



**Mother Anna Huberta Roggendorf**  
Founder of the Society of Helpers of Mary

# Igniting Sparks

MONTHLY NEWS LETTER

JULY 2017

## A Deathless Visionary

Every individual life to some extent is an indication of the historical conditions of an age and a great life of any time stands as a model to provide inspiration and determination to the young minds who seek model foot prints to lead a noble life. Once again July brings the fond memories of our Founder whose great life, always stood as a model and which continues to inspire many.

Mother Anna Huberta's life and work was closely intertwined with the fabric of Indian history of the 30s. Since she landed in India in 1932 until her journey to eternity, she travelled the breadth and length of India meeting people and responding to emergency situations. The times between two great wars was a time of rampant poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy. No doubt Mother was a thinker ahead of her times as she understood the menacing effect that war and poverty had upon the beauty and individuality of children. Mother found an answer to the hungry, starving and homeless children that crawled upon the streets of Mumbai, by opening her heart and home to them and in the process giving them face and future. Her actions were permeated by a sense of the beauty of the universe, by her love for the children and a sublime consciousness of God. She was truly a woman of God who spent the night in prayer and day in serving the poor.

Many friends and benefactors both in India and abroad found her as a woman of great charm and fine character that left an indelible mark on those whom she encountered. We discover the eloquent speaker in her when she spoke extensively on bread, on Corpus Christi day. She was truly an inculturated German, who understood the ethos of religious culture of India. No wonder then she gave Indian names to the newly professed Marys. She often dialogued with the people of other faiths, and in the process crystallised her own understanding of Hinduism. She was an environmentalist who spoke of flowers and blossoms. Her mission consciousness was clear when she came to India as young as 27 years old, later sent to Nawabsha Pakistan and was instrumental in opening up the mission communities in the North in the late 60's and early 70's. She understood the heart beat of the Church in India that opted to serve the poor which was evident in the social outreach program that she headed as a part of international Eucharistic Congress of 1964. Her undying spirit was inspiring as she fought cancer bravely until she breathed her last.

"A worthy heir always adds to the legacy that he /she receives", said Mahatma Gandhi. We, Marys as heirs to the Charism ought to add to the legacy by continuing to walk the path that she charted out for us. More than ever, the call to care for the Environment is louder- a topic that was close to mother's heart. Our social consciousness need to be sharpened, in the wake of the diminishing social and cultural values of the modern era. For us Marys, the understanding the intricacies of Indian culture is not only important but also imperative in the present socio- political context. The Missionary Spirit of the Marys need to be reawakened as we see a tendency among us to settle down in comfortable places. As we commemorate 108<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Founder, I pray that the moving spirit of Mother Anna Huberta help us to recapture her charisma and attain that which our Charism demands. Mother Anna Huberta will always live in our hearts as likeable as a living Mother and deathless as a Visionary.

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**Sr. Stella Devassy** shm, Superior General

## God works wonder in our Lives

Every new day has its own beauty to manifest the wonder of the creator. Once again the love of the Lord revealed and surprised us, Helpers of Mary in Cercenasco by giving us an unforgettable day on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February 2017, which will remain as a hallmark in the mission of Italy. In collaboration with Fr. Roberto Debernardi the Parish Priest, Parishioners of Cercenasco and all our friends we planned a dinner 'Grande cena'(festive meal) prepared with Indian recipes. Marcello the member of cultural team took the lead and supported us in our plan. The theme of the evening was " TO BE A TINY SPARK." Sr. Shobna the Delegate Superior welcomed the participants and with the lighted lamps singing the hymn 'boond boond' Srs. Rakhini, Veronica, Priyanka, Rachana and Supriya welcomed the audience. The 225 people were welcomed in an Indian traditional with the application of sandalwood powder on their forehead. Small clippings of SHM activity and culture of India was presented to the audience. Sisters were interviewed on the works and life of Helpers of Mary. It was a wonderful moment of knowing and sharing about SHM. Fr. Roberto Debernardi appreciated and thanked the Sisters for their work in the Parish. The Mayor of the village acknowledged our presence and said in Italian 'Nostre Sore' (our sisters).



After a grand dinner we had the bonfire dancing in the rhythm of tribal dance. It was an awesome evening because we saw the hand of the Lord working through different persons. Sr. Rakhini proposed vote of thanks at the end of the gathering. Everyone present was delighted and appreciated the efforts and Charism of SHM.

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**Srs. Priyanka & Rakhini**, Cercenasco – Italy



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## Serve with one heart and one mind

"Spend every moment of your life serving Him in the poor." We the Sisters moved forward to visit 4 Tribal areas staying in small huts. In the beginning we hesitated to visit their huts as we were unfamiliar to them, but they welcomed us with a smile on their faces. We spoke to them about the purpose of our visit. On 20<sup>th</sup> March 2017 we invited them for the gathering organized for the widows, widowers, sick and elderly. Sr. Karuna Superior of Maria Sadan welcomed all the audience and explained the life of Mother Anna Huberta. We sang hymn 'ma tuje pranam' and Sr. Kaushilya honoured her with garland and Sr. Priti Bhagaji spoke on the work and life of Helpers of Mary who continue to serve the poor and the needy.



Our Chief Guest Mrs. Gracy Rock Dabre addressed the gathering and shared about her experience with Mother Anna Huberta who came as a missionary to serve the poor and needy. The chief guest said, "When I was 8 years Sr. Zita one of the pioneers took me to Andheri to visit Mother Anna Huberta. She was happy to see me and asked my name. This short visit impressed me, it was all about her tender love and care. I felt that there was someone for me because I had lost my mother in my young age. She gave me a small doll. Till today I remember her motherly love and I am very happy to speak about her self-giving attitude and service, which the sisters are continuing today. Sr. Pushpa gave vote of thanks to those involved and participated in this joyful event of being and serving with one heart and one mind. There were 122 participants and we distributed bed sheets, blankets and essential food items to all. The function ended with refreshment. We are grateful to God for calling us to care and nurture those living at the periphery.

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**Sr. Karuna & Sisters, Maria Sadan – Nirmal**

## Day of joy and thanksgiving

We received numerous blessings during 75 years in the life of individuals and in the Congregation. We are grateful to all those who contributed to extent our hands in collaboration with God who called us to serve and care for His creation. It was a joyous moment to celebrate joys at the close of the Platinum Jubilee and march forward towards the centenary.

It was a memorable event when the parishioners together with the Parish Priest Fr. Bijay celebrated the day. The youth led the sisters to the altar with tribal dance. They washed the hands of the sisters in their

## Women 'Be Bold for Change'

In line with its annual tradition of celebrating the International Women's Day, this year the sisterhood of Jagruti Kendra invited to be a witness towards creating a gender equal world by encouraging them to 'Be Bold for Change' which embodies the dreams, passion and ambitions of women in contemporary society. The event was organized on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2017, when over 800 women actively participated; all of them collectively dressed in an assorted mixture of traditional dresses and each donning traditional attires corresponding to their unique cultural identity. The gathering was graced by the presence of Rt. Rev. Bishop. Allwyn D'Silva who was the Chief Guest and other esteemed dignitaries such as Fr. Lancy - Manager of Jagruti Kendra, Fr. Nelson Saldana, Fr. Maxwell, Fr. Gabriel, Sr. Seema, Trustee members. Mrs. Qutub Kiswai was invited as resource person to preside over the event.

Fr. Lancy welcomed and introduced Bishop Allwyn with the statement "the son does not need any introduction" because the people of Jerimeri had seen his empowerment works. He was honored with the shawl and the dignitaries were gifted with 'Lucky Bamboo plants' Fr. Gabriel and Fr. Maxwell who were guests of honour. During the event, women groups performed skits and fusion dances to create a lively environment. The beauty of the event was summarized in the interfaith harmony reflected in the participants, guests and performances with women putting their best foot forward to exhibit artistic concert performances irrespective of their caste, creed or background; thereby demonstrating inclusiveness towards people of all faith.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2017 Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana is the flag ship out come based skill development + entrepreneurship (MSDE). The objective of this skill certification and reward scheme was to enable large number of Indians to take up skill training and get employed. National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) is implementing this scheme all over India. We have enrolled 264 women and 160 of them completed the training and the assessment to judge the eligibility in four batches of 40 trainees. It is a wonderful platform for our women to earn their livelihood. On successful completion of the training candidates will be awarded with a certificate from NSDC and will also receive a monetary reward based on the eligibility and T-Shirt & Cap of PMKVY. Labour Net who in collaboration with NSDC approached us to net work with them to mobilize the trainees so we went ahead with the plan.

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**Sr. Bibiana Cheriakkara - Snehanjali, Jeri Meri**

traditional way of welcoming the guest and respect to the dignitaries. With a sense of gratitude we took part in the Holy Eucharist and remembered all our friends who stood by us all through the years. Mr. Jerome the representatives of Parish Council spoke about the contribution made by the Helpers of Mary through our presence and services and they promised to support us in all our endeavors. The parishioners felicitated the Sisters during the cultural program.

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**Sr. Padmini - Samarpan, Odisha**

## *Journeying from Prison to freedom*

We began prison ministry in Varanasi district jail on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2016. We had the opportunities to meet and interact with the inmates. During our visits we came across Sangeeta (name changed) from Jharkhand who was arrested at Mugalsarai railway station for human trafficking. Sr. Meena tried to contact her family members for several times to release her from the jail.

With the help of the advocate, Sr. Meena Carvalho who holds a Law degree worked to bring justice to Sangeeta. She got the news about her release on bail; but to furnish the bail from Chanduli Court she required two sureties and amount of Rs. 1,00,000/-. Her family members were helpless to fulfill the requirements. In Nov. 2016 her brother contacted Sr. Meena to support the case. Sr. Meena assured him to journey with Sangeeta during the trial. It was a time of uncertainty in an unknown land, to work with unknown people. On 26<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2016 Sangeeta waited for her brother who did not come. Seeing the tears in her eyes Sr. Meena said to her, "I am with you". And that day onwards Sr. Meena began her journey to the Chanduli District Court, assisting Sangeeta's Advocate Mr. Arvind. Later her family along with others came forward as witnesses and case took a better shape.

Our Easter joy was doubled on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2017, when we heard about the news of Sangeeta being acquitted. Sr. Meena went to Varanasi district Jail to receive her. There was tremendous joy in



the heart of Sangeeta as she was released from the jail. Fr. Prakash Das and Fr. Sanjay from Varanasi Dioceses stood as surety and the Diocese of Varanasi met the expenses of the Advocate. One night Sangeeta stayed with us at Premal Jyoti, Varanasi. She joined her family on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2017. She expressed her gratitude to God and to Sr. Meena, Fr. Kasper, Fr. Sanjay and Fr. Prakash who stood beside her as her own.

Year of jubilee is the joy of sharing, Joy of peace, joy of freeing from bondage, joy of celebration. We are grateful to our Congregation for giving the opportunities take up studies and to gain expertise in different fields to bring justice, equality and dignity to the poor and the marginalized.

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**Sr. Merlin Hembram** – Premal Jyoti, Varanasi

## *Celebrated God's love*

Reaching out and transforming lives was the theme for the Platinum Jubilee of the Society of the Helpers of Mary. The sense of joy and happiness rippled from our hearts as we celebrated God's love with great joy and gratitude. It was a great day of joy to look back and thank God. "God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance." (2 Cor 9:8) Sisters of Nitya Seva Niketan, Rivona were glad to welcome our former girls who have achieved great heights and settled in life. 40 girls participated in the Alumni gathering on 26<sup>th</sup> Jan 2017. We recalled the wonderful roles sisters played as they lived and grew in our home. It was a moment of pride to see the success and upliftment of our girls who have climbed the ladder of success. The girls' alumni celebration was grandiose with cultural program by the children of Bal Niwas and Care home. Children have enacted the life of our foundress, Mother Anna Huberta, her love for the poor and needy.

Two of our former girls Mrs. Anita Dias and Prajakta Shiriskar shared their experiences of being served. I remembered a quote "Our hard work is like a growing steps, luck is like a lift. Lift may fail sometimes, but steps will always get you to the top". So our girls have reached on top by climbing the steps of life."

Sr. Rohini D'Costa gave a meaningful message of how our girls have grown over the ages and have shouldered the responsibilities of the family and have made a good home of love. Sr. Gladys D'Souza thanked all the girls for sharing these joyous moments and gave them a token of love, starting from Sr. Prerana Dias who was part of this home and today nurturing the children at Bal Nivas children's home. We took the opportunity to express our gratitude towards SHM family, our benefactors and all our co-supporters for making this day a memorable one.

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**Sr. Rita Lopes** - Nitya Seva Niketan, Rivona

## Eco-friendly movement at Sagar Tara

Sahayog Samaj Kendra, Chowk celebrated Women's Day highlighting the need to make Cleanliness a daily habit and a health mantra "Swatchat Manje Rojcha Sun, Nahitar Kayamche Aajarpan" (meaning cleanliness is a daily celebration or else it will become a daily affliction). 800 and above fisher folk women participated in the Women's Day celebration on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017. Rt. Rev. Bishop John Rodrigues was the Chief Guest. Dr. Mrs. Tejaswani Lanjewar, MBMC - Health Department and the Local Corporator - Mrs. Helen Govind, leaders and people from every section of the community were present.



Centre for Social Action asked the Core Committee to identify issues and take concrete actions. At Women's gathering various issues were raised such as Health and Hygiene, Alcoholism, Inordinate Expenditure during festivals and Insufficient supply of drinking Water. Through the street play women depicted the need to have clean environment to prevent ill effect on the community and the environment.

Bishop John appreciated the skit and the interest displayed by the women to make cleanliness an integral part of their life, and reiterated the role of the women in society, village and in the family. Dr. Mrs. Sanjeevani highlighted the theme and

emphasized on her role that brings change and to sustain this practice. Fr Joe Borges, the Parish Priest of Chowk encouraged them to make progress in the society. The event was planned and executed by Sr. Chaya along with women and members of the Core Committee of Chowk. There was a sense of accomplishment as the women felt that they have taken one step forward in making their community better place to live. We could see the ripples of smiles on their faces as they walked home with new dustbins with determination to make Cleanliness a daily Celebration.

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**Sr. Chaya Martin, Sagar Tara – Uttan Chowk**

## Women you are genius!!!

Prem Sadan, Madh Island celebrated women's day on 26<sup>th</sup> Feb 2017. We took an apt title for the variety of roles women play in today's world 'Women you are a genius'. The celebration began with prayer dance by the Children of Prem Sadan and the women welcomed the audience with melodious song. 500 women participated in the grand program. Fr. Ajit Bandekar Parish Priest of Our Lady of the Sea appreciated and supported us to make this day a memorable one. He thanked Sr. Shobina and leaders of women's group for planning the entire program. They staged a beautiful cultural program with dances and skits. All the audience cheered and encouraged the women.

Chief Guest Mrs. Julia D'Souza boosted women with encouraging words and appreciated for their contribution to the family and the society at large. She stressed that women need to build confidence to inculcate leadership qualities. In India they face challenges and lack public safety, in addition to pressures of balancing work, home and family, woman today can be saved by their own wisdom by awareness that they are not objects of fate but subjects of their own destiny. At the end of the program the women danced on barefoot and enjoyed to their hearts content. At the end snacks were served for all. They went home with joyful heart and renewed spirit.

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**Sr. Shobina Dabre, Prem Sadan - Madh Island**

## Congratulations to our newly professed Sisters

*We wish you manifold blessings in your mission*

Anita, Anjuni, Salomi, Clara, Gloriya, Priya, Sahaya, Shoba, Bijeshwari, Velalicy, Margaret and Sumitha



## Entry to Novitiate – Wishing you God's blessings during your initial formation

Anjali, Valansiya, Kiran, Sweedal, Nancia, Joslina, Reshma & Consesav

