

In-touch

Creating Synergy



Bethany Sisters
Northeast Province

A Newsletter of the Northeast Province of Bethany Sisters

Volume VI Issue 1

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Message



Greetings of Peace and Joy to the readers of IN TOUCH!

It appears that the six months of 2017 have passed so quickly. This could mean that we had been busy and engaged which is a good sign.

These months have taken a good toll on the preparation for GST [Goods and Services Tax]. Some magic wand of total wellbeing for all is proposed to the existing ills of economy in the country. Will it meet the expectations and what will be its real benefits to us the common people when it is introduced on 1st July 2017? We will have to wait and see for a while.

There is no doubt that in the present scenario in the Country in general and in the North Eastern States in particular, where there is restiveness, we keep wondering what role can we play? Is there a place at all in today's society, for the type of contribution we religious can make? There is certainly a place we may say, that is because we do not want to accept that we are nearly irrelevant. There has to be something dramatic, or in today's parlance a radical 'paradigm shift' in every aspect of our life! Relevance of our spirituality do we say? Read 'The WEEK' of June 25, 2017. The entire issue is dedicated to the "Hindu spirituality abroad", that is making rounds in the world. It is amazing to see how it sells in the West!

Month of July brings us to another important event, the 96th Foundation Anniversary of Bethany. From now on there are 4 years when we will be into the Centenary Event of Bethany. The closer we arrive, greater is the urgency to delve deeper into the preparations and the transformative factor of our consecrated life. Our study and tests on our Constitutions certainly is an important tool to explore the depth or shallowness of living it in our day to day life!

Let us wake up to make a meaningful sense of our life and do something that will take a new course. We pray for the newness of the Spirit to guide us, God of surprises to wake us up from our stupor!

Sr M Joy BS

Provincial Superior

Editorial

Glass for Diamonds??

"Patriotism cannot be our final spiritual shelter. I will not buy glass for the price of diamonds and I will never allow patriotism to triumph over humanity as long as I live." - Rabindranath Tagore.



Friends, this may be the uppermost sense today that could start uniting we as Indians and global beings given the growing rifts that make us less comfortable. We are so much into online world today that we may forget the ground zero. Coming out of our ghettos we see many a divisive factor in the air overweighing those points for unification. Therefore, the kind of religiosity that I am in is a matter of concern. Has it led me to some sort of spirituality? Is there something that has sprung from my connectedness with God, or, from my interiorisation of our 'Charism'?

Getting closer to our hundred years as Bethany family we question ourselves as to how we have affected our Nation's wellbeing. Where are those young minds in thousands that we have taught? Are they nearer to safeguarding the rights and dignity of our fellow beings? Even if there are a few from our own schools, and that is true, have resorted to sectarian ideologies, it should disturb us.

Learn to swim against the currents...I was told. Yes, this has to be today, that we affect our society with the conviction of having God in us to make peace in the socio-political sphere. It is nothing less than the spiritual activism given the huge risk it involves. Let's value diamonds and not the glass which is cheap. We want to forget about our online activism and whatsapp debates, but discover strategies to build people, those in fear and seclusion.

Sr Clara Mendonca BS



Sr M Berlinda BS

Born : 02-11-1949

Professed : 16-05-1970

Entered eternity : 24-02-2017

celebration concelebrated by 9 priests. The Superior General read the Decree of the Canonical Erection of the community stating Sr Lolia Juliana as the Superior and Sr Clara Mendonca and Sr Mary Grace Bhengra as the members.

A felicitation cum cultural programme was organized wherein the dignitaries were honoured. The welcome address by Sr Joy, the Provincial Superior, Cultural dances by the Bethany Champions, message from the dignitaries, vote of thanks by Sr. Edleburgh were some of the highlights of the programme.

No doubt the establishment of the mission at Umsning and most specially the promotion of human resource through Leadership skills, spiritual quest, holistic health, livelihood promotion, and promotion of peace and justice for the youth, men and women of the northeast will surely contribute to social change. The province experienced the abundant blessings of God through the Founder on his Ordination anniversary.

Courtesy: www.bethanycongregation.org



Bethany Institute of Resource Development (BIRD) Inaugurated

March 4, 2017 was a memorable day in the history of the North East Province, as it witnessed the special event of the Inauguration of the Bethany Institute of Resource Development (BIRD) which was a long planned project. It was a double event -the Inauguration of BIRD and Opening of Bethany Convent Umsning. Indeed it was a blessing for the province to have Rev Sr Rose Celine, the Superior General gracing the occasion.



The Inauguration was solemnized by the cutting of the ribbon by Sr Rose Celine, the Superior General, unveiling the plaque by Sr Joy, the Provincial Superior and blessing by Most Rev Dominic Jala, the Archbishop of Shillong. Sr Clara Mendonca, the Director of the Institute led the group through the significance of the event which was followed by the Eucharistic



Province-level meetings

Annual meet on Social Concerns

It was indeed a rare opportunity to be part of the annual meet of sisters involved in social and health mission from 8 to 9 March 2017. Special concerns for discussion and planning were Human trafficking, rescue of migrant children, and child welfare.



At the outset Sr Joy the Provincial Superior exhorted us on being watchful to the needs of the poor. A big portion of the first day was the interaction with Smti Rosie Kalita, APS, A.D.C.P. (Crime), who enlightened citing various cases on her adventurous rescue operations as a team and the sacrifices involved therein. All were touched by her life example as she is an active and vibrant officer with commitment and compassion. She gave some tips as how sisters can train the young minds to be productive.

We also had the chance to interact with Mr Surojit And Mr Prabhakar, the team members of Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA)



who shared their experience on rescuing children at risk.

Along with this the sharing on the works done at various socio-medical units of Bethany Social Service Society enriched the two days' coming together.

Sr Dr Prema Misquith BS

Bethany Convent, Kathalcherra, Tripura

Youth Ministry and Vocation Animation

The first half of March 10, 2017 was set apart for planning and evaluation of the youth ministry. Sr Edleburgh BS the Youth ministry coordinator of the Province explained the social change we need to aim at through training



Bethany Champions. She stressed on the need to promote a transparent bureaucracy in the society by way of training young people in leadership. Sr Mary Diki the Provincial Councillor moderated the reporting session. Zone wise action plan was presented at the end.

Vocation animation was the topic for discussion in the afternoon. The province coordinator Sr Edleburgh highlighted the need for promoting genuine vocations. Reports and action plans followed.

Courtesy: Province documentation

On Education and Hostel Apostolate

11 and 12 March 2017 were the days to evaluate the Education and hostel mission of the province. Sr Edleburgh the coordinator of the ministry welcomed Sr Joy the Provincial and the participants namely headmistresses, Principals and hostel wardens for the meeting. Quoting Pope Francis, Sr Joy asked the sisters to acquire the wisdom of God and the wisdom of the Spirit, inviting them to be spiritually strengthened and congregationally oriented.

Fr Dr Paul Puduserry CSC the resource person spoke on Re-imaging Education in the 21st century. He made presentations on Changing workplace and Changing Skills, Education revolution, and Traits of an effective teacher.

In the afternoon session there were a total 23 reports presented from different institutions. In her concluding remarks Sr Joy reminded the heads of the schools to make the schools pro-poor and pro-people.

The Action Plan for Education Apostolate was based on the mandate of XV & XVI General Chapters and V Provincial Chapter. To excel in bringing fullness of life, unravelling the creative potentials, forming our students

for tomorrow and not for yesterday, training them in life skills besides academics, to educate the students to be good human beings and serve the society, Empower the girl child by giving leadership were some



of the decisions in the plan.

On 12th March reports on hostel apostolate were discussed. Some of the decisions made were- Provide hostel facilities for working women and migrant youth wherever possible, Region wise hostel students exchange program, all community members to be involved in hostel ministry and Career guidance to students including religious life.

Courtesy: Province documentation

Our God experience at Attapady

We the 14 juniors along with Sr Elizabeth Uchoi began our pilgrimage to Attapady, Sehion Retreat Centre, Kerala, on 15th Jan. from Guwahati Provincial House. The sight was beautiful that at first glance our hearts wondered about the Lord. We went with loaded baggage but when we stared into His eyes we could unload ourselves on to Him and in-turn were filled with His SPIRIT. It was a turning point to imbibe the holistic life of JESUS and MARY.



We were indeed privileged to experience and witness miracles that were taking place. It was inspiring, enlightening, shocking and piercing to ponder on the Word of God explained to us. There was so much to learn together with so many questions, answers, truths, testimonies and inner conflicts. It was a moment of grace to witness our past and present right before our eyes through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, counseling, healing and deliverance prayer. Each one has experienced healing in different ways-physical, mental and spiritual.

Srs Margaret, Silvia Pao & Agatha.

6th Yr Juniors, NE Province.

News from Formation houses

First Profession- Journey towards Christ

On 25th April 2017, ten novices (4 for NEP-Srs Veinai, Mesta Mary, Seema & Emilia, 3 for NP and 3 for EP) hailing from five states were vested with the religious garment as a symbol of putting on Christ, at the Novitiate in Barasat. Sr Joy, Sr Jyoti and Sr Shaila the provincials of Northeast, North, and Eastern Provinces respectively were present on the occasion.

Their hearts sang the melody of gratitude as they entered the prayer hall with lighted candles and vows paper along with their parents beside them while the choir sang 'Charano me tere aaye hum'. The homily by Archbishop Thomas D'Souza of Kolkata encouraged them to give their total self to God as Mary our mother did. Singing "Ecce Ancilla



Domini" gave them the assurance that they fully belong to God.

The Eucharist was concelebrated by 16 priests along with Archbishop Thomas D'Souza. Apart from their parents a good number of Bethany sisters from different communities as well as the religious from the neighbouring communities were present. The felicitation programme and a family meal followed.

Sr Gurpreet and Sr Veinai

1 year Juniors, Bethany Novitiate, Barasat

At the portals of Novitiate

Our desire and longing to be initiated into the Novitiate was fulfilled on 13 June, 2017 when we, the 8 (2 from NEP and 6 from NP and EP) Pre-novices were received into the Novitiate by Sr Joy, the Provincial Superior of North East Province.



lamps in our hands. Sr. Jyoti the Provincial Superior of North Province in her reflections asked us to listen to God, to make right choices, follow Jesus and surrender to him totally.

Our hearts overwhelmed with joy and happiness when our seniors put up an apt felicitation programme. We thank God for Sr Ruth our Directress, and Sr Monica and Sr Cleopha for making 13 June 2017 a memorable day in our life.

Sr Archana and Sr Florence

1 Year Novices, Bethany Novitiate, Barasat

Seeking the hidden treasure Jesus

On 14 June 2017 sixteen candidates were initiated at Sacred Heart Pre-Novitiate, Behala by Sr Jyoti the Provincial Superior of the Northern Province. The presence of Sr Joy the Provincial Superior of the North East Province, Sr Bridget and Sr Mary Diki the Provincial Councillors doubled their joy. Sr Bridget through the scriptural message called each



one of them to focus on Jesus alone who is their treasure and the goal.

During the felicitation Sr Joy reminded the young entrants, of the importance of pre-novitiate stage and encouraged them to be faithful to their Vocation. Sr Clare Toppo and Sr Charilin will assist them in their formation during the year.

Josyna Pao and J. Sonia

Sacred heart Pre-Novitiate, Behala

Come and see Programme at Guwahati

19 candidates from different parts of the Northeast region were initiated into their first stage of Formation 'Come and See' on 18 June 2017 at Bethany Provincial House Guwahati. They entered the house of prayer



with lamps in their hands and with a desire to know the Lord. Sr Joy the Provincial Superior initiated them formally to the one year course of their formation. They were offered a small cross each as a sign of their choice for Christ and of nurturing their call for religious life. They responded before the Lord that they volunteer to follow Christ while the congregation sang in thanksgiving.

Staff Reporter

Celebrating Final Profession

Indeed 1st May 2017 was a significant day in the annals of North East Province as 6 sisters hailing from 6 states of North East India made their Perpetual Profession at Bethany Provincial House Guwahati. Sr Lucy Gonmei from Manipur, Sr Sulahela from Nagaland, Sr Chandita Sangma from Tripura, Sr Jyoti Xalxo from Assam, Sr



Rebecca Lalzamliani from Mizoram and Sr Bankyntiew from Meghalaya vowed to follow Christ forever.

The Eucharistic celebration was solemnized by the presence of Most Rev John Moolachira, Archbishop of Guwahati along with 14 priests, Religious brothers, Sisters and relatives of the professed sisters. The sisters to be professed were led to the Eucharistic Celebration accompanied by their parents by a traditional Assamese dance in symphony with Bethany School Band. Sr Lilita BS the General Councillor and the delegate of the Superior General received the Vows in the presence of the witnesses Sr Joy the Provincial Superior and Sr Sandhya the Asst Provincial Superior. After the Mass a short felicitation and a common meal was scheduled.



Sr Bankyntiew and Sr Sulahela

Bethany Provincial House, Guwahati

The follow-up training for Bethany Champions

Thirty youngsters from 4 Schools of Bethany Sisters including the College at Manmow, Namsai came together for an extended training of Bethany Champions from 1st to



4th March 2017 at Bethany Convent School Guwahati. Most of them had attended the initial trainings. It was organised from the Province

sessions in Page Designs in the computer lab. Web designing, Advertising and Branding, Feature Story Writing and Creative Writing were some of the topics dealt with. The need for the church to use social media as their most effective method of outreach was very much emphasized.

At the Closing Ceremony Most Reverend Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas the CBCI Secretary General was the Chief Guest who gave away Certificate of participation to all the participants.

Sr Edleburgh BS

Bethany Provincial House, Guwahati

Youth ministry Training at Bethel

North Eastern Regional Youth Commission (NERYC) had organised a Youth Ministry training programme at 'Bethel', Barapani, Meghalaya from 9 to 13 February 2017. There were total 43 participants from different dioceses. 5 Bethany sisters too were a part of it, while Sr Edleburgh BS was one of the 8 resource persons.

The training focused on addressing the present concerns of the youth while some of the topics were:



Youth ministry-challenges and opportunities, Empowerment of youth in social and political field, and leadership of youth in the Church. The presence of Bishop John Thomas of the diocese of Itanagar and the Chairman of NERYC as well as Fr Varghese the Vicar General of Guwahati Archdiocese encouraged the participants in making themselves agents of change.

Sr Sanjukta BS

Bethany Convent, Guwahati

We care to build Families

Sr Sandhya and Sr Hilda Paula attended 10 weeks course on Family apostolate from 15th February to 30th April 2017 at Holy family Convent, Gurgaon Haryana. There were 17 participants from 6 Religious Congregations. There were many topics for learning to make the course inclusive; main among these were- Basic Counseling skills, Theology of marriage and related church teachings, Canon law and legal views on marriage and family, Developmental Psychology and Pastoral Theology.

It included a full course on 'Home mission' after which the trainees were sent to 3 parishes of Delhi Archdiocese.



This was very experiential as it helped the trainees to listen to, counsel if needed, interact and pray with the families.

Sr Sandhya BS

Bethany Provincial House, Guwahati

Health training at CHAI

In view of gearing the health mission of the province towards alternative health care, Sr Teresa Liani and Sr Teresa Lallianpui attended the 3 months course on "Community health enablers". It was held for Sister Nurses at CHAI (Catholic Health Association of India) Hyderabad from

5thJanuary to 4th April 2017.

As part of the course they had learnings on topics like Herbal medicine, Acupuncture and

Acupressure, Su-jok and Reflexology, Naturopathy, Yoga, Counselling skills & Rehabilitation Techniques, Spiritual care, De-addiction Counselling, Elderly care, Advocacy and lobbying, and Documentation and soft skills. It also included one month certificate course accredited by Telangana Government on Holistic Palliative Care.

Sr Teresa Lallianpui BS

Bethany Heath Center, Sihphir-Mizoram

A Demonstration to raise the Mission Bar

The 17 junior sisters including the newly finally professed came together at Bethany Provincial House Guwahati for a ten days programme geared to re-orient to Bethany's mission. It was held from 25 May 2017 to 04 June 2017.

Sr Joy the Provincial Superior enlightened the sisters on Personal integration which is so very basic to any fruitful mission. Sr Sandhya, Sr Edleburgh and Sr Carmine capacitated the sisters in the area of Pastoral care, Education and Media, and Temporal administration respectively.

Sr Leena Shareena gave a hands-on experience through arranging practical classes at the Bethany School and the juniors rated themselves in their skill and expertise. Sr Benedicta Aranha and Sr Sunitha Jyoti presented the relevant issues in the social and health apostolate. A visit to the slums and to Bethany promotional schools among the migrants rejuvenated in the juniors the elements of the Founding Charism- 'to bring good news the poor'.

Sr Anandi Kerketta BS

Bethany Convent, Guwahati

Home Mission in the Province

Home mission was initiated in 2 Centres of the Province, viz. Kathalcherra and Viswema during 6 to 12 January 2017. The sisters who participated in this mission

were given due orientation by Sr Joy the Provincial Superior and Sr Sandhya the Pastoral coordinator, prior to their arrival at mission places.

In the state of Tripura, it was in Kathalcherra under the Good Shepherd Parish in the diocese of Agartala. This parish

has 28 sub centers in the far out villages. Here the Home mission was launched under the leadership of



Sr Sandhya, and with a good support from Fr Lancy D'Souza csc the Parish priest and Sr Suman the Superior of Bethany Convent



Kathalcherra. 25 sisters who knew Bengali or Darlong language were chosen.

The Sisters were warmly welcomed in the parish. 7 villages were chosen and sisters stayed in these villages in groups of 3 to 4. They visited the Catholic families, listened to them, shared the Word of God and prayed with them. In the evenings people gathered after their daily work for common Rosary and sisters gave instructions on Sacraments.

It was a thrilling experience for sisters to walk long distances, experience hardships in locating the houses, and visit every family in their area, know their struggles and be enriched by their life of faith. They visited about 240 families.

In Nagaland, Home mission was arranged at St Joseph Convent, Viswema where we have Catholic families in the same village belonging to



Angami Tribe. Sr Harsha the Superior of the Convent arranged the needful in consultation with Fr Jerome Veigas SJ the Parish Priest, Village Leaders and Catechists. Sr Mary Laldikzuali along with 17 sisters and 3 candidates participated in this mission. So 21 of them in different groups along with a few BLA members shared the 'Joy of the Gospel' with the Catholic community. They learnt to appreciate the faith of the people, their culture, life style and their way of dealing with problems. A total 113 families were visited.

Sr Sandhya & Sr Gladys

New Wing for St Maria Goretti Hostel

St Maria Goretti hostel Kolasib has stood homely for many batches of students. But of late, a great necessity was



felt to create more space for the all-round growth of the hostellites. The construction work initiated in January 2016 under the supervision of Sr Greta the hostel warden reached the inaugural moment on 20th April 2017. Most Rev. Stephen Rotluanga the Bishop of the Diocese of Aizawl, solemnized the occasion.

The Inaugural lamp was lit by Bishop Stephen, Sr Joy the Provincial Superior, Sr Shanthi the community superior, Fr. Roman Mascarenhas and Mr. Sangkima the church leader, after which a meaningful prayer service was led by Sr Rose Mary. Bishop Stephen gave a befitting message during the prayer service. Ceremonious cutting of the ribbon was done by Sr Joy the provincial.

The new building was then blessed by Bishop assisted by Father Roman Mascarenhas. Soon after this, Sr Shanthi felicitated the Bishop and Sr Joy, with a bouquet and a traditional shawl each. As a mark of gratitude contractor Mr Khanu Malakar and his team of workers were honoured.

Sr Shanti BS

Madonna Convent, Kolasib

Reaching the Unreached

The sisters at Bethany Health Center Kathalcherra, Tripura had an enriching experience in one of the Adivasi



villages of Kamranga Parish as they held a day's outreach programme.

A session on human trafficking was conducted to the gathered people by Sr Suman and Mr Chandrojoy Reang. Health talk was presented by Sr Dr Prema. About 70 people benefitted through the health camp conducted thereafter. Under Vitamin angels Programme they distributed vitamins to 35 children of the village.

Thanks to Sr Punita SJA and Fr Joachim of Kamranga Parish for their help.

Sr Dr Prema Misquith BS

Bethany Convent, Kathalcherra

Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany. It was a mutual consultation between the Diocese



and the Province administration that led to this taking over from 10th January 2017. Sr Sandhya, the Asst Provincial was officially present to take over the administration on 12th Jan. 2017 from the Parish Priest Fr Prasad Rao.

The Hostellites arrived on 16th January after their annual vacation. On 17th evening the sisters had arranged a meaningful welcome and prayer service for the girls in the hostel. At this prayer, Fr Prasad the parish priest symbolically handed over the Hostel keys to the Superior of the Convent Sr Kanthi. In return, she thanked him for this opportunity made available to serve the young girl students in a better way.

Sr Kanti BS

Bethany Convent, Depacherra

Silver bells at Sacred Heart Pre-Novitiate

June 14th 2017 was a very significant event as Sacred Heart Pre-Novitiate, Behala Kolkata, recalled its 25 silver years. Through this Pre-Novitiate, several buds have bloomed for Bethany as religious and to serve humanity without boundaries today. So many hearts, heads and hands have not only dreamt and planned for this formation house but also toiled hard in various capacities to assist young candidates for religious life.

The Holy Mass was officiated by Rev. Fr. Patrick Rodrigues, the parish priest of Infant Jesus Church, Behala who summarized the Word of God and called on us to continue to work for God. The presence of Sr Jyoti and Sr Joy the Provincial Superiors and a good number of sisters from different communities, the Novices, and well wishers added joy to the occasion.

Pusale L. Kikhi and Ramya M

Pre-novices, Behala

Loving tribute to the dear departed of our Sisters

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Sr Anna Francesca | Father |
| 2. Sr Sumita | Sister |
| 3. Sr Laveena Flora | Uncle |
| 4. Sr Jyoti Xalxo | Father |
| 5. Sr Malati | Aunt |
| 6. Sr Pushpa Joseph | Aunt |
| 7. Sr Rosia | Cousin |
| 8. Sr Shareena | Brother |
| 9. Sr Selina | Brother |
| 10. Sr Therese Zothanpari | Brother- in-law |
| 11. Sr Sylvia Monteiro | Aunt |
| 12. Sr Sanjukta Minj | Cousins-2 |
| 13. Sr Imani | Brother-in- law |
| 14. Sr Kiran | Sister- in- law |
| 15. Sr Cleopha/ Sr Sunita Jyoti | Sister/Aunt |



Change of guard at Holy Cross Girls Hostel Depacherra

The Diocese of Agartala handed over the management of Holy Cross Girls Hostel at Depacherra, Tripura to the

'Limerick Calcutta Calling Group' visits

On 28th Feb. 2017 'Limerick Calcutta Calling Group' Ireland consisting of 14 members visited Bethany Jan Vikas Samiti Barasat. It was in view of their annual monitoring of the Women Empowerment Project in Barasat villages which they have been partnering with Bethany Sisters.

Thanks to your continued support and great



goodwill dear Fr Pat Hogan the team leader, David, Charlie Coughlan, Charlie, Ita, Kieran, Pat, Margaret, Brian, Ken, Alan, Maura, Julian and Clodah. Thanks to many other team members who have helped us in the past.

Staff Reporter

Silver Jubilee of Religious Profession



Sr Margaret Mary BS
Profession : 27-04-1992



*Wish you
A Very Happy Jubilee
dear Sr Margaret*

