



# Ursuline Links

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## EDITORIAL

### Mary, The Untier of Knots

Faith always brings us to joy, and Mary is the Mother of joy! Mary's birth brought untold joy to the whole human race.

The first aspect of her faith is this: Mary's faith unties the knot of sin (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 56). What does that mean? The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council took up a phrase of Saint Irenaeus, who states that "the knot of Eve's disobedience was untied by the obedience of Mary; what the virgin Eve bound by her unbelief, the Virgin Mary loosened by her faith". But we know one thing: nothing is impossible for God's mercy! Even the most tangled knots are loosened by his grace. And Mary, whose "yes" opened the door for God to undo the knot of the ancient disobedience, is the Mother who patiently and lovingly brings us to God, so that he can untangle the knots of our soul by his Fatherly mercy. Reflecting on the theme of 'Mary, the Untier of Knots' I was reminded of an incident in my life when I was a novice. One day as I sat with my novice mistress sharing my life with her I told her, "Sister, I don't know where to start for my life is all in knots". What she said to me still rings in my ears. She said: "Don't worry, let's remove the knots one by one." And that is what she did, helping me to untie the knots of my life and make me a free person.

I define the life of Mary as this: Mary believed the word of the Lord, and treasured it in her heart. For me, this believing and treasuring of the words of the Lord mean first of all believing and treasuring the Scriptures. By meditating upon Mary, I become more aware of the dozens of times each day I come to a choice, in which I can follow the path of greater love of God and others or greater love of self. The more I ponder Mary, the more I recognize that voice inside me urging me to make the choice of selfless love not as merely some psychological function, but as the word of the Lord. The more I invoke Mary in those situations, the more I say to that voice, "Be it done to me according to your word."

Today along with the growth and development in our society we are also in a world of turmoil. We witness the heartless attacks of the ISIS, the Talibans on innocent humanity. One government down playing the other in



politics, the poor are becoming poorer, creeping individualism in the private sector and now the problems and difficulties that people are facing because of the pandemic that has hit our world very badly. These are the many knots (problems) in our personal life as well as in our environment around.

How can we untie the knots of our own life? How can Mary help us? We hear the answer in the words of Mary at the wedding feast: "Do whatever Jesus tells you". To listen to Jesus, we need to quieten our inner and outer world. There is a lot of empty noise around. a lot of temptations being in the digital world. Often, we are entangled with a number of knots in our own personal life. As well as in our relationships with others. This causes eruption in persons and ultimate leads to tension and downplaying the other in the community, in the society and thus tying more knots in life.

Are we ready to take up this leap of faith in our lives and loosen the knots of life? With God's grace and with Mary as our model, you and I can choose to make this world a better place by untying the knots of our everyday life. The choice is our!

Sr. Susanne

# The Cannonball Moment – The Transforming Moment

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
Nor are your ways, says the Lord.  
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
So are my ways higher than the earth,  
So are my thoughts than your thoughts”. Isaiah: 55: 8-9



This scripture quote comes up to my mind as I reflect upon the **“Cannonball moment”** in the life of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Our God who is our creator and the author of our lives knows our past, present and future. Every event and encounter that takes place in our life happens with His divine knowledge. God knows the “big picture”, a picture that is impossible for us to see from our limited perspective.

And so it was with St. Ignatius of Loyola who was struck hard by the cannonball that shattered his legs. He suffered tremendous pain and it took him months to recover. During this period of convalescence God made an intervention in the life of St. Ignatius. His encounter with Christ and the saints through the books he read enabled St. Ignatius to have a self introspection, reevaluate and commit his life for God’s work. This cannonball moment transformed the life of St. Ignatius where he began to see all things in God.

Drawing inspiration from St. Ignatius’s response to his cannonball injury which further led him to reflect and to change his way of life, it’s an opportunity for each one of us too, to search our own responses to the life’s unexpected moments. It is during these cannonball moments we need to depend on the grace of God. To open our inner eyes to see His finger and to embrace His invitation to let ourselves be guided by Him. Thus, to let these cannonball moments be the transforming moments of our lives.

As we live our commitment it is important that time to time we ask ourselves, “What are the cannonball moments in my life and how do I respond to it”?

Sr. Marie Therese

## The virtue of fortitude in the life of Mother Anne

The year 2021 is an important mile stone in the life of the Society of St. Ursula, for it marks the 400<sup>th</sup> death anniversary of our beloved foundress M. Anne (1621-2021). Mother Anne entered heaven on 8<sup>th</sup> June 1621 at the age of 54, leaving behind a legacy of virtues to be followed by her sisters. M. Anne was an embodiment of virtues. In the following lines I wish to highlight the virtue of fortitude in M. Anne.

Fortitude is the virtue to face the suffering and pain and tribulations of every kind in deep faith, loving patience, courage and confidence.

Illustrated below are just 3 events that took place in the life of M. Anne (among the many) bearing witness to the fact that our foundress was a brave and courageous woman.

M. Anne was convinced that God was calling her to found our Society in Dole, which was an enemy city of France. The atmosphere was one of national hatred towards the French by the Spaniards. Her own father wrote a letter to the parliament of Dole requesting that she be treated as a rebel and a runaway. A storm of abuse fell upon Anne after the public reading of the letter in Dole. Vulgar taunts would issue from shopfronts and windows “foreigner!” “spy!” “runaway!” “hypocrite!” “rebellious hussy!”

Anne's father made again and again various attempts to bring her back home. He wrote a letter to the Jesuits in Dole, not to hear her confession, not to give her direction, and not to allow her to receive Holy



Communion! Anne was left stunned when she heard this!

While in Dole, Anne was residing at the house of Mme Duzin. Mme Duzin received an anonymous note threatening to burn the house to the ground if she did not get rid of the obnoxious French woman. Fearing the public, Mme Duzin was forced to put Anne out of her house. Mocking laughter and sarcastic taunts were thrown at Anne and the people were satisfied that the French woman was forced to sleep under the open sky.

All these painful moments Anne bore patiently in order to accomplish the will of God in her life namely to found our Society in the city of Dole.

How do I respond when obstacles come on my way in order to fulfill God's will in my life?

Sr. Sunita



## New Ventures

### St. Ursula- Borgaon Manju- Akola

On 23rd August 2021 we opened a 'study Centre' in our house. Mount Carmel School going poor girls staying far away are very happy to avail of these facilities. Five girls have joined the boarding.

Our Foundress Mother Anne de Xainctonge had but one desire to reach out and help the poor women and girls.

On 15th Sept 2021 we began the tailoring course for the very poor girls and women from the surrounding areas. At present we have 12 girls who come to us to benefit from the course so that in future they will earn for their families once they have mastered the trade.

They are very happy and grateful. We thank God for these new ventures giving us a new insight to reach out to the poor and needy.

Sr. Karuna



### Karunya Trust

The Kalyan Diocese is one of the Mission dioceses in India, established in the year 1988 with the intention of bringing unity, integrity and oneness among the scattered Syro-Malabar Catholics in the various parts of Maharashtra and mission work in the various villages of Maharashtra.

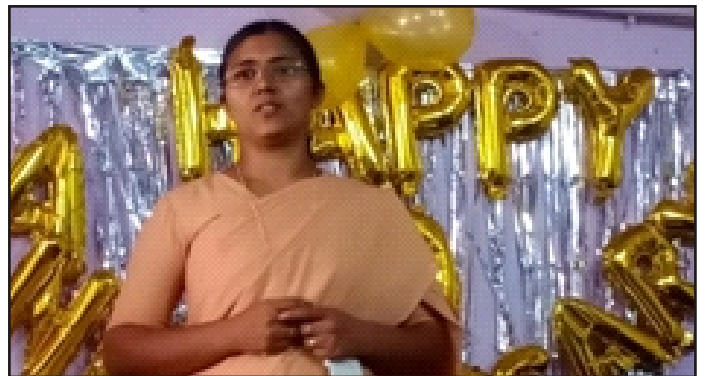
**Karunya Trust, the Diocesan social work wing of the Diocese of Kalyan** is a Non-Governmental Organization, registered under the Bombay Public Trust 1950. Ever since its inception on 5th September 1998, the Trust was engaged in the development of the poor irrespective of cast, creed and religion. Karunya Trust seeks to restore the dignity and potential of marginalized individuals and communities by facilitating access to holistic education, health, livelihood, relief and rehabilitation along with disaster preparedness. Our vision is a just and harmonious society rooted in the gospel values of love, freedom and peace.

### My experience in Karunya Trust

**“Faith is the foundation upon which rests hope and charity and all the other virtues.”**

“Every day is a new experience and it opens up new opportunities, and life is awesome.” I Joined Karunya Trust on 17th March 2021. Everything seemed to be a new experience and a new world that I had entered. As I had a telephonic conversation earlier and then meeting the director in person who explained the responsibilities in brief and mentioned that I had to write a project proposal and there are people to help, I gained some confidence.

Those were the days I felt it as a real challenge to work in this institution. The rosary was my biggest support which gave me the inner strength to go forward.



Sometimes even the greatest joy brings challenges. It was a challenge between work and covid19. I had to submit many annual reports and project proposals, suddenly everything went topsy-turvy. I was down with Corona and the pressure of work was too strong because I was told that every document to the donor should be submitted on time. I had no materials to write the proposal, I had never visited the project area to have an idea. The staff was busy with their activities, report, and meetings. Later I realized that the proposal had to be written by me. Those were the days I questioned God about my purpose of bringing me here? The director was cool and yet very supportive, it was my responsibility to meet the dead end of the proposal. The quarantine period helped me to start work. challenging myself, to take risks. Since the effect of corona had many side effects I could not meet the deadline of many activities and that led the donors to the extension of the end date.

I'm happy to share about this new venture that our Society has taken up. I'm looking forward to sharing with you more of this noble work of Karunya Trust that is reaching out to so many poor and downtrodden people.

Sr. Rosemary

## Overseas Mission Orientation Course at Ishvani Kendra

The *Overseas Mission Orientation* course was conducted by Ishvani Kendra, Pune, from 31st July to 21st August 2021. A Religious with missionary zeal and enthusiasm, trusting completely in the saving power of God is ready to reach out to the people in need, in different parts of the world. This course is a very helpful tool, as I have been appointed to venture into the



Overseas Mission Orientation  
Ishvani Kendra, Pune (July 31 - 21 August 2021)

mission of our Congregation in Africa. The course has enlightened me by offering various topics connected to the subject matter. It dealt with matters concerning our day to day life in overseas mission and the difficulties and challenges that missionaries face in their apostolate.

St. Paul says, "*For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God*" (1. Cor.1.18). It was no doubt clear that the cross is before us, as we launch into the new culture, new mission with new people; yet we are confident that the power of God will never fail us. As we are being planted into the new and unknown soil, it is

fitting and appropriate that each one should have a lucid understanding, of the new culture of the country where he or she is appointed. This course helped us to deal with our initial difficulties as we enter into the new mission.

Over all the course was illuminating and helpful, as it challenged me to face the difficulties of working in foreign countries; it also helped me in discovering what my fears and anxieties, strengths and gifts are as I move towards my mission. I praise and thank God for helping me to complete this course successfully in spite of the uncertainties caused by

the pandemic. As I write this to you, I feel positive that the prayers of St Ursula, the emotional bond that I have with each of you in our Society will help me go forward joyfully.

Sr. Diya

## Experiences at Premanjali

It is our great pleasure to share the experience that we had in Premanjali at Maan. Though we were there only for a month we had an enjoyable and enriching experience with our sisters and hostel children.

We had English class to improve our communication skills, vocabulary and self confidence. We were given various topics to speak on and to listen to different motivational speakers. This helped us to improve our language.

Different household activities helped us to be creative, responsible and gain confidence in whatever we were doing. Our sisters in Premanjali though busy with the hostel children and in the school, gave their valuable time to us to teach us stitching, singing, reading, cooking etc.

We enjoyed being with the hostel children, teaching them dances, songs, skit and organizing games for them. It is an inspiration for us to see our sisters working for the poor and less privileged children.

The daily mass in the parish, different spiritual activities, the monthly recollection given by Fr. Linus helped us to reflect on God's love for us and our readiness to answer



his call.

Thus our stay in Premanjali helped us grow in many ways. We are very grateful to Sr. Marina, and Sr. Lissy for giving us the opportunity to go to Maan and sending Sr. Vanitha to guide and be with us during our stay. Thank you dear sisters for your prayerful support.

Pre-novices



## Experiences at Sumedha- Sadhana, Nainital



**Sr. Sandhya and I had a golden opportunity to attend a two and a half months course at Sumedha** - a program of inner journeying together with others seeking for greater healing and wholeness, to live lives in more fulfilling and satisfying ways and be more effective in our service to others. It helped to explore and examine our least liked behaviours, feelings, and responses to move towards the wellspring within us which radiates peace, love, and harmony. The academic program was enriched by creative liturgies, weekly recollections, retreat, group therapy, sharing. It enabled me to journey into my innermost and find the wellspring like going down to the underground stream to connect to the wisdom. It prepared me to embrace the past, own up the present and plan for the future.

**Centering Prayer** helped me go deeper into God's invitation by calming self-consciously and be receptive to God's promptings. , need to be an integrated person, a time to move closer to the truth about oneself.

Every fault acknowledged, every defense dismantled, every pain felt and released gives us powerful new thoughts and feelings for creating our lives in the new direction. Every problem is a gift that makes me aware of

my shadow that I need to integrate doing which leads me to wellbeing. Nature is the greatest teacher, it is a place of divinity where I can gather a sense of the sacred, recognizing God's presence in every bee, in every blade of grass and in every drop of water, rekindle our relationship with nature as it is our true home, we need to be integrated and acknowledged to the whole of creation.

Behind every behaviour there is a positive intention, no matter how annoying and negative it may seem for us. Every experience teaches us something, no use of blaming ourselves and others. It is better to focus on finding solution. **We have the capacity to heal ourselves to be a whole and human person.** See others with different perspective, attitude.

Many more topics were dealt with that enabled us to go deeper into the journey of our lives and to emerge as enlightened and joyful persons. We are ever so grateful to Sr. Marina for the privileged opportunity to attend the course which has refreshed, strengthened and rejuvenated us not only from within but from the beautiful nature around.

**Sr. Divya and Sr. Sandhya**

## My experience in Divine Retreat Centre Assam

It was a rare opportunity that I received from our Society and I am grateful to our sisters for it. It was a memorable experience, my words are not sufficient to express the feelings and healing I have experienced over there. It was a place where retreats are conducted regularly. People would flock to the Centre from various States, from far and wide . I had a great responsibility towards day to day functioning, such as, taking care of the guests, arranging and decorating the altar, Which I did to the best of my ability. Whenever I did this service I offered it for a particular intention. I had a lot of opportunities to grow immensely in the love of God. Everything was an



inspiration for my growth, now I can look at my future with gratitude and love for the providence of God.

**Sr. Elisa SU.**

## Aging Gracefully

We are at the sunset of our lives - the best time to reflect, to relax, to remember, to reconnect, and to be reborn. Think thoughts that are positive. We have to untie the knots of our negative past and let go.

Keeping this in mind 19 senior sisters participated in the 'Aging Gracefully' course from 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> August 2021 at Atma Darshan given by Fr. Ittoop SVD.

In the subconscious level we have lots of images stored both positive and negative. These images turn to memories, memories turn to thoughts and thoughts turn to feelings and feelings turn to sensations, finally bodily reactions follow.

At this phase of our lives how do we want to live?

Fr. Ittoop explained to us the 5 elements namely - fire, air, space, earth and water. These 5 elements are related to our fingers and to its corresponding emotions.

1. Thumb for- anxiety.
2. Index finger- related to air.
3. Middle finger space anger.
4. Ring finger- earth sadness.
5. Little finger water low self-esteem.

How to get rid of negative energy through breathing?



### Tips to fight Covid 19

1. Breathe like a rabbit. (shallow breathing to reduce anxiety)
2. Pant like a dog. (to reduce the level of irritability)
3. Roar like a lion (to reduce the level of rage within you.)
4. Breathe like a tortoise (inhale and exhale to keep your mental calmness.)
5. Breathing like a bird (taking air in and then let go.)

**Integration:** Go back to your experiences and integrate them. This integration will lead to wisdom and wisdom to integration. If this does not take place, then it will lead to despair.

**Ego:** At this stage of our life we need to move away from the ego and move towards the soul and soul leads you to bliss.

Srs. Angela and Sunita

## Visit to Our Mother House – Brig Switzerland

**One of the most fulfilling things in life we can ever experience is to fall deeply in love.**

This was the experience that we had during our visit to Brig, Dole and Dijon. As we were visiting and being in different places we were deeply touched and moved by the life and mission of our dear Foundress and our sisters. Mother Anne was a great and courageous woman of her time and she is still very much loved, accepted and remembered for her greatest contribution in forming, shaping and educating the girls and women. In spite of having lived an unassuming life, even today she lives in the heart of France as we saw the painting of her image among the historical people of France at that time. May Mother Anne be our model and inspiration after the example of Jesus Christ.

The smiling and happy faces of our sisters are an expression of the satisfaction that they have in following in the footsteps of our Foundress. Dear sisters you are an inspiration. We thank you for all that you have been to us. We enjoyed being with you. It



was a special privilege to participate in the joyful giving of our Jubilarians. A special thanks to Sr. Nicole for your love, care, concern and keen interest that you have shown us. Thank you for all the good and wonderful things that you offered us. May the Lord help each one of us to be an inspiration for the young generation to fall deeply in love with Christ in following the vision and mission of Mother Anne.

Sr. Joseline and Sr. Prerita

## OBITUARY

We regret the sad death of the mother of Sr. Anusha who expired on 15th Sept 2021. She was 57 years old. May she rest in peace.





# Congratulations Dear Sisters

15th August 2021

Golden Jubilee



## Platinum Jubilee

Sr. Martina Bellwald  
Sr. Constantia Schmidt



## Diamond Jubilee

Sr. Marie-Josephe Kalbermatten  
Sr. Marcella Gurten



Sr. Pushpa Kommattam. Sr. Nicole Glenz & Sr. Christa Erni

## The Provincial Chapter - South African Province



The Chapter took place in Ursuline Convent Mt. Nicholas, Libode on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of September 2021. The Secretaries to the Chapter were Sr Celine Gomes and Sr Cecilia Mavuthela.

### Theme: “Awakened to be sowers of Prophetic Hope”.

Sr Pushpa Kommattam our Superior General declared the Chapter open in the presence of Sr. Augusta Stoffel the Assistant General and the delegates. She welcomed all the sisters and thanked for the preparations made. She made us aware of the importance of the Chapter. She said, “A Chapter is a reflection of all the Sisters in the Province bearing in mind that our Province is our home.” Sr Pushpa encouraged us to do our best to come closer to God and to make our community, Province, Society, a better place to live in.

Unpacking the theme, “Awakened to be sowers of Prophetic Hope” Sr. Antonia explained that a Prophet is God's spoken person in a given time and place. Some prophets are sent to inspire action or change. She said we are the prophets of today. We are awakened by God during this challenging time of Covid -19, has made us aware of the importance of life, teaching us to plan and

think ahead. Covid -19 taught us to be Sowers of Prophetic hope to ourselves, to our community, and to God's people. Let us check the signs of the time and allow God to use us, just as he did with the prophets of old. It is God's specific invitation to live out the call, to be Sowers of Prophetic hope.

Sr Pushpa Kommattam re-appointed Sr Mary Shange as the Provincial of South African Province.

### The Leadership Team of South African Province

Sr Mary Shange {Provincial Superior}

Sr Martha Shezi {Assistant Provincial}

Sr Antonia Khathi {Councillor}

Sr Celine Gomes {Councillor}

Sr. Augusta Stoffel Assistant Superior General's presence was very much appreciated at our Chapter. She shared her valuable and experiential knowledge, ideas, inspirations and was a great advisor to us. Thank you very much sister. We thank Sr. Pushpa for conducting the Chapter so well. We also thank all the sisters in Motherhouse {Switzerland}, India, and Romania who supported us through their prayers.

Sr. Celine

## St Joseph- Guardian of Virgins The Miraculous Staircase

The fatherly protection of St. Joseph was evident in what he did for a group of religious sisters in New Mexico in 1878. In 1873 the sisters of Loretto operated a girl's academy in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The academy was very successful, so the sisters wanted to build a new chapel. They hired a well - known architect to complete the task. The building project took five years to complete. However, once the chapel was finished the sisters realised that the chapel lacked a way to get to the upper choir loft without the use of a very long ladder; the choir loft was 20 feet above the main floor. Climbing such a ladder was very difficult for the sisters. They also realised that there was no room left in the main chapel area for a staircase to be built because of the many pews, and the sisters could not rehire the man who had built the chapel because he died shortly after the chapel was completed. What were they to do?

Well the sisters prayed to Saint Joseph for help. They began a novena to St. Joseph asking him to send a carpenter to help them. Remarkably on the final day of the novena, a mysterious man arrived at the convent and stated that he was interested in building a staircase to the choir loft for the sisters. The gentleman had only one request: he wanted to work alone and behind closed doors. The sisters readily accepted his offer and hired him. It took the man three months to build the staircase. Once the project was completed, the man could not be found. He simply vanished from the town. No one saw him leave, and no one knew who he was. The sisters looked for him everywhere but could not find him.

Unsuccessful, the sisters went to the lumberyard to



inquire who had attained the lumber for the staircase, as well as to pay for the lumber. When questioned, not one person at the lumberyard knew what they were talking about.. Perplexed, the sisters remembered how odd it was that the man had only a T square, a saw, a hammer, and a few other basic tools. None of the sisters ever did see how the lumber arrived at the chapel either. Intrigued, the sisters and others from the town inspected the staircase and realised that the mysterious man had constructed something quite unique.

It was a spiral staircase that didn't interfere with the pews on the main floor in any way. It had 30 steps, no centre support or load- bearing column, and appeared to be floating in the air. It also contained no nails! It was found to be held together by square wooden pegs. The staircase is an architectural wonder. It's a carpenter's masterpiece!

So where did the wood come from? Well, in 1996, a study was done by Forrest N. Easley. His extensive study found that the wood of the staircase is spruce, but unlike any other spruce in the world. Additional studies were undertaken, and it was determined that the spruce that most resembles the kind found in the spiral staircase is only found in Israel.

Who was the mysterious man who built the staircase? The Sisters of Loretto believe that it was St. Joseph. After praying and asking their spiritual father to send someone to construct a staircase for them, St. Joseph came himself and built it for the consecrated virgins. The staircase remains intact to this day.

Sr. Angela



## Laying and Blessing of Foundation Stone of the Extension of Stella Maris School

Rev. Fr. Rajesh Pereira did us the honour of laying and blessing the foundation stone, at a simple ceremony in the presence of some teachers, students and sisters, on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

## You Tube Channel

The You Tube Channel of the Society of St. Ursula of Anne de Xaintonge was launched on 18th Sept. 2021 at Shanti Ashram in the presence of all the Superiors who had come for a two-days meeting, which was animated by Fr. Gregory Pinto SVD.

