



Ursuline Links

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Message From the Superior General - Sr. Pushpa Kommattam



Once in a while we all need to hear somebody say 'I think you are wonderful.'

Encourage some one with these words today. Rom.12.10, Eph.4.32

We all need this "Bravo" now and then.

We are like a piece of

mosaic. Each piece is important for the full picture.

Everyone may not be nice in our eyes, but there is something nice in everyone.

Let us try our best to find that something which is nice in others.

You are who you are for a reason

You're part of an intricate plan

You're a precious and perfect unique design

Called God's special child/ woman.

Each one in the Province is like that mosaic piece, no matter what the shape or size, or even where it is placed, all the pieces together make the full picture as God wants from us as a family of Ursuline Province of India.

There is a God who made us for a reason and our life has profound meaning. We discover that meaning and purpose only when we make God the reference point of our lives.

After meeting nearly all the Sisters, I feel each one is trying to do her part, though a bit more of collaboration with one another is essential.

Thank you very much for your warm welcome and friendly atmosphere, Sr. Augusta and I experienced in every community we visited.

May God bless each one of you and grant you the grace to serve the Lord. Be sure you are in my prayers daily.

Sr. Pushpa Kommattam

Message From Sr. Augusta - Assistant General

Dear Sr. Rita, dear Sisters all,

With a thank-filled heart I look back on the 9 weeks, I have spent in India with you all. It was for me a coming home, where I have spent the greater part of my life. I like to thank you for the warm welcome, we

have received and the love, which was visible and tangible that you gifted us with. May God bless you all.

In deep joy and gratitude I could see the hard, selfless work you put in, to reach the GOALS Mother Anne set out for our Society. I am proud of you all.

The seeds we have sown are bearing fruits.

The spiritual preparation during the Chapter on Discernment, which Fr. Gratian S.J gave us, helped all of us in our group-discussions, to spell out the needs of the Province and the qualities we expect of a councillor.

Joyful seeker of God in all the events of life... and all the events of life must lead me to a deeper love of the Trinity.

Deep faith in God and in Others, Clarity and Passion for Mission, Loyalty to the Society, Confidentiality and Working in Inner Freedom, To be an integrated Person with non-judgmental attitude, Being Mission-oriented over one's likes and dislikes etc.

Now as a team, we all work together. Each Sister must be ready and willing to work hard to contribute her part, so that as a Community, we all together achieve these Goals.

Once more I wish you all lots of inner Joy and Strength in spreading the Kingdom of God.

Yours affectionately,

Sr. Augusta



EDITORIAL

Misericordia Et Misera (Mercy with Misery)

In *Misericordia et Misera*, the apostolic letter released on November 21st 2016, Pope Francis wrote, “The Catholic Church's focus on God's mercy must continue with individual acts of kindness, assistance to the poor and particularly, encouraging Catholics to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and making it easier for them to do so.”

MISERICORDIA ET MISERA is a phrase used by St. Augustine in narrating the story of Jesus' encounter with the woman taken in adultery (cf. *Jn* 8: 1-11). A very beautiful and apt way of expressing the mystery of God's love when it touches the sinner: “the two of them alone remained: *mercy with misery*”. What great mercy and divine justice shine forth in this touching narrative! Its teaching serves



not only to throw light on the conclusion of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy 20th Nov. 2016 but also to point out the path that we are called to follow in the future. The Holy Year of Mercy was indeed a time rich in mercy and which must continue to be celebrated and lived out in our communities parishes and in the world at large.

A woman and Jesus meet. She is an adulteress and, in the eyes of the Law, liable to be stoned. Jesus, through his preaching and the total gift of himself that would lead him to the Cross, returned the Mosaic Law to its true and original intent. What is central here is not the law or legal justice, but the love of God, which is capable of looking into the heart of each person and seeing the deepest desire hidden there; God's love must take primacy over all else. The Gospel account, however, is not an encounter of sin and judgement in the abstract, but of a sinner and her



Saviour. Jesus looked that woman in the eye and read in her heart a desire to be understood, forgiven and set free. The misery of sin was clothed with the mercy of love. Jesus' only judgement is one filled with mercy and compassion for the condition of this sinner. Jesus replies with a lengthy silence to those who wished to judge and condemn her to death. His purpose in doing this was to let God's voice be heard in the conscience not only of the woman, but also in those of her accusers, who drop their stones and one by one leave the scene (cf. *Jn* 8:9). Jesus then says: “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?... Neither do I condemn you. Go your way and from now on do not sin again”. Jesus helps the woman to look to the future with hope and to make a new start in life. Once clothed in mercy, even if the inclination to sin remains, it is overcome by the love that makes it possible for her to look ahead and to live her life differently.

In conclusion, “*Mercy is a force that overcomes everything, filling our hearts with love and bringing consolation through pardon*”. (Pope Francis)

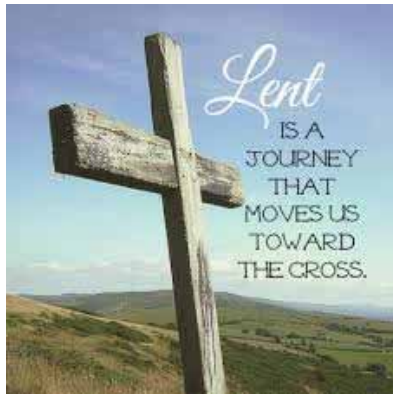
Let us recall our reflections, decisions and all that we have done in the 'Year of Mercy' being more compassionate, forgiving and merciful towards the members of our community, in the apostolate and especially towards the poor and the downtrodden. Let us not stop with the ending of the 'Year of Mercy' but let our merciful hearts continue beating with the merciful and compassionate heart of Jesus that will never stop beating. Let us continue to keep the 'doors of mercy' of our hearts open for all those who enter therein.

Sr. Susanne

Retreat Dates to Remember

1. 21st evening - 30th April morning Fr. Medard SJ
2. 2nd evening - 10th May morning Fr. I Raj SJ
3. 28th May - 2nd June morning Inner Healing Retreat- Attappady

'All I want is mercy not sacrifice' - Lenten Reflection



The season of Lent is here again reminding all of us of God's abounding love for the humankind. However when we hear the word Lent what comes to our minds at once is fasting, penance, sacrifices, giving up and many other things which we do not long for. As we all know all these are

external factors. Do we concentrate on what is inside us which no one can see but God alone- our inner selves?

If all our external piety will make us only self righteous and not make us more loving and compassionate it is meaningless before God. If they are carried out with a good purpose they will automatically make us better persons for nothing great can be achieved without the struggle- some giving up, some tedious effort or sacrifices.

Lent is a time to convince ourselves that there is always a way to make things good again especially those whom we hurt or those who have hurt us for to say I am 'sorry' it requires courage and it takes a big man/woman to be able to forgive. Am I the first one to take this step courageously especially during this holy season?



Lent is all about 'homecoming' like the prodigal son returned to himself first - 'he came to his senses.....' (Lk.15:17) and then to his father's home to his loving embrace - do we experience the joy of reconciling with ourselves first and then with others and coming back to God's loving embrace? If yes we can be convinced that Lent is a joyful season and not something to be gloomy about.

Lent is not so much a time to concentrate on what goes into our mouths but much about what comes out of our mouths (Mk.7:15). It is a time for a self examination and to ask, 'am I a person who spreads happiness wherever I go or are people happy whenever I go from their presence.' Remember the maxim: 'Flies are caught by a spoonful of sugar rather than a barrelful of vinegar'.

Sr. Marina

My Experience of Religious Life



"Sing my soul at the joy that I feel, there is now dwelling in me my God".

This is my song of praise as I look back with joy on the years of my commitment to Jesus.

The following of Jesus wasn't easy, but wonderful and always risk taking. I was born in a family of very religious

minded parents, a disciplinarian father, but a mother who always compromised with her gentleness. Her piety, planted the seed of vocation to religious life in me. The caption that caught my eye and which captured me to set out was "These orphan children need you, are you ready?"

Unique were his ways with which He led me through to

confirm my love for Him and His love for me. The trials in various stages transformed me. So, it gave me inner freedom and joy. The most painful trial in turn was my foundation experience. I came to a deeper understanding of divine reality that God uses broken things beautifully, broken clouds to pour down rain, broken soil to set as fields, broken crops to yield seeds and broken seeds to give life to new plants. So when you feel you are broken be rest assured that God is planning to utilise you for something greater. I am deeply grateful to God for all that has happened these past 32 years of Religious Life in the Ursuline family and I am greatly indebted to the Society for making me what I am today.

Sr. Vinita

Lenten fasting and feasting

While we fast from certain thing; it is time to feast on other things such as:

FAST FROM	FEAST ON	FAST FROM	FEAST ON
judging others	the Christ dwelling in others	Complaining	appreciation
Indifferences	the unity of all life	Bitterness	forgiveness
words that pollute	words that purify	Self-concern	compassion for others
Discontent	gratitude	Idle gossip	purposeful silence
Anger	patience	Personal anxiety	unceasing prayer
Pessimism	optimism		



VISITATION

4th January - 8th March 2017



Welcome Dear Sisters

Visitation to Communities for the Pre-election of the Provincial



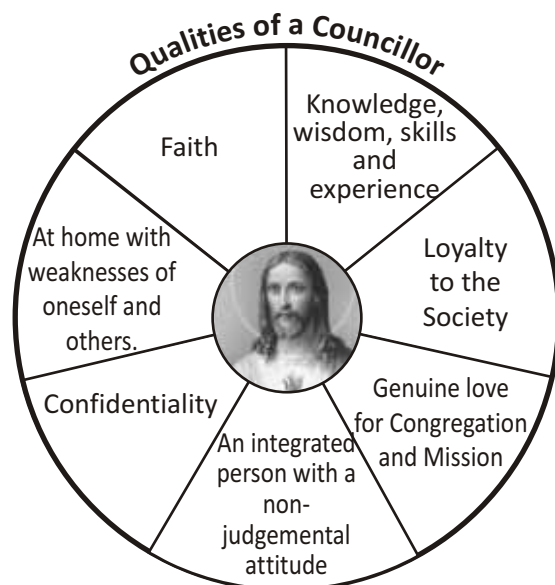
Provincial Chapter- 4th February 2017 at Shanti Ashram- 85 Sisters Participated



Fr. Gratian Carlos sj guided us with an input session on the criteria in electing leaders. Two questions were given to us for discussion namely:

1. What would be the greatest opportunities, challenges, concerns or areas for growth that our Province would be facing in the coming three years?
2. Qualities that a person should have to be elected as a councillor.

The outcome of our discussions were as follows:



The New Governing Body- 2017-2020



From L to R Sr. Marina Thomas -Vice-Provincial, Sr. Valery Borges- Councillor, Sr. Karuna Sadaphal- Councillor, Sr. Rita D'Silva Provincial, Sr. Rekha Kurian- Councillor, Sr. Lissy Thomas- Councillor

Psycho-Spiritual Rejuvenation My Experiences at Ryshivana



The Sabatical Year 2016-2017 has been gifted to me by God and my Society. It has been a year of renewal, inner healing and being rejuvenated in body, mind and spirit.

'Ryshivana' in its scenic beauty situated on the 'lap of Mother Earth' speaks volumes of God's infinite love

and goodness; enabling one to live in harmony with oneself, others and creation itself. Many were the topics dealt with as I journeyed each day along with my companions at Ryshivana. What I would like to share with you is the 'Journey of Prayer' that we were invited to walk through namely:

1. Vocal Prayer 2. Discursive Prayer 3. Active Prayer 4. Passive Prayer 5. The Dark night of the Senses 6. The Dark night of the Spirit 7. Spiritual Bethrothal & Marriage.

* In Vocal prayer we are taken back into our childhood days where we learnt the Lord's Prayer and other prayers at home and in our Catechism classes. As one grows in the higher stages of prayer, even vocal prayer becomes meaningful and a means of communion with God.

* In Discursive prayer the mind is active. Meditating on the Word of God it definitely helps us to communicate with God.

* Active prayer keeps us focussed on some truths of God-eg. Goodness, Faithfulness, Love, Mercy etc. This type of prayer can be compared to a child whose father is abroad and the child has not yet seen him. But the father regularly sends gifts and communicates with his child over the phone. The child has not yet experienced the father in person, only can imagine the qualities of his dear father. In Active prayer one has not yet deeply experienced God-only focussed on His qualities. My effort and God's Grace.

* Passive prayer is being consciously aware of the loving presence of God. This is the work of God. One sees Him present in persons, creation, the Eucharist, anytime and everywhere. Here the person experiences God without his/her effort. It's entirely the work of God. Intellect and memory are not involved. It's like the child who gets the message that his father is coming home. He longs for him and when he comes, he becomes one with him in a loving embrace.

* The Dark Night of the Senses is bypassed by the one who has gone through the passive stage of prayer. In the dark night of the senses one experiences dryness in prayer and a deep sense of her/his misery and sinfulness. Pride, self-gratification and self-righteousness creeps in, making the person weak in love and incapable of a deeper communication with God and others.

* When a person goes through the dark night of the soul, purification takes place. Soul and Spirit are involved. One struggles long sickness, misunderstanding, death of a loved one etc. However the person going through this stage experiences union with God and a powerful communication with God. Mother Anne and the saints have gone through this stage. They rarely enjoyed good health, an easy life, experienced etc. but they were attuned and one with God as they gazed into eternity.

* Spiritual Bethrothal and Spiritual Marriage is the stage where one triumphantly comes out of the dark night of the soul. The person lets go off everything and surrenders totally to God. Thus a spiritual marriage takes place where soul and Christ are one. (Gal.2/20) Eg. of a dry log- it burns into a red hot amber. A similar transformation takes place in the soul. As the 'divine' fire of love consumes the soul, love transforms the soul into God through participation in the fire of love. It's the stage of a re-birth of the soul.

Sr. Maya

Happy Birthday Dear Sisters

APRIL

- 3. Sr. Celine
- 5. Sr. Jolly
- 8. Sr. Meena
- 16. Sr. Joicy
- 17. Sr. Miriam
- 19. Sr. Dipti
- 20. Sr. Stella
- 24. Sr. Mary Ann
- 26. Sr. Angela

MAY

- 1. Sr. Philomena
- 2. Sr. Silvy
- 2. Sr. Joseline
- 4. Sr. Vimla
- 7. Sr. Tanuja
- 7. Sr. Sudhani
- 12. Sr. Alphonsa
- 12. Sr. Pratibha
- 25. Sr. Bincy

JUNE

- 1. Sr. Alka
- 3. Sr. Judith
- 5. Sr. Malini
- 5. Sr. Gracy
- 6. Sr. Augusta
- 12. Sr. Anne
- 13. Sr. Rosemary
- 13. Sr. Sudha
- 16. Sr. Anusha
- 17. Sr. Varsha
- 18. Sr. Ranita
- 20. Sr. Jyoti
- 23. Sr. Amrita
- 28. Sr. Juliana
- 30. Sr. Clare
- 30. Sr. Mercy

Women - The Backbone of Society

Women's Day Celebration - 8th March 2017

On the occasion of International Women's Day, I feel empowered, I feel happy, I feel this is our time to Be who we truly want to BE.

Women today are mothers, daughters, sisters, friends, empathis, nurturers, care-takers, scientists, doctors, care-takers, revolutionaries, healers, visionaries, auto, bus drivers, train guards, pilots, police, poets.....whoever they want to be.

Each woman wears many hats in just one single moment. She is born with such amazing abilities. She is above all a creator of positive change. **She moulds this little life into**



one BIG beautiful life. This life then goes and touches all with its amazing love, only then creates another life, such is the **miracle of a woman.** She Gives, and Gives and Gives.....to all, so openly. Her heart is deeper than any ocean and bigger than any universe.

The world will come to a half without women, they are innately powerful, multi-talented, have strength with grace, courage with compassion, affluence with values, and wisdom with vision. In her lies the seed for profound social transformation. She can be a strong peacemaker, at home, in the Community, in Society and in the world. She has carried out her responsibilities effectively and efficiently, and has proved her abilities and leadership qualities at the grass root level.



Despite all these strengths still consciousness is essential, one needs to emphasize that real empowerment of women is from within, women must empower themselves to believe in themselves, and stop doubting their place in society. And change the Patriarchal mind- set of men which will enable an equal free world.

A truly empowered woman is one who is Confident, Creative and brings people together rather than create disharmony. She is truly empowered, when she has inner strength and peace of mind. She has the potential to FORGIVE. We need women to come to the forefront and take more responsibilities for spreading VALUES, to bring prosperity to unite.

The step that we take today, the field that we plough today will create a better ground for the next generation of women, only then will we make a difference.

As women let us use every opportunity that comes our way to be the women we wish to be...

This year we had 70 women, who took part in the celebration, and various sports conducted for them, and who also exhibited their self-worth by performing various awareness programs, on equal rights to education and health related issues.

Hats off to all women everywhere, Rejoice, Celebrate, Live: because you are stronger than any mountain and can fly higher than any Rocket ship.

Sr. Divya

OBITUARY

Sr. Judith's mother expired on 1st January 2017.

Sr. Juliana lost her elder sister on 10th Feb. 2017

Sr. Rekha's mother passed away on 6th March 2017.

May God grant them all His eternal peace and rest
and grant consolation to the family members.



News From India

Launching of the New Website of the Society of St. Ursula, Pune www.stursulaindia.org

The website of the Society of St. Ursula, Pune was displayed to the 85 sisters who had gathered for the Provincial Chapter on 4th Feb. 2017. It was a moment of great pride for all of us to view our website and see the happenings in our Congregation here in India and abroad. We are all welcome to write articles or send pictures for the web. The 'sisters' blog' invites us all to write poems, stories, experiences etc. So please do come forward and share with us your views and news.



Science Exhibition at St. Ursula School - Varawade



It was a moment of pride, joy and happiness for St. Ursula School- Varawade, when it's budding young scientists exhibited their scientific talents on various topics pertaining to science on 28th Feb. The chief guest to inaugurate the exhibition was none other than our dear Sr. Augusta. She was very happy to see the various projects of the students and to hear them explain their workings. She congratulated the students and teachers for the excellent exhibition.

Ready to Embark on a Mission



From left to right Sr. Alka, Sr. Sandhya & Sr. Arpita

Srs. Sandhya, Alka and Arpita have been appointed to start a mission in Brig Switzerland, for medical and pastoral work. They have willingly accepted the challenge and are at present preparing themselves by learning German and getting their passports and visas ready. We are grateful to them for saying a YES and we wish them God's blessings.