sneak-peek.

"Distinctive experience in Bethany House, the Founder's Cottage and warmth received at St Theresa's Convent School were an awakening to the selfless love of Bethany Congregation.



(Mrs Simmi Aggarwal and Mrs Tej Singh)



Green pastures of Mangalore, the spirituality around Bendore, unconventional rainfall of Mangalore, the soothing atmosphere of Pastoral Centre led me to my own secret enclosure. (Mrs Pankil Priya Lamba)

Watching the things used by the Founder, the clothes worn by him and the realization that he actually had touched those walls and his feet actually touched those floors were awe inspiring. (Mrs Sushmita Walia)



We had a rocking time clicking our heels on the floor and tapping our feet on the folklore of Mangalore. The Spirituality Centre, the green moss on the wall, the turbulent Arabian Sea, the clear hills and the fragrant air lifted our spirits and mesmerized our souls. Founder's tomb brought serenity to my soul and divinity to my heart. (Mrs Rohita Seigal)

Being a Bethany student and then a Bethany teacher for the past 23 years was a dream come true when I saw the Bethany headquarters. For me it was a daughter visiting her father

and that is what held me spell bound when we went to pray at the Founder Father's tomb at St Sebastian's Church. (Mrs Satwinder Kaur)



Visit to Mother House, Bendore, gave us an in depth knowledge of the culture and the values of Bethany Educational Society. Experiencing the hospitality of Bethany Sisters made me feel my belonging to the vast family of Bethany. (Mrs Gurmeet Kaur)



Praying near the tomb of the Founder filled me with solace. Visiting a place where our school has its roots was a life time experience. At the Pastoral Centre where we stayed I enjoyed watching the coconut trees and listening to the orchestra of crickets and other insects around.



(Mrs Ritu Malhan)

Serene, simple and pristine St Sebastian's Church, the Bethany Mother House, and the museum that houses memories of Fr Founder made me discover my moral compass. His spirit of compassion pervades all over Bethany. (Mrs Nandini Sharma)



The staff and students have become

increasingly galvanized by this visit and today's moment has become tomorrow's memory. You are welcome to Bethany at all times.



## Students of Sacred Heart, Barnala, at the Founder's Park (Mangalore)





# THE CENTENARY HOUSING PROJECT OF BETHANY



A house for oneself is the fulfillment of a cherished dream. In the Northern Province, Mr Chander Shekhar Azad of Barnala became the first recipient of a house under the Housing Project Scheme of Bethany Congregation to celebrate the Centenary of Bethany in 2021. On 22 July 2019, the house named Ashirvad was blessed at Barnala by Rev Fr George Antony, the Parish Priest and Sr Erasma, the Provincial Superior, inaugurated it by handing over the key of the house to Mr Azad and family. What was only a dream and wish for Mr Azad became a reality because of the support of Sr Shirley, the Superior of the Convent and Sr Lyra, the Principal of the School. May this home be an abode of peace and prosperity for Azad's family.

## REMEMBERING FR. RFC MASCARENHAS

Fr. RFC Mascarenhas Servant of God, and Founder of Bethany Congregation was honoured on 16 July 2019 as the convents, schools and other centres celebrated the 98th Foundation Day of Bethany Congregation. Besides prayers, the main focus was on the poor. School children visited slums and non formal schools and further engaged in various humanitarian activities. Large hearted friends of Bethany Mrs Ayesha Somal, Dr Inderpreet Kaur and Mrs Kiran Jaidka willingly render service at Community Centre in Ludhiana. 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2019, the 59th Death Anniversary of the Founder was also kept up with much grandeur and involvement in service oriented activities.. Both these celebrations gave ample opportunities for Bethany staff and students of educational and socio-medical centres to practice the Core Values of love, compassion, truth, justice and respect for the other.



Mrs Ayesha Somal



Dr Inderpreet Kaur



Mrs Kiran Jaidka

## BLESSING OF THE GROTTA

Sacred Heart Convent, Barnala, is much in the news these days. The campus is always abuzz with activities. The latest is the blessing of a Grotto of Mother Mary in the campus, overlooking the play ground and the path leading to the convent as if Mother Mary is watching over the safety of every one. Of course, one can always be sure of her protection and care. The Grotto was blessed on 9 November 2019 by Fr George Antony, the Parish Priest paying paeans to Mamma Mary.



*Imparting skill education to the non-formal students*



## TRUE RELIGION

### Dr Sanjay Aggarwal, Sai Hospital, Solan, HP

True religion consists in giving, sharing, forgiving and loving. Holy festivals like Christmas indeed is a time of sharing and enriching the poor with our service and abundance.



I have been in touch with the Bethany Sisters for the last several years and feel the divinity present in these sisters. My wife Dr Savita and I have been brought up in schools manned by sisters and the values instilled by them have become a part of me.

Besides being a doctor, I have the responsibility of looking after the service and spiritual activities of Sri Sathya Sai Seva organization, Himachal Pradesh. Just as Jesus did, Sri Sathya Sai Baba also spoke about the divinity inherent in each one of us. His message of love all; serve all; help and never hurt another give us guidance in serving the society through our services.

Study classes for slum children, community kitchens, disaster management, adopted schools, medical services,

old age help, Bal Vikas for children, and spiritual activity with divine study circles are some of the important activities which we undertake through our Society. Bethany Sisters are a great help in physical as well as a moral support for us. God has transformed us, the likeminded people from strangers into good friends.

It's an annual feature in Solan to have holiday classes for children. This year in the first week of December our five day camp held in Sai Sanjeevani Hospital, Solan, attracted 300 students from 12 different schools. Human values formed the basis of these classes conducted by Bal Vikas teachers, Dr Savita and Mr Minaketan Sahu.

It is a practical camp where moral education goes to the children through videos, games, storytelling and discussions. Sr Isabella Agnes, the Principal of St Luke's School, graced the occasion and gave us the Christmas blessings and message.

As the New Year dawns we pray for the continuous outpouring of God's Grace on all to carry on doing good in the world for which we have been chosen. Let us spread peace and harmony where ever we are and raise our unredeemed human actions into divine ones. This is true religion.



## 550th BIRTHDAY OF GURU NANAK

### Mrs Baljit Kaur and Pinky Choudhary, Ludhiana

Nagar Kirtan is the procession of Sikh Sangat through a town singing holy hymns. It aims at bringing the message of God to the doorstep of the community. It is normally led by the 'Panj Piaare' followed by one main float which carries Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The Sangat walks behind Guruji, singing Shabads.

A grand Nagar Kirtan was taken out on 3 November 2019, from Gurudwara Singh Sabha, Sarabha Nagar, to commemorate the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, the first guru of Sikhs. The Sacred Heart fraternity of Sarabha Nagar, Ludhiana, welcomed the Nagar Kirtan at the School gate. They paid their obeisance to the holy Guru Granth Sahib on this occasion. 'Parshad' in the form of sweets and fruits was distributed by the school. *Siropa* the robe of honour was given to sisters by the Gurudwara Management. It was a heart touching experience to see the devotion of the devotees who were all engrossed in the sanctity of this Nagar Kirtan.





# CONGRATULATIONS

## International accolade

We express much appreciation to Sr Jyoti, for the compassionate heart of hers that reached out to the victims of human trafficking and urging the Religious in India to get involved in anti human trafficking movements, pioneering the work of Talitha Kum in South Asia. Sr Jyoti was awarded at the 10th General Assembly of Talitha Kum International Network of Consecrated Life against Trafficking in Persons, held in Rome in September 2019. Congratulations, Sr Jyoti.



reaching out to the persons in need. We wish her long years of service.

## Kudos to Sr (Dr) Reena D'Souza

Sr Reena D' Souza was awarded with PhD degree at SHUATS, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh in collaboration with IIT Mandi, Himachal Pradesh, on 14 Aug 2019. An exciting and complicated topic, 'Graphene oxide supported heterogeneous acid catalysts, for the esterification of oleic acid and conversion of waste cooking oil to bio diesel' was thoroughly researched by her. It is an eco -friendly research and would be of use in the production of renewable energy. If researched further, it would be a great contribution for the industries. Sr Reena had wide opportunities of being in various Indian and foreign universities and IIT's during her research, offering her tremendous fortuity of interacting with diverse cultures. On 30<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2019, Sr Reena was felicitated by the Provincial and her team during the educators' meet.



## Another feather in her cap

Commitment, compassion to the poor, determination and perseverance are the hall marks of Sr (Dr) Preeti Margaret, a doctor in Unnani Medicine. She was congratulated by the Provincial Superior and team during the Provincial Assembly held in August 2019 for getting an MSc in Psychiatric Nursing. We wish all the best to Sr Preeti and the Sisters at Burari, who are engaged in their new initiative there.



## Adulations to Sr Lancia

Participants of the Educator's Meet held in August 2019 at Ish Kripa, Karnal, applauded her when the Provincial Superior and the team felicitated Sr Lancia for her book Secret Wisdom of Mother Earth.

Nothing can stop Sr Lancia, an experienced nurse, from

## APPRECIATION

Appreciation to the pre-novices of Lumding, Assam, who along with their formators Sr Vijaya and Sr Jessica spent the entire month of September 2019 in two deep interior Garo villages-Sonitpur and Jamagudi of Guwahati. Their service to the poor was much appreciated by the villagers. This is exactly keeping in tone with what Jesus said "Whatever you do to the least of my brothers, you do unto to me."

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