

Reflections for a Great New Academic Year 2018 - 2019

The new Academic Year has begun and with it everything new - class, teachers, friends, books etc. With enthusiasm and zeal the children enter their school breaking the silence of nearly two months. As I reflected on a theme for the editorial in this new academic year and wondered what message could I bring out, my thoughts went back to a movie 'Hitchki' that I had lately seen. The story of the movie centres around an aspiring teacher, Naina Mathur (played by Rani Mukerji), and a batch of 14 unruly students of class IX in an elite school.

Life was hard on Naina as she suffered from

Tourette Syndrome (TS), a neurological disorder that causes repetitive and involuntary movements or 'tic' noises. Despite this embarrassing medical condition which neither the management nor the students understood, Naina determined to be a teacher and a good one. At home her life revolves around her ever-dominating father with his own dream for Naina, the silent presence of her mother and a charming brother at her side to comfort her.

In school it was even worse. The students made fun of her, were rowdy in class and made it difficult for her to teach them. The elite school had given her this batch of slum children on purpose in view of making her an utter failure. The movie has its twists and turns. The great turn was in the lives of the fourteen kids! Naina and the kids made the classroom a playground of inner transformation.

You and I can do the same. How?

Education is real when it is *inclusive*, *inspiring and introspective*. Education must be a level-playing ground where all are treated as one. Naina reached out to those students on the periphery and challenged them to do their very best. The movie teaches us with these inspiring words: "An ordinary teacher teaches.... a good teacher explains.... a very good teacher shows an example by doing it himself/herself.... but there are some teachers who inspire us for our entire life!"



The very meaning of education in Latin e-ducere means "to draw out" In every student there is a wellspring, a sleeping giant, an unpolished diamond waiting to be tapped. Education is about drawing that out. Failing to draw that out is failure on the part of education. Classrooms can easily become prisons rather than palaces, agony more than ecstasy and above all institutions for conformity rather than a home for growth.

Here are a few tips to make your classroom a playground of inner transformation:

- i) Make the classroom a home:
- ii) Be fair, not partial:
- iii) Deal with discipline issues privately:
- iv) Use humour, not sarcasm:
- v) Motivate for excellence:
- vi) Create a family spirit:
- vii) Give primacy to God:

Conclusion: Mother St. Teresa of Kolkatta said: "Let everything I do or say be something beautiful for God". In this new academic year what difference will you make to your students? May it be beautiful and lasting.

Sr. Susanne

Call To Holiness

Pope Francis in his latest Apostolic Exhortation, GAUDETE ET EXSULTATE, gives clear and simple guidelines for each one of us to answer our own call to holiness. A whole chapter (chapter three) focuses on the Beatitudes. The word "happy" or "blessed" is synonym for "holy". Pope refers to the Beatitudes as the "Christian's identity card". We are called to do what Jesus told us to do in the Sermon on the Mount, in order to be a good Christian - in other words, to be holy.

There is nothing to beat prayer, sacrifice and sacraments for anyone to become holy- for these give nourishments to the soul and creates a healthy soul. As a

famous Latin proverb says: "No one can give what they haven't got", no one can spread holiness unless he/she possessit.

Fr. Joe Mannath in his book, 'A Radical love, A path of Light' speaks about 'Fitness for everyone' in the first chapter. He refers to a highly educated Hindu lady who spoke to him something very important regarding the religious whom she had known: "Before being members of a special group, (here she refers to the religious congregations) you are human beings, like the rest of us with all our weaknesses. If you have found ways of overcoming the human weaknesses we all face- greed, jealousy, egoism, etc- then, you have something to teach us."

Do we ever think of doing a check up of our souls as we do for our body, to determine how sound are our souls? If we



do, we will come to know whether we have taken good care of our souls; whether they are healthy, sick, need urgent 'servicing' 'repair', or 'maintenance'.

Let's compare the two further- the first one which we are more used to and more concerned about- check up of the body-what do we often find? Cholesterol, high B P, High Sugar....the list goes on. What does the doctor say? Either something is excess in the body or something is deficient, which is causing this disorder. Same with our souls- there is something that is in excess; each of us has to find out what it is-pride, envy, resentment, anger.....and what is deficient- love, forgiveness,

compassion, peace, joy......

According to me this is what we are called to do, when we speak of our call to holiness-it is our daily struggle to manage our lives with all its ups downs, knowing that the one who called us is in control; it is the process of peeling off our masks, egoism and misplaced identity in order to discover that **priceless treasure** within us; it is our increasing desire to recognise and experience our core identity as a child of God.

Let us not stop with a talk, reading or writing about holiness but let's sincerely work at it. Let's go for a check up of our souls and get rid of what is harmful and supply what is required for a healthy and happy soul as we do for our physical health.

Sr.Marina

Growing Deeper

"June 16,1606 was the blessed day chosen by God for the beginning of this holy Institute. It was the Feast of Saints Fereol and Ferius, who were martyred in Besancon, France for defending the faith. Six companions should have surrounded the Foundress on 16th June 1606, but four failed to come. Only Claudine de Boisset and Isabel Brocard stood firm.

On the first day that they gathered together, they lacked everything that was needed to sustain a human life. They did not even have a knife to cut a piece of bread. They barely had a room with four walls. On that night, our sisters had the bare floor for their beds and they folded up their outer dresses to use as pillow."

The above is the extract from the original biography of Anne de Xainctonge. Such was the foundation of the new Institute Company of St. Ursula. A humble beginning with no glamour and no celebrations. But it was set on a sure foundation of *Jesus Christ to make Him known and loved*. This led Anne de Xainctonge to begin a company without

cloister and had a vocation to educate girls and women which did not exist anywhere at that time.

Four centuries later, reading her story of fidelity we continue to walk her path with vision and inspiration.

As we begin initial



preparations for the General Chapter 2019, reflecting on the Transition Statute and our ways of future animations, allow God to guide us and take us further. With a discerning heart, let us go through a reflective process and have a fruitful dialogue among us. May we imbibe the spirit of Mother Anne and seek to make Christ known and loved.

Sr. Rita

Mother Anne - A Woman For Today



"For to me living is Christ and Dying is gain' {Philip 1; 21}

Childhood Days: Mother Anne who lived an authentic life for Christ could say this word out of deep conviction and profundity. She experienced Jesus in her life very tangibly. Therefore fulfilling the mission of Jesus was her ardent desire and aim of life.

She had all the privileges of the aristocratic family and high standard in the society yet her heart was for the poor and under privileged ones since the childhood. She saw Jesus in the ignorant women and servant girls. Her heart was moved with compassion for them. So she started to take care of them and taught them the knowledge of God in her own house itself. Thus she began her mission in her home at a very young age. Her life, teaches us the great lesson about the mission that in order to hear one's inner call place, persons and the time is not an important factor but a willing heart. If we are willing to do something for God He will open many roads and show the ways and means to accomplish them.

Following God's Call: God in His own time showed Mother Anne the place for the foundation of her

congregation in an enemy country with unknown place, people and situation. It is indeed wonderful and marvellous to know the ways of God. Jesus says "if you wish to follow me deny yourself and take up your cross and follow me". She was charged with one mission so she endured everything with patience till her mission was fulfilled. Therefore the foundation stone for our society is the sacrifice and penance of our beloved Foundress Mother Anne.

Following His Way: If we follow Christ, suffering and crosses are sure to come on our way. When we face difficulties we should not be frustrated and run away but draw strength from Jesus who called us ,like our foundress and many others who have already gone through suffering, rejection and

persecution and experienced the hope of the resurrection in their lives.

Our Mission at Pakertoli: I have experienced this in my personal life. The hand of God was there helping through generous people to accomplish the mission even in the midst of rejection and misunderstanding. When we started our mission in Pakertoli we were a bit scared as it was too far and interior with no proper roads, electricity, communication facilities etc. After five years of our presence there people have availed of all these amenities. Don't you think it is the work of the Lord? "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28.

Conclusion: As I reflect on the life of Mother Anne I see her like Mother Mary pondering over the words of God and acting according to it and thus bringing Jesus the light to the world. So also Mother Anne who listened to the inner voice of God and acted accordingly, to bring the light of education to enlighten many especially to the servant girls, poor and women who were in the darkness. A woman empowered by God's call could break the structure of the society in the 16th century and start a non cloistered convent is our model and example. This convinces us that we ought to draw strength and inspiration from her example, trust deeply in the providence of God, leave our comfort zones and plunge into challenging mission which spur us on today to act as women who listen to the voice of God. We learn from Mother Anne how to be courageous in times of difficulties, her firmness in decision making and her passion for Mission Magis.

"Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God." {William Carey}.

Sr. Elsy



Snippets from the life of St. Ignatius of Loyola

Introduction:

An account of his life has be taken from the Memoirs of St. Ignatius ' Testament and Testimony'. It covers only one period- from the time of his conversion, when he left his ancestral home in Loyola, till after many wanderings he settled down in Rome and became the first Superior General of the Society of Jesus.

Ignatius speaks of himself as a Pilgrim, his self-image being a man on a ceaseless quest, always forging ahead, never wanting to look back till to the end of his life's journey.

Jerome Nadal, his trusted lieutenant, was determined to obtain a Testament- a piece of fatherly advice. What he wanted was not just some haphazard pious message, but a thoroughly reliable account of the intimate relationship between God and Ignatius. Nadal firmly believed and strongly affirmed that, God deals with the followers of Ignatius as he dealt with Ignatius himself and they must respond as he did.

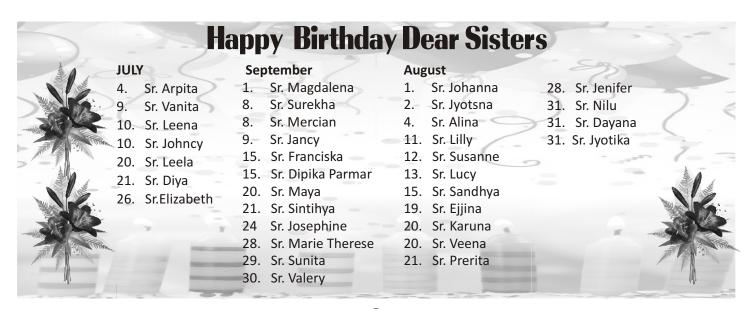
What Ignatius and the first Jesuits wanted was an authoritative exposition of the Ignatian Charism as it should be realized in themselves and all those who came after.

Ignatius actually did not write anything but reluctantly spoke out his story, in bits and pieces to Louis Gonzales de Camara, another loyal companion. The resulting narrative is a most unsatisfactory piece of literature. What does come as a surprise is that it was never published till the present century. Today the document is recognized as a Spiritual Classic, and a master-piece of self-revelation. The remarkable renewal in the appreciation and use of the other small but powerful Ignatian composition, the Spiritual Exercises, is in large measure due to their current understanding in the light of the insights provided by the Memoirs.

What stands out in the whole story is the loyalty of Ignatius. As a young man he was constantly getting caught



up in unrealistic ambitions, and not even a shattered leg by a canon ball that hit him could break the spell that held him captive. But some accidental reading during convalescing on the Passion of Christ and the Lives of Saints revealed to him the true object of his quest namely that it is Christ; who alone is worthy of absolute loyalty and can satisfy the loftiest aspirations, which is not self-centred but outgoing. (To be cont)



Anthony of Padua- the World's Most Popular Catholic Saint.

St. Anthony of Padua is my favorite saint; I have a great devotion since my parents surrendered me in his arms as a baby to protect and to guard me. I developed my devotion by marching with enthusiasm along with my parents to St. Anthony's shrine in Guntur. My father always encouraged me from childhood to request all my needs to this great Saint.

Birth

St. Anthony was born in 1195 (13 years after St. Francis of Assisi) in Lisbon, Portugal and given the baptismal name of Fernando. His parents, Martin and Mary Bulhom, belonged to one of the most prominent families of the city. This young man was always, from his earliest

days, focused on the Almighty. He worked such amazing miracles, that it's truly astonishing that he is known for "finding lost objects. He is a powerful intercessor, and the favorite saint of Catholics. He was the greatest preacher of the middle ages and one of the finest orators of all time.

Recognized as preacher

Anthony was first recognized for his great gift of preaching at a gathering for the ordination of Dominicans and Franciscans in 1222. After they finished their meal, the provincial suggested that one of the friars give a short sermon. There were no immediate volunteers among the group, so Anthony was asked to give "just something simple," since he presumably had no education and at the time was only 27 years old.

Anthony, while resisting the offer at first, finally began to speak in a simple, artless way. The "fire" within him became evident. His knowledge was unmistakable, but it was the passionate manner in which he spoke that truly impressed everyone.

Once his talents and knowledge were exposed, his quiet life of prayer and penance at the hermitage was exchanged for that of a public preacher. Francis heard of Anthony's skills as a preacher, and re-assigned the young priest to preach in northern Italy.

We know that not everyone was impressed by his preaching. Legend has it that one day, faced with deaf ears; Anthony went to the river and preached to the fish. In this way he got everyone's attention.

Anthony became the first teacher of the Franciscan order to be given special approval and blessings of St. Francis.

The story and tradition of devotion to St. Anthony of Padua began almost immediately upon his death on June 13, 1231. Thousands came to view the body of Anthony and attend his burial. His grave at once became a place of extraordinary devotion and numerous miracles. The following year, his friend, Pope Gregory IX, moved by the many miracles attributed to him during his life and that occurred at his tomb, declared him a saint. In 1946, Pope Pius XII officially declared St. Anthony a doctor of the



church

Recognized as the patron saint of the poor.

The first is the story of St. Anthony's bread. Many people give donations to help the poor in thanksgiving for gifts they've attributed to St. Anthony's intercession. They call this St. Anthony's bread. The story of St. Anthony's bread is said to have begun in 1263, when a child drowned near the basilica of St. Anthony. The child's mother prayed for St. Anthony's intercession and promised that if the child was restored to her, she would give the child's weight in grain to the poor in order that they could make bread; a very great gift in a time of

widespread poverty and hunger.

When the child was miraculously restored to life, the woman was true to her word and the tradition of giving alms to the poor in St. Anthony's name was begun. It is a beautiful tradition of generosity and charity to the poor. And it is fitting that it is done in St. Anthony's name, since he is the patron saint of the poor.

Recognized as the finder of lost items

Many people think of St. Anthony as the "finder of lost items". The reason for invoking St. Anthony's help in finding lost or stolen items is traced back to an incident in his own life. As the story goes, he had a favorite book of psalms that was very valuable to him. As this was before the invention of printing, the book was a hand- written book but of even more value were his personal notes and the comments he had made in the Psalter to assist the teaching of students in the Franciscan order. It was suspected that a novice leaving the community had stolen the Psalter. Anthony prayed for the return of his beloved possession. Shortly after, the novice returned the book and sought Anthony's forgiveness, which was given.

Novenas to St. Anthony are celebrated in many churches and shrines around the world. Many begin on Tuesdays as Tuesday was the day Anthony was buried and the miracles at his tomb began. The beginning of novenas is linked to a story of a childless couple. After many, many years of longing for a child, the wife took her troubles to St. Anthony. He is said to have appeared to her in a dream, telling her, "for nine Tuesdays, one after the other, make visits to the Franciscan chapel and approach the holy sacraments of penance and the altar, then pray, and what you ask, you shall obtain." the couple soon had a child.

In images of St. Anthony one sees lilies signifying the purity of the Saint and the Christ-Child in his arms. So great was his love for Jesus that he was granted this privilege of holding the Christ-Child in his arms.

Sr. Sudhani

News From India Silver Jubilee Celebration Of Simdega Diocese



On the auspicious and grace filled occasion of the Silver Jubilee celebration of the Catholic Diocese of Simdega, we are privileged to be the part of this great event. The Diocese was erected on 22nd May 1993. Emeritus Most Rev. Joseph Minj D.D was the first Bishop of Simdega. He retired from his office on 11th February 2008 and Most Rev. Vincent Barwa was appointed as the Bishop of Simdega.

The Jubilee is a time for looking back in gratitude and looking forward in hope for the mission. 25 years have gone by under the bridge of life. The mission started as the grain of a mustard seed, which has now grown into a huge tree spreading its branches into 37 parishes and 6 substations. It has grown extensively in the Socio-Economic, Religious, Cultural and Political areas of life. It is one of the most Catholic populated dioceses of Jharkhand. The Diocese has contributed to the Universal Church with a good number of Priestly and Religious

vocations. They are working all over the world as Missionaries.

22nd May 2018 was a memorable day that will go down in the history of Simdega Diocese. The Silver Jubilee celebration took place with the solemn Eucharistic celebration followed by a cultural programme by different units of the Diocese. The historical events of the Diocese were brought out very creatively in different forms. The Diocese recognized and felicitated the selected people from various fields like catechists, priests, sisters and laity for their yeomen service in the Diocese. We are proud of our Sr. Vimla who was felicitated for her work in the medical field.

This Silver Jubilee celebration is not the end in itself. It is a message by God to realize that our task is an ongoing one and this calls for all the faithful to renew their commitment all the more to the mission, so as to pass on the light of faith



to the next generation.

Sr. Elsy and Community

Commencement of the Boarding at Pakertoli-Simdege Diocese



8th June was indeed a memorable day when we celebrated a triple feast. The feast of our dear Mother Foundress Anne de Xainctonge, the feast of the Sacred Heart to which our community in Pakertoli is dedicated and the starting of the boarding. It was really a joyful moment for us. We had a meaningful Eucharistic Celebration along with the 15 boarders, their parents and close by parishioners. After a

festive meal together, the parents left their children in the boarding confident of being educated and taken care of by us. God has blessed us with more children and now we have 37 boarders all together. Our gratitude goes to God for enabling us to open the boarding, all our benefactors and to all our sisters for your prayerful support.

Sr. Rani

Commencement of Postulancy

8th of June 2018 was indeed a memorable day for us when 6 of our candidates. Marium, Kalista, Asnalynne, Olive, Poonam and Amruta joined the novitiate community as postulants. A meaningful prayer service was conducted by the novices. Sr. Rita accepted them to Postulancy. It was indeed a moment of grace for them and for all of us. May God who has called them grant them the strength to remain faithful to Him till to the end and allow themselves to be moulded and shaped by the Divine Potter through the daily events of their lives.



Sr. Lissy

Experiences at Sadhna Institute Lonavla

What thanks O Lord can I render thee for all the gifts thou hast showered on me

Our life is a journey, and we are all pilgrims . God journeys with us to teach us faith, to refine our character and to equip us for the greater challenges that lie ahead of us. At this juncture of my life's journey together with 17 of the participants from different congregations I stepped into Sadhana Institute for a renewal course, with lots of hope and expectations.

The course was very informative, interesting, interactive, energizing and at the same time very formative. The various input sessions, skills, group therapies, and personal sharings enabled me to be in touch with myself, as it demanded great application to oneself and personal commitment.

I found this course very relevant and helpful for my inner growth. I have personally benefited a lot for a healthy and



Left to Right: Middle Row Second Sr. Gracy

wholesome living. It was a transformative learning experience for me to become aware of my self- worth and learn to 'let go and let God'.

To sum up my feelings after this course; I feel empowered to walk with the Lord of life into the future.

I want to express my heartfelt thanks to Sr.Rita and all the sisters who made this possible for me.

Sr. Gracy

Psycho sexual integration: A course at Sadhna Institute-Lonavla

6th 22nd June 2018

My experience in Sadhana was very enriching and enlightening. The course was mainly based on grounding in the psychosexual and developmental aspects of human sexuality and emotional maturity with special reference to the celibate way of life, also to discuss the stages of psychosexual journey of oneself in a comfortable and effective manner.

Our life holds many stories such as family, educational, faith, health work, crisis and psychosexual. This dimension of our personal history involves the mysterious convergence of circumstances, events, experiences, and choices that have brought us to our present stage of integration and boundedness.

Our psychosexual story contains all the moments of our growth, excitement, discovery, pain, struggle and questioning in our relational lives. This is the story of our growing in our journey towards friendship and human

communion. It is the story of our physical and emotional awakening, our yearnings and our fantasies, our feelings and our broken hearts, our desires and our dependencies, our struggle with shame and our breakthrough to maturity.



Nobody can tell my story as well as I can.

Why should we spend time exploring these memories and messages? How will this help us to become more integrated in our relational lives? The answer to this question has to do with the importance of self-knowledge and self acceptance in our journey towards integration. Through telling our story we are being 'born again' going back and owning up the childhood.

To be healthy, we make the unconscious, conscious. In doing so, we become our own story teller without any hesitatations which brings healing to the greater extent. In

the pre-natal, infancy and childhood, the event is too much for the child, so we bury it into our own unconscious. As adults we cannot consciously remember our prenatal experience. It can seem like a faraway, unreal part of our existence. Yet much happened during our prenatal life that still exerts its influence today: how intensely we feel our sexual energy; whom we find attractive; the way we express our maleness or femaleness. It's very important to consciously become aware of the unconscious mind in

order to live a healthy, matured and integrated religious life.

Sr. Sudha and Sr. Amruta too joined in this course and have had a very positive experience. Personally I have benefited much from it and I feel grateful for the opportunity to be able to go deeper into myself and thus to be healed in order to become a free person.

Sr. Lilly

Dear Sisters,

Since this year 2018 -2019 is declared as the 'YEAR OF VOCATIONS' in the Diocese of Pune, we are all called upon to pray very specially for this intention and also speed up our efforts to work for this noble cause. What better way is there than to share our own Vocation Stories with each other and with all those we come into contact with especially in schools and villages. The seed of a vocation may fall on some faithful soul by God's grace. So in this issue of Ursuline Links and in the ones to follow we continue once again to tell our story of how God called us to this way of life and have kept us faithful to Himself and the Congregation all these years.

God's Presence in my Life

Ever since I was a child I had a great desire to become a sister. The seed of my vocation was sown in me by my aunty with whom I lived most of my younger days. Her way of life, her prayer-life, teaching me to pray, instilling good values in me etc all helped me to realize my vocation to religious life. Though my father was not for this idea of me becoming a sister since I was the eldest and we did have financial problems, yet my mother was more understanding and gave me and my sister to permission to join.

Having made up our minds we wrote to Sr. Nicholas who wholeheartedly welcomed us to Pune. My sister Lucy and myself came to Pune in 1964. I was went to Rahata where I was put in charge of the boarding for orphans. I struggled with the language but persevered with God's grace. After a year I came to Pune where I worked in the dispensary which was the candidates' house. I also learnt English. Then followed my religious training. In 1970 I made my first vows and worked as a junior sister for one year in Shanti Ashram. Though I was happy yet deep down I did not find fulfilment. I felt something was missing in my life, since I came with the desire to work with the poor. I was sent to Rahata and was happy that I could work with them. After sometime I had the desire to stay in one of the villages for some time and experience life of these poor people.

My Stay at Valki tough but very rewarding

On the 24th June Feast of St. John the Baptist Sr. Johanna drove me to this village Valki which is about 5 kms from Rahata. From here began my real life's experiences alone, no proper house, hardly anything to eat. A muslim family gave me a small hut and there I lived for two years with the bare necessities of life. The thought of Mother Anne our dear Foundress came to my mind and she gave me much strength to go through. I had the Sacred Host with me and the presence of my Jesus alone was my strength and

refuge. I did have the opportunity to attend Mass either in my little hut where Fr. George the Parish Priest of Rahata celebrated it or go with him to other villages for Mass. This enabled me to meet many other poor people and be of service to them. Mice and scorpions shared my room but I



was unafraid for my Jesus was with me. One night it rained so heavily that my hut began to leak and I found it difficult to find some dry spot. The villagers came in the morning and helped me in whatever way they could. By now they realized the love of God through me and so I was very much loved and accepted by them. Like Jesus I too felt I must go on to the other villages and so I worked in three other places- Rui, Ranchangaon and Astegaon. In all these places which I visited twice in the week, I took up the meetings with women, teaching the children, opened balwadis and prayed with them. All these encounters brought me very close to the people. With their help we built grottos in these villages and the people's faith and trust in Mother Mary grew. I had the privilege to meet Mother Teresa who encouraged me to carry on the good work. A mild paralysis attack brought me to Pune for medical treatment. I was healed within 15 days but advised rest for a year.

Conclusion: And so ended my village experiences and after I got well I was sent to different communities and did whatever I could to bring God's Love. I am now in Shanti Ashram, my main work being to pray for all my sisters who have done so much for me and taken care of me especially when I was very sick. Thank you dear sisters, thank you.

Sr. Alphonsa