

# Newsletter Province India South





## **EDITORIAL**

In this issue we bring to you interesting articles written by our sisters on Celebrations of Golden Jubilee, Christmas, New Year and World day of disabled. Some sisters have shared very deeply on their personal experiences concerning their life and mission.

During the past few months the Province was bubbling with sessions very thoughtfully and painstakingly arranged by our dear Provincial and her team. Sessions for Golden age group, Accountants, different Commission members and steering committee for Provincial Assembly. The senior sisters who attended the session have shared with us their reflections that will surely inspire one and all.

Our Next issue will be released in the first week of June. It will be dedicated to our dear **Adelaide de Cice**. I kindly request you to send news about the celebrations of Bi- centenary, any articles, poems, and Triduums.

I express my gratitude to sisters who have contributed articles to this newsletter and to Marykutty Chandy and Sarita Pinto for the technical support in bringing out this Newsletter.

*Happy Reading!*

*Perpetua Machado*



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*With a Thanksgiving heart Philo George shares with us her experiences of.....*

## **Golden Jubilee Celebration**

*Philo George,  
Vimalalayam*

At last the long awaited day dawned on 15<sup>th</sup> of August 2017!

- A day of thanksgiving and happiness.

Yes in my heart I really wished to celebrate this day only with my Community members. But Rita Joseph expressed that I should also invite my family members. Since all my vows celebrations were held in France, I too thought, after a moment's reflection, let it be as they wished to do it. So I bent my will to theirs. My family members too will get a chance to know our sisters. I have two sisters and one brother.

- All these years the God Almighty has helped me to travel along with Him, holding His hands. Yes, I did experience his love and constant protection in different ways. Fifty years of faithfulness – I do offer my sincere thanks for this immense love. Words cannot express this. In the silence of my heart He speaks to me.
- “Tu es precieuse pour moi – You are precious to me.
- Tu as du valeur a mes yeux et moi, je t’aime”- You are valuable before my eyes and I love you.

Is there anything more that I wish to get? No, nothing at all. That is my life, the fullness of Christ in me. He holds me always in his loving hands and I hear his encouraging voice ‘You are mine, I love you’. I thank God for fifty long years of God’s faithfulness towards me. Having a life of friendship- at times experiencing difficulties, tears rolling from the eyes or experience of solitude or deep consolation, spiritual desolation or togetherness - one has to live this and only when you live courageously you can relish this life with Jesus as your companion.

Living like this till the end of my life is my great aspiration today, bearing all the difficulties, jumping over the little thorns or stones along the path, gives me joy. I share this joy with all of you, though this little note came rather late. I thank all those who have helped me during these fifty years of journey with the Lord.

*Shirley reaches out to the children with utmost care and concern....*

## A Home away from Home

*Shirley Varghese*

‘Valsalya Bhavan’ was started in 2001 by the Salesian fathers[Don Bosco] with the aim of providing safe shelter for the wandering young girls from the dangerous situations of their



lives, by giving them accommodation, education and at the same time promoting their physical, mental and spiritual growth. Ample facilities are offered to them by way of counselling. This Institution gives job-oriented training too so that when they grow up they can stand on their own feet.

Right from the inception of this Institution the DHMs were collaborators with the Salesian priests at

Vaduthala, Ernakulum and they are fully responsible to run this Institute.

Twenty children from the age group 1-7 yrs are being looked after by Shiny Devassy at ‘Thammanam Valsalya Bhavan’ whereas 27 girls from the age group 8 – 10 and teen agers are being looked after in ‘Valsalya Bhavan Annexe’ at Vaduthala by Shirley Varghese . Shirley is a full time staff- member and is the director there; she takes keen interest in their personality development.

The girls here through the values imparted to them, especially through a deep faith and love of God get strength to face the difficulties in their lives. Since the past 3 yrs, 26 girls have passed X std and are continuing their plus one and plus two education in other institutes, while staying at Vaduthala Valsalya Bhavan. A girl who completed plus two in the year 2016-17 at present is doing her Nursing Course at the Medical Trust Hospital, Cochin.

Child Welfare Committee refers the girls to the Institute. Computer classes, dance classes and music classes are offered to them. Conscientization classes are periodically given so as to give them self confidence and happiness in their lives.

**Personal reflections from Shirley:** - I have many reasons to be grateful to God for the ongoing miracles that are happening here. Many times I have witnessed these incredible things and I stand in awe in front of God Almighty. My experience here is such that often I get overwhelmed when I think of the marvellous changes that are taking place in their day to day lives. Though they are troublesome to be with, sharing the meals and fun time is a grace. I do experience heavenly joy and I consider this as a great privilege in my life.

When I look back at the life in Valsalya Bhavan I have no words to express my gratitude to God for His countless blessings He showered upon me.

*Catherine makes herself available for a vacation with a difference..*

## Vacation in dream land

*Catherine Presilda*

*Mater Dei - Goa*

The Christmas holidays at Mater Dei was announced, and I was all set to be in my Goa Community for the Christmas holidays. I prepared myself well to spend time helping them in decoration and other Christmas preparations. But a call from my superior Maria Fernandes shattered my dream when she asked me to go to Bijapur and from there to Mudhol. On 20<sup>th</sup> afternoon I reached the Goa community, another surprise was waiting for me, I had to leave to Bijapur that same evening, and I hardly had time to digest the thought. In no time I prepared my little baggage to leave. Maria briefed me about the place and told me that Mabel would



brief me about my mission there. Though I said yes at that moment, later my heart was not letting me to be at peace. Why??????

As an aspirant I had heard about Bijapur Mission, I found it was meaningful. Since then Bijapur mission has been my dream. I always waited for an opportunity to be there. But at this juncture when I least expected that I would be sent there and that too just for 10 days, I felt disappointed. When sisters will be busy with Christmas preparation what will I

be doing there, How am I going to be useful for them?" these questions haunted me.

With these thoughts I started my journey, I started feeling a kind of fear and sadness within, not because I would miss Christmas sweets, food and celebration of Goa community but the thought how will I make myself useful in Bijapur community. It was getting chill as I approached Karnataka. I really felt very cold when I reached my destiny. At last I experienced the warm welcome from Annie, Rita, Veena and Mabel.

While having breakfast Mable briefed me the ministry that I was going to undertake for 10



days. Since it was Christmas preparation, and having series of Christmas programmes, my job was to get the youth, children and the KG kids ready to perform for the different programmes. I began my ministry with our KG children teaching those Jingle bells, for Vikasini girls a Hindi Carol dance, to our area children bigger girls a Kannada Carol dance and to the little ones Jingle bells. I enjoyed my ministry, but I started getting cough and cold due to severe winter. The days were just passing a little

too fast.

For Christmas, New Year and the Sunday mass we had to travel from Indi to Bijapur. It takes three hours, to and fro. There is no way out.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> we had Christmas celebration with our office staff, KG children and Vikasini students who are with us. It was a very meaningful celebration. All the staff, the KG kids and the Vikasini students belong to other faiths, only we 5 DHMs were Catholics. It was a great celebration with a meaningful skit with the message of Christmas through dance, games and songs. I enjoyed clicking pictures and being one among them. It was indeed a real Christmas.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> December, we were supposed to inaugurate the newly built stage in our compound, which was constructed from the Karnataka government MLA's fund. We expected the MLA of the place to join us for Christmas celebration. Due to some unavoidable circumstances he could not make it. But we had the Christmas programme with three other local officials. More than 400 people attended this programme. Most of them were women and children belonging to other faiths.

I also had the great opportunity to visit historical places of Bijapur district. Indeed I saw great historical monuments. I could use my photographic talent to capture the beauty of these historical places.



The most beautiful thing I loved in Deepalaya community was the community spirit. Praying and sharing together, caring for each other and adjusting with one another and to the situations which I admired.

My short stay with the sisters in Indi, enabled me to begin the New Year with positive affirmation from each sister of the community.

I left the house with a feeling of satisfaction and greater longing to be back to the place to give myself fully. The dream land remains still the dream land...pray that it will be a reality in the near future.

Thank you Mabel, Rita, Annie, Veena, Dorothy and Jacinta, for your love, support and encouragement during my stay there. A special thank you for the positive affirmation to begin my New Year. I also thank Philomena D'Sa and Maria Fernandes for sending me there to have this experience.

My learning in two sentences.....

*Art speaks where words are unable to explain  
And  
Art is not what you see but what you make others see.*

*A unique way of celebrating New Year by our sisters at Alleppey*

**New year celebrations for the senior citizens**

*Vimalaniketan  
Alleppey*



We had the New Year Celebrations for the Senior Citizens of our area in Collaboration with the Local Self Government (Municipality). Our Premise is given for the medical checkups for the Senior Citizens of our Locality / ward. Twice a month we hold meetings for senior citizens. On an average 60 patients come regularly. One doctor and two nurses are at their service and free medicines are given by the Municipality.

This Year we celebrated the New Year with 105 Senior Citizens. On the Dias we had Jancy Thomas (wife of our Municipal Chairman Mr. Thomas Joseph) who arrived on time to chair the function. Mr.C.V. Manoj Kumar, our ward Councillor, our parish priest and other distinguished Guests were present for the same.



Mr. John the resource person spoke about the overall well being of the Senior Citizens with musical interventions by Josy Alappuzha and Sanel (Well known play back Musician). Inputs were given in an interesting and participatory manner which was thoroughly enjoyed by the audience. It was delightful to see, some of the Senior citizens spontaneously singing their favourite songs / love songs from their youthful memories.



We were honoured by the presence of the Municipal Chairman Mr.Thomas Joseph who arrived on time to cut the New Year cake and initiated the distribution of the New Year Gifts. (Bed Sheets).

It was really good to see the joyful presence of the aging people of our area.

The day's programme ended around 6pm.

*Juliet recounts her God Experience....*

**My Faith Experience**

*Juliet Machado*

God's ways are mysterious and unique, which I cannot imagine or think of. God is a God of surprises. I thank God for the wonders and mighty deeds He has done in my life during the past one and a half years. "Holy is His Name".

Yes, He has done wonderful things for me... According to His plan, I rendered my service in the Bijapur Rural mission for 15 years, and I was transferred to Honavar Reunion in the month of May 2015. It was my felt need to go for a spiritual renewal course. I went to Ryshivana Mangaluru for the same. The course began on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2015. I was happy and my heart burst with gratitude for the immense love and graces the Lord bestowed on me. It was a time of grace and an opportunity to gain spiritual strength and to live and interact with sisters of other congregations. I spent a lot of time with the Lord in prayer. Various sessions and inputs helped me to strengthen my faith. The beautiful nature spoke to me of God who is imminent, very present in His creation. God is the "ground of my being". In Him I live and move and have my being.

I was happy and interiorizing the richness of the course along with other activities. The course was coming to an end. One day I found a small lump in my right breast while I was taking a shower. I realised that something is wrong with me. From that day onwards that thought disturbed me. I felt that God disturbs the comfortable and comforts the disturbed.

I waited for the course to get over to inform my superior. I joined the community after the course. I was calm and at peace. It was on 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 2016, that I informed my superior Celine Fernandes and other sisters regarding the lump. They took me immediately to the nearby nursing home for investigation... Through the FNAC test I was diagnosed as having breast cancer. I accepted the test result in a positive way, and said, Jesus is with me, He loves me, and He will do what is best for me. I put my total trust and confidence in the Lord.

I came to Roshni for further tests and treatment. Colin took me to Dr. Venkatesh Sanjeve for a second opinion. He is specialized in breast cancer. I did all the prescribed tests. The results were positive, but I did not want to be operated by him. Goretti Colaco took me to an oncologist Dr. Rohan Chandra Gatty who is a very good doctor in Father Muller Hospital. I still recall his words "Be at peace, everything will be O.K., this is a small thing, nothing to worry". These words of his were so soothing and comforting that it gave me courage to move on and accept reality, to face the unpleasant experiences that were awaiting me. I underwent surgery on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 2016. By God's grace and prayers the healing appeared to be very rapid and the doctor was quite happy about the way I responded to the treatment.

I had thus completed the 1<sup>st</sup> step. Dr. Gatty directed me to the medical oncologist Dr. Krishna Prasad who is well versed in chemo therapy. Before going to him Dr. Gatty explained everything pertaining to the procedures and the after effects of the therapy. So I was quite prepared mentally, spiritually and physically, to face all the uneasiness and discomfort. Evelyn Benis took me to Dr. Krishna Prasad for the chemo therapy. Chemo treatment was planned for one year. I had to undergo 8 courses of chemo, one month radiation and 17 Canmab preventive injections. By the grace of God I began my chemo on 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2016. Chemo cycle was once in 21 days. Chemo could only be given through the left hand and not through the right hand, because of the removal of the right breast which had damaged the right hand. The Dr. asked me to look after my hand like a little baby. With the 4<sup>th</sup> chemo, my hand was

swollen and my veins collapsed. I was anxious. I was afraid to see my swollen and painful hand. I was worried about the next chemo. Dr. suggested to me the insertion of a Chemo port. I went for the chemo port too. I had an infection due to which I had fever, pain and as a result of the chemo my blood count was coming down. My health became weaker and weaker. I couldn't bear the pain. I requested Dr. to remove the chemo port. The chemo port was removed and my next worry was how to take another 4 more chemo's and 17 injections on my left painful hand. I felt it was impossible. Finally I made up my mind and told my sister who is a nurse that I would take the 4 more chemos. I put my total trust and confidence in Jesus and the support of the prayers of my sisters. I spent a lot of time in prayer to receive graces to regain my energy and strength. I used to talk to my hand, see and touch my hand and say "I love you, I need you, please co-operate with me during the treatment". I was afraid and worried about the chemo cycle one after another. I used to pray to Jesus that the medicine would be available, that the doctor would come to give the chemo that the nurses and room would be available, that a sister would accompany me' "but where is the vein to insert the cannula to give the medicine?" My inner voice prompted me: "God will provide, go in peace". This assurance gave me hope. Trusting in the providence of God, I used to leave Roshni and go to the hospital along with the sister who accompanied me. I felt the need of prayer and I believed in prayer. Theresa would sit in the chapel and pray at that particular time and besides, so many of our sisters, friends of mine, prayed for me constantly. I experienced the power of prayer. Really I exclaim, "Great things happened each time". God provided the vein to give the chemo. I felt so happy that God is with me. He will never let me down. He upheld me in His victories right hand.

The nurses also believed in the power of prayer. Eula was accompanying me from December onwards. Once we reached the hospital she used to start praying the rosary along with me. We used to finish two rosaries before the nurses came to insert the cannula to start the treatment procedure. One day it happened that Eula admitted me in the hospital and after some time she had to go home for some work. I was saying my rosary and spent time in prayer. As usual the nurses came to insert the cannula. That day they found it difficult to find the vein. They were pressing my hand, twisting, taping, pricking here and there and damaging my hand. At last they got the vein. They were asking me where that praying sister had gone, why she had not come. We missed her praying presence. She always prayed and we used to find the vein in one prick. They too felt the power of prayer.

I strongly believed that God heard our unceasing prayer. Our Great & Mighty God did great things for me. During each of the following chemo cycles they got the vein to give the chemo. I thus finished all the planned treatment in the month of August 2017, which I felt was not possible for me, but God made it possible. It is God's mercy. I felt that God was speaking to me "My grace is sufficient for you". It was very painful to undergo this treatment. I believe that God has given me tremendous grace to cope with the pain and uneasiness. Till today I never complained to God but thanked Him for His mercy. I can now communicate with conviction, hope and courage, to other patients who are suffering from cancer.

Now I am of the disposition that whatever comes my way, there is nothing to fear but to face it gracefully. I believed that God had prepared me during the course in Rhysivana to accept my illness in faith. I learned to surrender my will and to let God do whatever He wants. I have

the contentment of heart that I have given my fruitful service wherever I was placed, especially in Bijapur, Rural mission where I count the blessings one by one from the Lord.

I take this opportunity to thank my God for being very close to me. I am very grateful to Mother General and her councillors, former provincial Jacinta D'souza, present provincial Philomena D'Sa, Celine Fernandes and the community, for their support and prayers. I am extremely grateful and I would like to make a special mention of Colin, Goretti, Evelyn, Theresa, Eula, Achamma and the entire Roshni community for their immense help and concern during my illness. I really felt cared for and loved by each one of them. It was amazing how each one played their role in order to make me feel happy, loved and cared for. I am grateful to Dr. Rohan C. Gatty who is very gentle and compassionate, Dr. Krishna Prasad who is humorous, active and disciplined. I thank each of the DHM of the South and North provinces for their prayerful support which I experienced through various ways like telephone calls, letters, and personal visits. I thank the Bijapur mission team for their telephone calls and personal visits. Special thanks to Most Rev. Bishop Francis Serrao, Bishop of Shivamoga who visited me and assured me of his prayers. I cannot fail to especially mention my younger sister who is a nurse by profession. She was a pillar of strength and God's presence to me. In spite of her hospital duty and family obligations, she paid me regular visits, supporting, comforting and giving me hope. I remain ever grateful to her. I thank my brothers and sisters and all my relatives for their love, concern, prayers and personal visits.

During my treatment I realized that I am a fragile instrument and God is my protector who protects me always, so that I may not break. I feel that I gained something great which I cannot adequately specify or express. It only prompts me to recite often, "Thank you Jesus, Praise you Jesus, Jesus have mercy on me", which has become part of me now. Presently I feel a sense of gratitude and fulfilment. I conclude with a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to our Blessed Mother who is my protectress and guide.

*A celebration worth taking note of.....*

**World Day of differently abled persons.....**

*Jacinta Machado*

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2017, the celebration began with a prayer song by Mrs. Shobha Devaramane, a physically challenged woman. It was followed by a patriotic song “Nadageethe” by a group of visually impaired persons. Mrs. Deepa Guledagudda, social animator of Ashadeep CBR warmly welcomed the chief guests on the stage with garlands of flowers. She also extended a warm welcome to all the differently abled persons. Ms Mabel Pinto, director of Ashadeep, inaugurated the programme by pouring water to a plant. In her inaugural address she spoke of the contribution of differently abled persons to the society. They too are blessed with many gifts, talents and potentialities. Hence they should not be considered useless and hopeless instead they should be respected, loved and cared for by everyone. She further said that Ashadeep acts as a bridge between the government and the disabled in trying to reach the various benefits to them, so that they may be happy and bloom in life. She expressed her joy and gratitude to all those who help us in reaching out to the disabled of Mudhol Taluka; Government officials, government organizations and the common people. She congratulated the coordinator and staff of Ashadeep CBR, Mudhol for organizing such a grand celebration for the differently abled persons of the Taluka.



**Presentation of annual report:** A power point presentation of the activities of Ashadeep CBR was done by Ms Jacinta Machado project coordinator. This was followed by a **Felicitation Programme for the** disabled persons as well as those who contributed to their wellbeing..

Mr. Kallappa Sabarada expressed his appreciation and gratitude towards Ashadeep for being a beacon of light for the disabled through their various activities for them as well as for leprosy people, senior citizens, women and children of Mudhol Taluka . He said that he is happy to be present for such a beautiful celebration of the differently abled day.

Ms.Prabhavati Guravva, from Social welfare Department said that she is very happy to witness the programme and she is been touched by the service rendered by Ashadeep for the rehabilitation of disabled of Mudhol, as she watched the power point presentation of the activities of the project. She promised to help and collaborate by giving the facilities available in her department.

**Distribution of Medical certificates:** Medical certificates of the camp organized by Ashadeep in October 2017 were distributed to the respective persons.

Mr. Mantesh and Mr. M.V.Matadh distributed medical certificates to mentally retarded.

**Prize distribution:** This was a joyous moment, long awaited by the winners of sports meet of the disabled and leprosy persons as they came forward to receive their prizes and certificates. This was an opportunity for others to realize the hidden talents and potentials in the disabled persons.

**Cultural programme:** The mentally retarded children from Aruna Chetana day care centre, Mudhol and Shri Shivashakti residential special school for mentally retarded entertained the guests and the differently abled persons with their dance and action songs.

Mr V.Y Devangavi who presided over the function appreciated the service rendered by Ashadeep CBR, Mudhol for the rehabilitation of differently abled besides working for the prevention of disability through awareness programmes and protest rallies in Mudhol Taluka. He said that the disabled are God's gift to society. They have a lot of talents and potentialities which need to be harnessed in a proper way. Hence they should be respected and helped to make use of them. This work is done by Ashadeep, who recognize them and bring them to mainstream of life. He further said that he is inspired by the differently abled people for their unique contribution to the society as per their capacity, sometimes even beyond their capacity. He assured his support and collaboration to Ashadeep in their service to disabled through the department of education.



them happy.

**Vote of thanks:** Hanumanta Halaki proposed the vote of thanks and thanked all dignitaries on the stage and the differently abled and others present for the celebration.

The celebration concluded with a sumptuous meal for all those who were present. All went away with a smile on their faces. It was a real joy for us to see

***SESSION FOR SENIOR SISTERS AT ALUVA, ERNAKULAM ON 21<sup>ST</sup> AND 22<sup>ND</sup> NOVEMBER 2017..***

***Impression of the graceful age session ..... Maryamma Stephen***

I thank God for Philomena D'Sa and Sunitha Cruz for giving me this wonderful opportunity to refresh and to grow in the loving designs of God.



We were 32 of us for this session. We began the session with a prayer mainly focused on the Gospel message i.e. “Do not worry about tomorrow” (Mathew 6:25-28).

Philomena D’Sa, our Provincial reminded us that we got a golden opportunity to participate in these two days session and to be relaxed. Then she gave us a relaxing exercise in order to come out of all our hurt feelings and negativity. It really refreshed me.

We had the session by Sr. Lijo MSJ. Her theme was “Aging gracefully and living positively”.



As I grow I have to accept myself and to live gracefully. I have to make conscious effort to change my mentality and attitudes. Sr. Lijo’s positive stroke helped me to grow in close relationship with God. This will help me to solve most of my problems.

My intimate relationship with God can help me to rediscover my religious commitment. I have to keep in mind that each one of us is a gift from God.

The guest speaker reminded us that we are the aroma of Christ.

The next session was conducted by Sr. Maria Theresa. She focused on Psalm 71:17-18. She also mentioned that each one of us has to learn from our own experiences. As we grow old we have to take all our disappointments in the right spirit. She also said that we should not neglect our bodies and take appropriate precautions and to accept our limitations. She reminded us that we are journeying towards our heavenly Father. This is the time to grow spiritually and to follow Him more closely and to surrender ourselves to Him. Find time to read the Word of God and use the appropriate word in times of our worries and tensions.

The last session was conducted by Fr. Prasad OCD. The topic was “Health matters, Laughter matters”. By spirituality of laughing-we become the messengers of Jesus. To love everyone and to accept them as they are.

These are the tips to grow old gracefully.

*Graceful age session .....*

*M.Chandy*

For sisters above 65, a wonderful session was organised by our provincial Ms. Philomena D’Sa, assisted by Sunita Cruz for Tamilnadu & Kerala region at Atmadarshan Spirituality Centre, annex to the Sacred Heart College [OCD Philosophy College] situated on the banks of Periyar river. The whole atmosphere was so peaceful and I must say that I enjoyed staying there for two days.

**Ageing gracefully and living positively** was the theme for the first day which was given by Sr. Liji Jose MSJ who is on the staff of Kusumagiri Mental Health Centre, Kakanad. The following points impressed me a lot.

1. The other person is a gift to me
2. Grow in the fullness of Christ . We are the aroma of Christ.
3. Rediscover the meaning of my religious commitment. Find meaning in my life. Instead of thinking from old memory, think new.
4. You are not an accident. Long before you were conceived by your parents, you were conceived in the mind of God. You are alive because God made you for a reason. He never makes mistakes and never does anything accidentally.

Important life lessons :-

- Accept ourselves, be happy, take the responsibility for our lives [growth begins when blaming ends], and live in love . I Cor 13/11-13
- ‘Love one another as I have loved you’. True love is unconditional

**Second day**, the session was conducted by a sister doctor from CSN congregation [Sr. Mary Therese] and she dealt with all the age related sicknesses which are commonly seen in the religious communities and the precaution which we have to take. Everything was so practical and it helped me to diagnose my disorders such as gastro intestinal problems, hyperactivity, blood pressure, memory problems, hallucinations and illusions and what not? So I took only one point to practice i.e. to avoid tension, read the Word of God daily.

In the afternoon, we had a Laugh Yoga Therapy! This was given by Fr. Prasanth, OCD former provincial. He told us in health matters, laughter matters and don't take everything seriously; at the same time don't laugh foolishly too! Laughing therapy is laughing without any reason or joke. Laughter helps to fight against boredom, shyness, tension and worry and thereby contributing to one's mental health. "Smile a while and while you smile another smiles and soon there will be miles and miles of smiles because you smiled."

- The spirituality of laughing:- You make others happy, you give joy to the others, you accept others unconditionally, you open yourself to the other and you become a partner of God, messenger of God and you become a catholic citizen.
- Eschatological realities :- Life after death

Important points:- Protect our minds from depression and enjoy life. Take the crucifix and concentrate more on spiritual life. I live with my physical weakness and I accept myself and surrender everything to the Lord. Show gratitude for all the graces and blessings He has given us. Every day of our life is a grace. We thank the Lord for providing all our needs, and practice the spirituality of joy as St. Ignatius put it 'Finding God in all things'.





*What we are is a gift from God,  
What we make of our lives is a gift from me to God.*

### *Sharing of the experiences of graceful age ..... Gracie Xavier*

We the DHMs of Kerala and Tamilnadu aged 65 and above gathered at Atma Dharshan on the bank of the famous periyar river a beautiful place for the young hearted sisters for 2 days peaceful rest and relaxation. We are extremely grateful to our dear society headed by Philomena D'Sa and Sunitha Cruz for arranging a get-together to look back into our life from its inception up to our golden age. As a process to begin the session Philomena D'Sa took us back to our conception until today, step by step to reflect the work of God in our lives and his loving hands that brought us to the point of our last breath. During this exercise some expressed the great joy of one's life and grateful to God for his protection at every step. Some of us said that they slipped into an ecstasy of sleep and slowly returned to reality.

Sr. Liji Jose M.S.J. a clinical psychologist, working in a mental health centre explained the different stages of our life and its consequences.. She reminded us that how precious we are in the eyes of God, we are not an accident, but long before we were conceived by our parents we were conceived in the mind of God. He never makes a mistake, but He wants us to be happy and live in love - The reason for us to be a truly happy religious.

The second day Philomena D'Sa gave us exercises of relaxation. It is good to those who suffer from hyper tension. She made us to go through this exercise of relaxation from toe to head. Some found it very useful.



Sr.Maria Thresia from Trichur spoke of integrity vs. despair. She spoke several incidents that occur in our religious communities after certain age and those are normal for any persons, but we as religious should be able to sort out by our experience and knowledge any negative incidents should be able to rectify with the help of

competent persons. She also gave practical examples. Last session was that of Fr. Prasad the Superior of the house, former Provincial of Manjummel province. He spoke of laugh therapy.

He began saying health matters, laugh matters. He suggested don't think too much- laugh a lot, 'enjoying is in- born in human being but laughing is to be learnt.' Laughing is very important. He suggested from his own experience that instead of taking pain killers, laugh. Laugh helps to fight against several illnesses. He even spoke of spirituality of laughing. It makes others happy, gives joy to others and helps to accept others unconditionally. He laughs a lot in spite of all his ailments.

After laughing session we had "Photo session" tea and departure. All enjoyed the rare outing and decision to grow more and more gracefully.

The food and accommodation was very good. Looking forward to another old age rather golden age get together. We are still on the planet.



*Joy of being together ..... Kunjammíni Varghese*

The GOLDEN AGE GET-TOGETHER for 2 days at Thottummugham, Aluva was a beautiful experience. The nature, fantastic riverside grandeur and the fresh air enabled the participants to be really, refreshed, energised, and rejuvenated. It was a very pleasant and positive experience to one and all because it was an eye-opening informative session, together with

simple psychological exercises to show how one lives her ordinary situations negatively, and passes negative energy around oneself which is destructive. There are ample opportunities to have the presence of mind to have open-mindedness and positive attitude which are selected by me/anyone at any time. By doing so, I can respond positively to anyone or any situation by being in control of myself. If I listen to myself, then I will come to know that the comments I make are based on my thoughts, thoughts are based on the memory, and memory is based on the previous experience of mine. Very often what we do is REACT to the person or situation instead of responding. Mt.7/1-2 "Please do not judge others because you will be judged in the same coins". Hence what we learnt is that my deliberate attention is necessary to make positive responses. Instead of correcting persons, we can connect with them by appreciating the good in others.

#### **Graceful age group engrossed with an exercise**



"We are the ambassadors of Jesus Christ" 2 Cor.5/20. This reminds us that we have the duty to proclaim the Master's word to all and at all times. Complaint is the language of fools. I and you are followers of Jesus. I have decided to follow Jesus, not to complain about others. So also we need to take the responsibility of our lives. Not to blame others for my misbehaviour. People who blame cannot be happy. Those who defend their unacceptable behaviour are the ones who blame others. Growth begins where blaming ends.

We need to laugh a lot....which is not only non-costly but also very profitable to our health. Pope Francis encourages us to develop the SPIRITUALITY of JOY to "Find God in all things and all things in God" Let us be joyful witnesses of our good GOD.



### *SESSION AT ROSHNI NILAYA MANGALORE ON 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017*

#### *Ageing Gracefully .....*

*Theresa Soares Goa*

The session "Ageing Gracefully" organized at Roshni Nilaya, Mangalore for the senior sisters of the South Province Goa on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017 was a memorable one for me. My gratitude to God and to our dear Provincial Philomena D'Sa for gifting this Session to us. It took many minds and hands to make this a reality – beginning with Philomena D'Sa our present Provincial, along with Jacinta D'Souza our past Provincial, Colin D'Souza the Superior of Roshni Nilaya and her community, all networking together. Every effort was made to make the stay of the senior sisters coming from Honavar, Bijapur and Goa, a comfortable and happy one. Our thanks to those who saw to the arrangements of Rooms and to the Food Department. A very happy atmosphere prevailed. The community at Roshni Nilaya met every need. Even those who were not so strong contributed so cheerfully.



The Resource persons of the Session stressed much on positivity, accepting our limitations, letting go of the Past, making a Gift of the Present, counting our Blessings, looking at the Future with Hope.

Dr.Lavina Noronha, the first resource person to speak referred to Age as a mindset. Happiness is a choice, she said. We can choose to be happy even at this stage, despite all its challenges. God must



find a place in our life for, He energizes. She touched very effectively many issues connected with old age.

Dr. Edward Nazareth, the next resource person spoke on the maintenance of health and its prevention. His approach was holistic. I appreciated his sincerity and commitment to humanity.

Sr. Shalini A.C. touched on Spirituality – the awareness of the presence of God and the need of Prayer in our lives always, but specially at this stage of our life, so that our life becomes a hymn of Praise. I was impressed to find every resource person bringing God into the picture, giving importance to prayer.

The last two resource persons were persons gripped by God. Ms. Rita Noronha and Mr. Dolphy Pinto shared their efforts to further God's Kingdom of Love amongst the poor, the marginalized, and the sick. One could not but help appreciate their efforts so silent, but so genuine, so selfless, so committed.

“When you rush to the needy, to do what you can God will rush to you, to do what you cannot”.

This Session had a lighter and relaxing side – recreations and an enjoyable evening outing to bring the Session to a happy close.

I would like to end with a Thanksgiving Prayer for all those who contributed to this Session, not forgetting our dear Maria, our Superior who accompanied the senior citizens from Goa, caring for them in every way.

We thank our God each time we think of you

And when we pray for you we shall pray with joy.

### *Session for graceful age .....*

*Flavia D'Souza*

A Session of two days was held in Roshni Nilaya, Mangalore for DHMs of Goa and Karnataka region- India Province South on “Graceful Ageing”.

According to me this seminar helped in building our spiritual selves, our physical strength, psychological being, social interpersonal relationships which would enable us in our sunset years to grow in maturity in Christ.



Sr. Shalini AC shared with us her insights on graceful age spirituality which is none other than growing in intimacy with our Lord. Spirituality should help us to be silent before our creator, to bless the Lord to be calm, peaceful, serene and contented rather than complaining and grumbling. It should also help us to understand and accept our limitations. The height of spirituality is doing God's will. Our attitudes towards self, others, and

God should be positive. The outcome of positive attitude is greater joy, love and compassion. If our attitudes are positive our self talk will take us deeper, closer and higher in our spiritual life. Faithfulness to our prayer life, deep relationship with the Lord will take us higher and deeper. Every aged person is beautiful, when she is open to the beauty in others. Do not seek the Lord outside but seek Him within. Avoid comparisons which make us unhappy.

Appreciate one another. Carry each other's troubles. Being nice is spirituality. Be happy, joyful, contented for God loves us as we are.



We learnt from the resource person Ms. Lavina Noronha “ Graceful Ageing means bringing vitality to our whole selves in spite of deterioration. This is a state of mind when expressed through our emotions, builds up energies in our bodies, keeps the mind and body active, helps us to accept death as meeting our Saviour Jesus Christ in His Father and the Spirit.

Keeping ourselves busy enabling us to keep our thought pattern changing from negativity to positivity thus ushering happiness which becomes a state of mind. This graceful ageing consists of the following components.

- Love unconditionally – have lower expectations from others
- Accept oneself with all its limitations
- Change the problem or change oneself
- Be inner directed, seek solitude
- Complement more, complain less
- Graceful ageing consists of positive attitudes like not losing hope of life.
- Hence “ living our life and forgetting our age” will enthuse us to

Rise up quickly at a particular time  
Start afresh with a new day  
See the brightness of the day  
Use the opportunities that come our way

Dr. Edward Nazareth emphasized health habits by focusing selectivity on food habits.

E.g. Vegetarian food is better

- For digestion
- For Constipation
- For vitalizing one's body with vitamin and minerals
- Reducing rice
- Fish is superior to meat
- Soft food is good for digestion
- Cow's milk supplies calcium

He emphasized

Water for seniors is very necessary, helps in urination 4 to 5 times a day

Loss of water leads to –

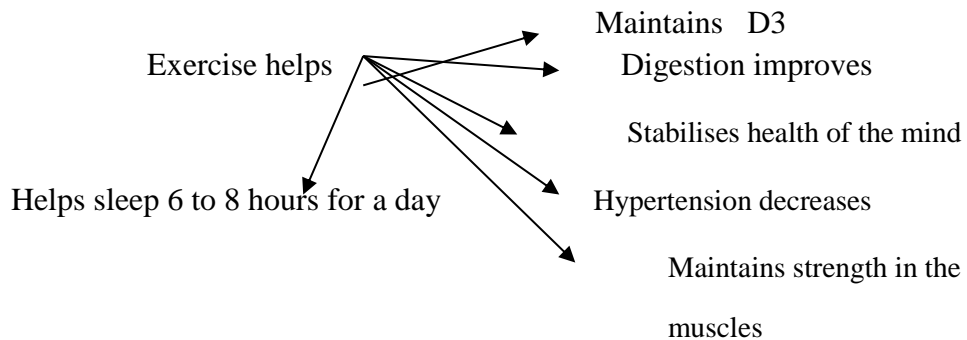
Constipation, Urinary infection, renal stones, Electrolyte imbalance

Questions by participants helped clarification:

a) Do we need to take “Protein Powder”?

Answer: No. 2 litres of milk per day would help

b) Do we need to take calcium tablets? Answer: No.



Calcium tablet is taken to strengthen bone, but according to the doctor when calcium tablet is taken only 13% of it is digested.

c) Vitamin: Milk, Vegetable, fish, fruits help in metabolism.

d) Is Vitamin D3 essential 1 tablet per week?

Answer: Not essential. D- Rise – 1 a week for 8 weeks is good

Alcohol for seniors is bad for health.

e) Is medicine for sleep good?

It forms a habit and it is not advisable.

Health issues

Blood pressure

Hypertension - Stroke

- Heart disease

- Kidney Failure

- Vision is affected



After 35 years check blood sugar, cholesterol, pressure.

Reduce mental stress

Check once in 3 months/ year - ECG, Blood Sugar, cholesterol.

For diabetes insulin production is less as pancreas does not work and glucose which is produced does not enter the cells.

If not checked it can become chronic leading to Diabetes, heart disease, Kidney failure.

Hypoglycaemia is caused when sugar comes down.

Stroke affects face, arms, speech. Avoid falls

The next day we had a panel discussion. Prof. Rita Norohna and Mr. Dolphy Pinto exposed us to their experiences as single persons. Ms. Rita Norohna – gave us her life experiences that although she is tired how she keeps herself active, healthy and strong.

Mr. Dolphy Pinto, a retired person who lost his wife in an accident lives alone and keeps himself busy by reaching out to sick people in hospitals especially to cancer patients. He is known as a store house of love to poor patients.

Both of them spoke about their spirituality as lone persons in their homes which helps them to go forward as living, loving, serving, and maintaining positive thoughts and reaching out to others.

The positive attitudes they propagate in their lives

- |                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| - Towards themselves | Love               |
| - " God              | Peace              |
| - " others           | Joy                |
| - " authority        | Broader smiles     |
| - " circumstances    | Laughter in plenty |

Their daily dictum is

Be beautiful but good

Be open to the beautiful

Maintain relationship

This seminar brought us in touch with the importance of total dependence on God and His spirit working in us to cope with our deficiencies brought about by age and I was able to recall Rom 37: 4 says: “ Delight yourself also in the Lord and He shall give you the desires of your heart ”. (Phil 2.13) Hence doing God’s will implies listening to Him in prayer and carrying out what I have to do. We will grow in wisdom which is the ability that God gives to know the mind of the Holy Spirit in such a way as to receive insight into how given knowledge may be best applied to specific needs arising in the Body of Christ.

This session helped us to understand ourselves and how to grow old gracefully.

The session concluded with a pilgrimage to St. Joseph vaz shrine in Mudipu where we prayed for our Society and Province.





*Accountants meeting with the Auditor ..... Goretti Colaco*

I was very happy to meet all the DHM accountants of our India Province South. We were about twenty five including some superiors and interested members of Roshni Community. It was nice opportunity to meet our well versed experienced auditor, Mr. Sunil Gonsalves who has the latest information about Government rules with regard to management of registered Societies/ Trust, Foreign Contribution, Filing of returns, Income Tax and so on. He also made time to clear all our doubts and fears. This session also helped us to share among us different issues connected to management of finances in our institutions, communities and projects.

We realised that our role as stewards is important and we are not only accountable to religious authorities but also to the Government and to God. In this meeting we decided that in the future we would circulate among us any important information with regard to Government rules. Thus we can support one another in our mission as faithful stewards of Christ.



### *Commissions .....*

*Celine Leo*

The members of the different commissions volunteered to work according to their interests by choosing the commissions they would like to serve. All the members came together for orientation and planning of the activities of the respective commissions. Our Provincial Philomena D'Sa explained the purpose of the commissions and the role of the members in planning the objectives and implementing the action plans. There was enough time to clarify our views and to interact with one another. We could see the enthusiasm among the members to work together as teams for the growth of our Province.



In the afternoon, the members of each commission got into their respective groups to plan the objectives and action plans which were then shared in the plenary session. It was very interesting to observe the active participation and interest of the members of each commission. It was also decided that a half yearly report would be submitted by each commission to the Provincial.



**Formation Commission**



**Education Commission**



**Social Welfare Commission**



**Pastoral Commission**

*We wish you all a prayerful season of Lent and gracefilled Easter.*