

Crossian Connect

SISTERS OF THE CROSS OF CHAVANOD

Issue No. 6/2024



Editorial Board:

- ▶ Sr. Judy Gomez
- ▶ Sr. Elsy John
- ▶ Sr. Jiji Mathew

In this issue ...

- ▶ Message from General Councillors ... 1
- ▶ From the Editor's Desk ... 2
- ▶ Journeying with Underprivileged Children ... 3
- ▶ "I Have Loved you with an Everlasting Love, therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you" Jer: 31:3 ... 4
- ▶ Empowering the Future of Individuals with Disabilities ... 5
- ▶ Forever in God's Favour ... 7
- ▶ God is Good to me all the time ... 8
- ▶ Inclusive Neighbourhood Children's Parliament ... 9
- ▶ A Difficult Step ... 11
- ▶ Nurturing Faith in the Secondary Schools ... 12
- ▶ Cultivating A Culture of Peace ... 13
- ▶ The Hidden Joy of A Missionary ... 14
- ▶ Sailing Together: Personal Experience of The Provincial Chapter 2024 ... 15
- ▶ Roots and Wings of My Life Journey ... 17
- ▶ Holistic Health Care through Mother Claudine Holistic Health Centre ... 18
- ▶ My Journey with the Lord ... 20
- ▶ A Tribute to Sr. Christiane Morand ... 21

December, 2024

Dear Sisters,

Greetings of love and peace to each one of you.

At the very outset, we express our heartfelt joy, gratitude, and appreciation to all who have contributed to the realization of our bulletin, *Crossian Connect*. This is the last editorial from the present General Team.

We thank God for the successful completion of the Chapters held across our provinces and delegations. These gatherings have been a testament to our collective dedication and have allowed us to engage deeply with the theme of our 18th General Chapter, *Pilgrims and Prophets of Paschal Hope*. The reflections, insights, and resolutions that emerged reflect our profound commitment to living out Paschal Hope in tangible and impactful ways.

As we look ahead to the General Chapter in 2025, which coincides with the Church's Jubilee Year, we recognize that this sacred time comes at a significant moment when the world is suffering from the impacts of war, the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, natural calamities and an urgent need for renewed hope and trust. This theme, *Pilgrims and Prophets of Paschal Hope*, resonates deeply within our hearts and mission, inviting us to reflect, renew, and reaffirm our commitment to our calling. We are called to journey as pilgrims, steadfastly moving forward in faith and to rise as prophets who boldly proclaim the hope and resurrection that Easter promises. This Paschal Hope is the living reality of Christ's triumph over death and the assurance of God's faithful love amidst challenges. By focusing on this hope, we are encouraged to undertake a pilgrimage of the heart, seeking a closer connection with the divine and each other, while illuminating the path for others and advocating for a world filled with love, justice, and peace. As prophets, let us speak boldly and act courageously, bringing the message of hope to every corner of the world. Let us be instruments of peace, channels of love, and witnesses to the transformative power of Christ's resurrection.

Within the pages of *Crossian Connect*, you will find inspiring apostolic experiences, reflections, and insights from our sisters that explore the essence of our faith journeys. These stories remind us that our synodal journey is not just about reaching a destination but about the transformation that occurs along the way. We are called to fan the flame of hope entrusted to us, helping everyone gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart, and a far-sighted vision.

In this time of preparation, let us deepen our prayer, strengthen our communal bonds, and recommit ourselves to our mission. Together, we can and will make a difference, living out our calling as Pilgrims and Prophets of Paschal Hope.

On behalf of Sr. Elizabeth Miranda, our Superior General, we extend our deep gratitude to Sr. Daisy Premila Thankiah, the link person; Sr. Judy Gomez, the Coordinator; Srs. Jiji Mathew and Elsy John of the editorial team; and Srs. Sharmin Fernandes and Alphonsine EBENE, the translators, for their dedication and collaborative efforts. Their hard work and commitment are truly valued and deeply appreciated.

May this editorial serve as a beacon of hope and a call to action as we move forward together, united in our mission to bring light and love to the world, especially during this time of jubilation and renewal. May the Holy Spirit inspire and guide us, and may the love of Christ be our constant source of strength and courage.



Sr. Shaly Sebastian | Sr. Natacha Ohoussi
General Councillors



In the words of Pope Francis, Christ's Church is called to venture into new geographical, social, and existential horizons, reaching out to “borderline” places and diverse human situations to bear witness to His love for all people, regardless of culture or status. As you turn the pages of this edition of *Crossian Connect*, you will discover a rich tapestry of events and experiences, all woven together with faith, commitment, and profound dedication with a special focus to be Joyful witnesses of Christ's Mission

Our ministries are as diverse as the communities we serve. From bustling classrooms where we educate and inspire young minds to the serene environments of healthcare facilities, and our outreach in marginalized areas, each facet of our work reflects our core values of love, justice, and mercy. A recurring theme throughout our stories is the transformative power of presence. Whether engaging with marginalized communities in urban centers or supporting families in rural areas, our sisters embody the spirit of accompaniment, offering not only tangible support but also a living testament to God's love and grace.

Recent assessments and evaluations, in the light of our Provincial Chapters and forthcoming General Chapter have illuminated the path ahead and the necessary changes to enhance our witness. We are currently on a journey of introspection, seeking ways to be both *Pilgrims and Prophets of Paschal Hope*, and to reveal the feminine face of God in our lives and work.

This issue of *Crossian Connect* is more than just a collection of stories; it reflects our shared journey and an invitation to deepen our bonds as a family of faith. May these personal reflections and experiences inspire hope and strengthen our collective spirit. “Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” (Hebrews 10:24-25)

We are indebted to our Superior General, Sr. Elizabeth Miranda, and her team who walk the talk and lead by example. A Special note of thanks to Sr. Daisy Thankiah for the prompt assistance in our work. Sr. Judy Gomez, Sr. Elsy John and I, as the editorial team, would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the General team for the trust they have placed in us by assigning this work. We are also thankful to the Provincials and the link persons who went above and beyond to help make *Crossian Connect* a reality each time.

Sr. Jiji Mathew

For Communication Commission



JOURNEYING WITH UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN

Sr. Hira Parkhe

Province of Amravati



Matru Schaya Social Welfare Society (MSSWS) has been providing educational opportunities for 850 tribal and underprivileged children in the Vidarbha Region of Maharashtra. Over the past 48 years, MSSWS has implemented several innovative programmes, facilitating development in numerous backward villages and communities in the region. Among various thematic programmes, we especially focus on tribal and underprivileged children from the remotest villages.



Many remote tribal villages still have a significant number of dropout children due to family migration. These children lack access to proper schools and when families return to their native places, the old schools often refuse to readmit them. Consequently, older children are forced to start working at a young age to provide food and education for their younger siblings. Moreover, if the family's breadwinner migrates and leaves the family behind, the lack of income prevents children from attending school.

These children face significant challenges in accessing quality education, which hinders their overall development due to isolation, lack of communication facilities, poor health conditions, economic hardship, superstitious beliefs, hunger, malnutrition, illiteracy, unemployment, inadequate infrastructure, and migration.

For instance, children from the Korku community have a high, school dropout rate. Their low self-esteem often prevents them from socializing with other communities in their locality. Moreover, the flawed education system limits their aspirations, leading to dropout rates after the 9th standard. Children from low-income backgrounds, with less-educated parents, are also more likely to leave school early and many children end up working to support their families, further affecting their education.

Our comprehensive educational initiatives provide learning materials to enhance the quality of education, ultimately improving overall well-being and empowering these children with essential skills for a better future. By reaching out to vulnerable and deprived children in remote areas, we offer them opportunities to study in quality schools with boarding facilities. Additionally, we raise awareness about children's education by personally visiting parents and children in these villages. Encouraging interaction with children from diverse communities significantly boosts their confidence and self-esteem.



To address these challenges, Matru Schaya Social Centre has opened 22 supplementary centers where 835 children receive quality education. Moreover, we have admitted 145 children from similar backgrounds to good schools with boarding facilities, covering all their expenses. Our goal is to empower these children and break the cycle of educational disadvantage. Thus the underprivileged children can have transformative effects, ensuring equal opportunities regardless of their background and fostering a more inclusive and just society. Beyond academics, these opportunities serve as catalyst for a positive change.

After completing their 12th grade, we take the responsibility of guiding these students toward self-reliance. Our commitment extends beyond the classroom, ensuring that they have opportunities to continue their education or pursue specialized courses. Over the past two years, we have empowered 45 tribal girls through general nursing training and 30 boys through ITI (Industrial Training Institute) courses. Remarkably, 18 of these young individuals have already entered the workforce, earning Rs 18,000 to 20,000 per month. Others are actively participating in various training programmes, equipping themselves with skills that will shape their future.

Education is more than just imparting knowledge; it's a beacon of hope, a bridge to possibility. By investing in these students, we are not only transforming their lives



but also uplifting the entire communities. As they gain employable skills, they contribute to a brighter, more sustainable future. Our mission is to foster confidence, resilience, and a sense of identity among these young minds. Together, we are building a world where children's potential is realized, regardless of their background.

"I HAVE LOVED YOU WITH AN EVERLASTING LOVE, THEREFORE I HAVE CONTINUED MY FAITHFULNESS TO YOU" JER: 31:3



Sr. Lincy Joseph
Province of Kolkata

Yes, when I look at the 50 years of my religious life, this is what I can recall – the steadfast love and faithfulness of the Lord to me.

I entered the Postulancy after a very happy and pleasant childhood and adolescent years both at home and in the schools. I was the pet of my parents and teachers and hence very delicate. The Lord purified me with a considerably hard life in the postulancy. I enjoyed my Novitiate life and the first two communities in Kerala prepared me for my later mission. The love, concern, forgiveness and Mission orientedness of my senior sisters in those communities were praiseworthy.

The first ten years of community life was a preparation for my entire life of consecration in the Congregation of the Sisters of the Cross. Along with regular teaching in the Government Aided school, socio-pastoral activities like taking care of the MCH (Maternal and Child Health) programme, preparing children in hundreds for First Holy Communion, teaching Catechism both in the School and Sunday School, family visits on every Sunday etc. trained me for my life in the Mission.

My long cherished desire of being a Missionary was realized when I was sent to the Nagaland Mission. The five years of fruitful life in the mission was enough to form me to be a formator. All through, I could experience the faithfulness and steadfast love of the Lord both in the difficulties of hard life in the mission among the less privileged of our country and in the glories when

publically praised and appreciated by our Bishop Abraham Alengimattam as the ideal religious community in his Diocese. The next five years as a Novice Mistress was another mile stone in my life where I became one among the Novices. It was a time for spiritual renewal and rejuvenation for me. The following two years of service as Headmistress in our School in Bhairahawa, Nepal was another enriching experience of the Lord's faithfulness and love where I experienced the closeness of Him who carried me on Eagle's wings.

Then came the call to be in Kolkata-Baruipur as the superior and secretary of Holy Cross School. The next seven years were a busy period with purchase of land, construction of buildings, animation of the community etc. with no resources. Here again I have experienced the support of the Lord even in our material needs. The contribution made by Bishop Lobo of Baruipur Diocese was remarkable. We did not even have a proper library for our school. I was able to prepare small projects and get approved by the generous agencies. The support of our sisters in the Community made our work progress fast to obtain No Objection Certificate from the Government. Our provincial too was very understanding and supportive. We sisters were teaching most of the subjects as it was very difficult to get teachers in those days.

Then after a short break of three months, I was transferred to Nautanwa where the school did not have sufficient infrastructure to accommodate our students. An approach

road from the bypass to the school was a dream of mine which materialized with the help of Late Bishop Antony Fernandez of Bareilly. Then again a hectic activity of purchase of land, construction of buildings was done with the Lord walking before me to prepare the way and with me to strengthen me in all the endeavours.

After seven years of fruitful ministry I got the chance of attending a one year course on Formative Psychology and Counselling in Sidhivihara, Mysore. Next one year I spent in our School in Ballia as a student counsellor. Then came the call to be the provincial councillor and bursar. Along with Sr. Cessy, the Provincial we were able to reach out to the peripheries of the province. All through I felt the Lord walked with me as a shield and protector. The six years of productive years with lots of hard work went very fast. The provincial secretary Sr. Lissy Joseph was my guardian



angel to accomplish all the hard tasks. Many of our dreams came true during this period. We happily handed over the charge of administration to the next team with satisfaction and back here in Baruipur, teaching the candidates and with School administration.



EMPOWERING THE FUTURE OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Sr. Ancy Antony
Province of Pune

“If a child can't learn the way we teach, may be we should teach the way they learn.” Ignacio Estrada



Focus on this picture for five seconds

Did you find this a difficult task? Concentrating on something for a few seconds; sometimes for extended period of time, may seem like a natural and easy thing in the world. But for a person with special needs it's simply impossible. Children with Neurodiversity cannot keep their minds focused on a particular task however simple the task may seem. Activities that you and I consider as routine, for example folding a paper calls for tremendous effort on their part. Its important to acknowledge that it's not that they don't have capabilities or talent; it is just that they are differently abled and we need to empower them accordingly.

Holy Cross Convent Special School and Career Training Centre is situated in Thane, Maharashtra, India. It was

started in the year 1996 with the motto 'Self-Reliance'. A school that began with 22 students, now has a strength of 165 Special Children including the expansion with the Vocational Training Centre.

After an initial comprehensive test to assess their current levels of functioning, they are placed in different classrooms with appropriate support and therapeutic interventions, such as Speech and Language Development, Occupational Therapy, Animal Assisted Therapy, Art Therapy, ipad and Computer Based Learning, Co-curricular activities such as swimming, sports and Academics. Interestingly you will note that academics is considered later on the list; as the first need is to find the mode of learning that suits them best.



Holy Cross Special School, Thane, has emerged as one of the model schools for children diagnosed with a variety of disabilities such as Down's Syndrome, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyper-Activity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum and Pervasive Development Disorders. Our child centred approach is exemplified by individual care and focused training with professionalism etched in every corner within our institution.

Although we trained several special children to discover their unique potential and help them to grow and become independent, yet we realized that their future is once again confined to their homes. Parents face the same concern. Job opportunities for such children are at stake. However, we also recognized the importance of acknowledging their abilities and providing them with skills to thrive in our society.

Thus was born our Career Training Centre in May 2011. We developed the programme called Empowering Futures of Individuals with Disabilities. Holy Cross Convent Career Training Centre enables people with disabilities to access work opportunities, by actively promoting and facilitating the acquisition of relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Our Vision is that young persons with disabilities have access to a range of training opportunities and acquire professional skills in order to facilitate their employment or they become capable of beginning their own startup. Empowering girl and boy students alike with advanced skill development opportunities to progress in their work life is the dream of this centre.

Intellectually challenged teenagers and youth are absorbed in the training centre. An Ability Test is administered for all students entering the programme to check existing pre-requisite skills. A counselling and orientation session for both parents help them understand the training programme. This ensures that all candidates are placed appropriately.

Programme Design:

This is a five year programme. Core skill-based subjects, help students to identify and build interests like Personality Development, Home Science and House

Keeping, Visual Art, Office Skills, Data Entry and Hand Embroidery. Travel skills are also introduced to make them ready to travel to their workplaces. Students are trained to travel independently. Individual focus as per the potential of the student helps them to specialise in one or more subjects. Work culture is introduced as a subject to make them understand the needs and policies of a workplace mapping to the skills of the student.

Our final year curriculum extends beyond vocational training to equip students with essential life skills including navigation and adaptability, imperative for the success of the students. This transformative phase focuses on immersing students to gain invaluable exposure to workplace dynamics and professional etiquettes.



During the year students are sent for internships to offices and hotels once a week. The students are accompanied by a mentor from the institution. This experiential learning phase enables trainees to understand work-life culture. A sensitisation programme is carried out at the internship venues for all members involved via a formal training provided by the mentors.

This is a crucial aspect as people around learn to understand and adapt their responsibility for the inclusion in the workplace. Regular feedback from the mentors and the internship team is what makes this programme a success.

The Successful placement of our students:

On completing the training programme, the students have a Graduation Ceremony in which they proudly receive their Certificates. Notably our students seamlessly integrate into establishments as Guest Relations Executives at both boutique accommodations and luxury establishments across Thane and Mumbai.

The success of this programme has led to several accolades at the national and international level. We have represented 'India' for the World Summer Games at Abu Dhabi and won silver medals. I also had the opportunity to present the Career Training Programme at the International Conference on Comprehensive Education held at Mysore, India.



Let me narrate an incident that has made a difference in my life. A group of students in our school were asked to complete their homework on the subject 'General Knowledge'. The following day the teacher noticed that the answers were not completed by a child with autism, and so the teacher wrote with a red pen INCOMPLETE. The child took his pencil, shaded the word Incomplete and

wrote PLEASE COMPLETE.

Such is the power, potential and positivity that lies within every special child. Every child is a star that deserves to shine, and special children have their own unique brilliance that lights up the world in unexpected and wonderful ways.



FOREVER IN GOD'S FAVOUR

Sr. Suvarna Ashok
Province of Angamaly

“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.” (Jeremiah 1:5).

Immersed in the grand design of the Father and consecrated by Jesus, I am called as a prophet to the world in my role as a consecrated religious and a Sister of the Cross. My mission is to make the good God known and loved to everyone I encounter in my daily life. The realization that I am on a divine mission fills me with joy and enthusiasm, driving me to go an extra mile for the Lord and His people. Since answering God's call, I have been assigned to various places in Kerala, which has reinforced my belief that I am appointed as a prophet to the nation. My mission is to convey His unconditional love to all, regardless of their religion, caste, creed or culture.

Initially, I harboured fear and anxiety about embarking on my missionary journey in Kerala, since I was born and raised in Karnataka. However, living in the presence of the Lord has enabled me to lead a purpose-driven life that pleases Him. I am confident that I am always in God's favour and that He has placed me

among the people and in the places as per his plan. Despite the initial language barrier, I discovered that love is the universal language. I began communicating with people through prayer, presence, and a smile. Over the time, God granted me the grace and courage to learn the language, adapt to the local culture and food habits, and undergo profound personal transformation.

Currently, I am in Munnar, Kerala, serving in the field of education. The breath-taking beauty of Munnar, with its rolling hills, lush tea plantations, and misty mountains, creates a serene atmosphere where I feel God's presence deeply. Our school serves the children of impoverished tea



plantation workers, many of whom are migrants from Tamil Nadu and North India. As a Hindi teacher, I face the challenge of engaging students from Tamil backgrounds who often struggle with the language. To address this, I use storytelling and role-play and impart Christian values such as love, forgiveness, generosity, and sensitivity.



When I encounter students facing academic or personal difficulties, including those from broken families, I strive to inspire, guide, and mentor them to live with integrity, compassion, and perseverance. I believe their struggles are part of a larger divine narrative. When they confide their difficulties to me, I offer comfort and assurance.

This year, as the boarding in-charge, I have the privilege of assuming a maternal role for girls from diverse backgrounds, in addition to being their friend and sister. When they are broken, weary, or troubled by personal or family issues, I provide hope and courage, support them through prayer, and walk with them to help create a bright future, offering comfort and encouragement.

Hope is the companion of power and the mother of success. Those who have strong hope within them possess the gift of miracles. The hope I have in God which I share with others through my house visits, presence at funeral services,

participation in parish activities, and BCC prayers have allowed me to trust in God's blessings. As a result, people have experienced greater hope and miracles in their lives through my visits and intercessory prayers.



The missionary, visionary, and prophetic lives of Mother Claudine, Mother Veronica, and our early sisters have inspired in me a deep desire to serve the poor, downtrodden, and marginalized in the society. Their legacy motivates me to continue their work, bringing hope and miracles to those in need.

My personal relationship with Christ and His word, active participation in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, and sharing my experiences of God's presence make my life fruitful and flourishing in His vineyard. The reminder that "taking Christ as our life's companion is a daily choice" (ROL18/2) encourages me to live a life of discernment and daily commitment to Christ. Through these experiences, I hope that my life as a pilgrim and a prophet will bring abundant and everlasting blessings to others. I trust that God has a plan for my future and prepares me for eternity.

Reflecting on my nine-year journey as a religious, I see my life as a river flowing with grace a song of hope and faith. To live in God's favour requires trust, obedience, and a deep understanding of His unconditional love. In surrendering my life to Him, I have experienced the abundance of His blessings and the joy of His presence. In conclusion, I reaffirm that I am always in God's favour.

GOD IS GOOD TO ME ALL THE TIME

Sr. Michealine Masilamani
Delegation of Latin America



As I begin this reflection, I want to express my deepest gratitude to Almighty God for the countless blessings He has bestowed upon me. This marks my fifth mission in Ecuador within the Diocese of Manabí Chibunga in 2019, Musuyacta in 2022, Muyuyal and Moracumbo in 2023, San Ramón and Aguacate in 2024. Among these, the recent mission proved to be the most challenging.

As I prepared for this latest mission, my initial excitement was tempered by unforeseen obstacles. Two of our catechists from Cojimies Parish had expressed a desire to accompany me, but as the days passed, they presented compelling reasons for their inability to join. Additionally, I was battling a persistent cough, cold, and slight fever, which led me to consider withdrawing from the mission.

Yet, I turned to prayer, entrusting my fears and uncertainties to the Lord, asking Him for strength and guidance.

On the day of departure, Father Juancho reassured me, saying that I was not going alone but was accompanied by Mary, our Mother, and the Holy Spirit. Armed with this blessing, I set out on my journey. Upon arriving at the mission station, I was welcomed by the local catechists, who assisted me in visiting the community, praying with them, and inviting them to participate in parish activities.

To my surprise, I encountered many individuals who did not believe in God, which was unexpected in a predominantly Christian country like Ecuador, where Christianity is widely accepted. Coming from India, where we believe everything is possible for God, I saw this mission as a significant opportunity to make God's love known through my words and actions, particularly by praying with and accepting people as they are.

Throughout my mission, I experienced the powerful presence of God guiding me to lead people in various situations. This divine support gave me the strength to proclaim the Word of God and offer a listening ear to those who shared their difficulties with me.

Upon completing the mission and returning a month later for a Sunday Mass, I had hoped to see more people at church, but to my dismay, only one family, the catechist's family was present. The priest decided not to celebrate the Holy Mass, so we spent time reading, and meditating sharing, on the Word of God. This gathering helped foster their unity with the Lord.



This experience taught me that mission work is not about immediate results but about persistent effort and trust in God's timing. What we plant today may bear fruit in the future. I went to bed that night with renewed hope and confidence, praying for that community. In the days that followed, I received messages from the community requesting visits to the sick and the priest for baptisms. Their growing interest in spiritual growth was evident.

Now, I'd like to share about the people of Cojimies. They are warm, welcoming, and hardworking. Many women work in restaurants catering to tourists, while the men fish in the beautiful Pacific Ocean. Though their daily lives are consumed by earning a livelihood, they often lack time for spiritual activities. Whenever we visit their homes, they greet us with joy and share their challenges. We cherish these opportunities to pray with them and encourage daily communication with God, which strengthens our relationship with the community.



INCLUSIVE NEIGHBOURHOOD CHILDREN'S PARLIAMENT

Sr. Chinnarani Swaminathan
Province of Madurai

“Let the children come to me and do not stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to such as these” (Luke 18:16).

At St. Joseph's School, Nagercoil: After the election of the Children's Parliament, a few children immediately began picking up bits of paper from the ground, explaining, “We are the newly elected ministers for 'Clean Water and Sanitation.'”

At Holy Cross School, Pandua: A boy known for his lack of discipline was elected as the minister for Good Health and Well-being. Shortly after his election, he started organizing his peers into orderly queues and ensuring they maintained silence as they went to their classes.

A girl was elected as the minister for Arts. Initially, a student objected, citing her irregular attendance and perceived irresponsibility. When it was her turn to speak, she promised to improve her attendance and be more responsible. A month later, she was noted for her regular attendance and active participation.

At Nagercoil Kurusadi: During a gathering of parents and students, I introduced the concept of the Inclusive Neighbourhood Children's Parliament (INCP) and explained the duties of child ministers. Before the

elections even began, a third-grade boy declared, “I am the Minister for Protection at home; I close the doors and windows in the evening,” while his younger brother added, “I am the Minister for Environment at home; I turn off unnecessary lights and fans.” Their mother confirmed their contributions.

At Home Science College, Tuticorin: As a warden struggling without a helper, I introduced the Youth Parliament, elected ministers, and delegated responsibilities. The students embraced this shared responsibility, transforming their perception of the hostel from a mere facility to a true 'home.'

These examples provide a glimpse into the transformative impact of the Inclusive Neighbourhood Children's Parliaments (INCP) and the concept of Neighbourcracy. Here, I am pleased to share the rationale and approach of Children's Parliaments.

The Why

To effect social change, the idea of starting small groups emerged in the 1960s. For broader, radical changes, the strategy evolved to “start thousands of small groups and use mass media to disseminate information and ideas.” However, reaching out to everyone remains a challenge.

The solution came through neighborhood-based communities in Latin America. Families in these neighborhoods came together to learn, discuss, decide, and act as a unit. This model inspired the creation of the Inclusive Neighbourhood Children's Parliaments.

Here's a breakdown of the key concepts:

Parliament: Derived from the Latin word *Parlare*, meaning to speak, a Parliament is a forum for discussion. In this context, it is a platform for children to speak and engage.

Children: The parliaments are designed for children aged 6 to 18. They address their concerns, problems, aspirations, rights, needs, and dreams.

Neighbourhood: Parliaments function at the neighborhood level, typically comprising around 30 children. This setup fosters familiarity and ease of communication, allowing children to work together effectively.

Inclusive: These parliaments embrace all children, regardless of caste, creed, educational status, or disability. Special attention is given to include differently-abled children.

The objectives of the Inclusive Neighbourhood Children's Parliaments are:

To provide a platform for children to voice their opinions and participate in governance.

To engage children in actions that benefit the common good.

To empower children to advocate for their rights and develop a sense of proactive citizenship.

Vision

Our vision is for the world to be organized into neighborhood parliaments of 30 children each. Each neighborhood functions as a mini-world or mini-nation, with a cabinet including a Prime Minister and various ministers addressing local concerns. These parliaments elect delegates to represent them at higher levels.

Power Sharing: Responsibility is shared among ministers. At the National Parliament of Children held in August 2016 in New Delhi, 17 national child ministers were elected to represent the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. Other positions include the Prime Minister, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Minister for Finance, and various ministers for specific concerns like Disabilities, Children's Rights, Sports, Art, Culture, Communication, and Spirituality.

Implementation

To start a Children's Parliament in villages or schools:

1. Engage Leaders: Meet with village leaders or school administrators to explain the concept of the INCP and share success stories.
2. Recruit Volunteers: With the support of leaders, recruit and train volunteers.
3. Form Parliaments: Organize children into parliaments based on their residential areas, rather than school classes. This can also extend to youth and adult parliaments.

Election Process: In the Sociocratic election method, which is task-centered rather than person-centered:

1. Circle Formation: Children sit in a circle to ensure equality and face-to-face communication.
2. Introduction and Discussion: The facilitator introduces the ministerial roles and responsibilities, ensuring all children participate in the discussion.
3. First Round of Ballots: Each child writes their name and a suggested name for the ministerial role on a ballot.



4. Reasoning and Reconsideration: Suggestions are reviewed, and reasons are discussed. Children may change their votes based on these discussions.
5. Consent Round: The facilitator asks if there are any objections to the suggested candidates. If no objections are raised, the candidate is confirmed.

Oath-Taking: Once all ministers are elected, an oath-taking ceremony is conducted, with an important local

figure administering the oath.

By promoting the Inclusive Neighbourhood Children's Parliaments in schools and neighbourhoods, we create opportunities for children to work towards their rights and contribute to their communities. If you are interested in implementing this in your own school or neighborhood, it could be a refreshing and impactful experience.



Sr. Imelda Stephano
Province of East Africa

A DIFFICULT STEP ...

The news of my acceptance to Jordan University College in Morogoro elicited mixed reactions: excitement tempered with fear. On one hand, I was worried about coping with academic challenges, competing with classmates, and avoiding failure that might disappoint my Congregation. On the other hand, I was intrigued by the prospect of being a Religious student in a diverse community with Catholics, non-Catholics, and Muslims. In reality, the joy of going to college in me was overwhelming, as I couldn't wait to see myself being addressed as a Student-Religious.

My journey as a fresher began in October 2021, when I, in company of my three other sisters arrived in Jordan University College for registration and orientation. Jordan University College, Morogoro (JUCO) is a Catholic University College located in Morogoro Region, Tanzania. JUCO is known for her wide range of academic disciplines, which include: Philosophy, Theology, Business Administration, Psychology, Education with Religious Studies etc. It equally runs Masters and PhD programmes. JUCO is acclaimed as the leading Tanzanian higher institution with the highest number of foreign students.

You can imagine the fear, tension and shock waves that would run through the veins of a fresh student like me, coming from religious community; of course, with mixed nationality but can never be compared to that of JUCO. It wasn't easy for me to set my foot on JUCO campus especially seeing the multitude of faces hovering and scampering around for registration, and sorting out other requirements. As my fear lingered, the joy of acquiring new knowledge for me was on the rise.

While my primary goal at JUCO was academic achievement, I was also committed to share the joy that only Christ can give. Studying with lay students gave me

valuable lessons in listening, helping, and praying. I was often moved by the struggles of students who faced financial difficulties yet managed to meet their academic responsibilities. These experiences deepened my appreciation for the sacrifices my congregation made to provide for my needs and inspired me to support my peers in any way I could.

As a religious, I was already used to some level of how to manage life, in view of my formation. However, this is a new environment with new realities. Academic demands might not be so much different from formation life, as I was trained to meet up with all community activities as a religious. However, being a student-religious can be so demanding, since I have to meet up with studies and at the same time, attend prayers and other activities in the university chaplaincy.

The English language was another aspect of life worth talking about. Things would not have been easy for me, if not for my Congregation which had already laid a solid foundation of English grammar in me during my initial formation. With such an excellent job done in my formation and the assistance of my fellow students, I was able to handle my assignments, class presentation and written exercises with much ease. The joy within, enabled me to cope with studies well while sharing the joy of Christ among the youth.

My experience as a student-religious at JUCO has been profoundly rewarding. It taught me the value of living and working with people from diverse backgrounds, including other religious Congregations, seminarians, student priests, lay students, and those of different faiths. It gave me the opportunity to present Christ to the youth and reminded me that I was there not only for my studies but also as a representative of my beloved Congregation, the Sisters of the Cross. This awareness guided my daily

interactions and reinforced the importance of upholding the values instilled in me by my Congregation.

Although I achieved success in my studies and activities at JUCO, I take no personal pride. My accomplishments are a testament to the support and encouragement of my fellow sisters. Their constant support has been invaluable.

I am now more equipped with the knowledge and skills to manage a complex community life and interact with people from various backgrounds and nationalities. We often do not fully appreciate our opportunities until we

encounter different experiences. My interactions with fellow-religious from local and international Congregations have deepened my appreciation for the rigorous yet enriching formation provided by the Congregation.

With joy and gratitude, I echo the words of our Foundress: "Long live Jesus, I give myself to Jesus, I consecrate myself to Jesus, I abandon myself to Jesus, I wish to live and die for the love of Jesus."

- Mother Claudine Echernier

NURTURING FAITH IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS



Sr. Suzan Benedict
Province of East Africa

Standing before a class brimming with eager young minds, their eyes alight with curiosity and hope, fills my heart with a profound and indescribable sense of gratitude. It is a divine privilege, a sacred calling to nurture the seeds of faith within these young souls.

Each day, as I embark on this journey of imparting the rich tapestry of the Catholic faith, I am reminded of the profound impact education can have on shaping lives. To witness the transformation that occurs within these young hearts is a testament to the enduring power of the Gospel.

I see the hesitant smiles blossom into radiant expressions of joy as they discover the profound truths of our faith. Their questions, sometimes challenging, often innocent, serve as a constant reminder of the living nature of our religion. In their search for meaning and purpose, I find a reflection of my own spiritual journey, a shared quest for a deeper connection with the Divine.

It is in these moments of shared discovery that I experience the profound joy of my vocation. To be an instrument through which God's love is revealed, to guide young people towards a life-long relationship with Christ, is a calling that surpasses all earthly rewards.

One of the most gratifying aspects of my role is fostering an inclusive and respectful atmosphere where students from various religious backgrounds feel welcomed and valued. The classroom becomes a microcosm of the

world, a place where dialogue and understanding can flourish. By creating a space where diverse perspectives are honored, we can cultivate a spirit of unity and compassion among our youth.

While teaching the tenets of my own faith, I am also committed to presenting other religions with accuracy and respect. This approach not only broadens students' horizons but also deepens the understanding of their own faith. By exploring the common ground shared by different religions, we can foster a sense of interconnectedness and appreciation for the rich tapestry of human spirituality.

The enthusiasm and openness of the students serve as a constant reminder of the power of the Gospel message. Their eagerness to learn about God and their desire to connect with a higher power are inspiring. It is in these moments that I am filled with gratitude for the opportunity to accompany them in their spiritual journeys. As I form them, I also form myself. I allow myself to be evangelized by them.

As I reflect on this incredible journey, I am filled with immense gratitude to God for the opportunity to serve as a humble guide on the path to faith. May I continue to be a faithful steward of the Gospel, inspiring young hearts to embrace the light of Christ and become beacons of hope in a world that desperately needs it.

May Almighty God shower His abundant Blessings on
Sr. Elizabeth Miranda and on all the elected Chapter Members.
Best wishes for the General Chapter 2025



CULTIVATING A CULTURE OF PEACE

Sr. Elsy John
Province of Kolkata

Amar Jyoti Boarding School where I render my service is situated in a town called Bhairahawa, Nepal. The birth place of Lord Buddha, the messenger of peace is just 21kms away from this town. Frequent visit to this holy place and occasional discussions with the Thai monk encouraged me to work for peace. It is said "If a window of opportunity appears, don't pull down the shade." I took my teaching staff to Lumbini and one of the monks there helped them to acquire the techniques for quietening oneself and finding peace even in the midst of troubles and chaos. This experience inspired them to impart it to the students; this made my work easy. With them now, the whole school is devoted to work in Peace and work for peace.

Claudine Senate (Students council of the school) and the staff together drew up an extensive plan for the academic year. 'Peace begins with me; let's give peace a chance' is the theme chosen. School assemblies with thought provoking poems, speeches, songs, notice boards flooded with quotes, write ups, creative paintings and drawings, placards and sign boards displayed in the corners and verandas all indicated to promote peace. During the recent Indian Hindu festival of *Rakshabandan* the students tied *rakhi* (sacred threads) to the trees and vowed to care for all God's creation.



Celebration of the International Peace Day was another important event organized by the Claudine Senate. It meant to cultivate a culture of Peace. A week-long programme (15th of Sept - 21st Sept, 2024) was organized by them. It was inaugurated by Rev. Fr. Silas Bogati of Nepal Vicariate and Mrs. Uma Adhikari, the Deputy Mayor of the place. Four white doves were released to the four directions to carry the message of peace. Fr. Silas



gave the biblical meaning of peace when he addressed the audience. Deputy Mayor highlighted the urgency of having Peace in our families, society, country and the world at large. The students through their drama titled 'Cultivating a culture of peace' brought out the realities of the society and families and tips to bring peace. Many competitions like logo making, essay writing, speech, skits etc. were also conducted in order to impart the theme to the students. Each day there were guest speakers - Buddhist monk from the Lumbini temple and a sister from Brahma Kumari Rajayoga Meditation Centre who spoke on the spiritual aspect of peace. The students under the abled guidance of the teachers prepared more than 600 greeting cards articulating their appreciation, admiration and gratitude for the inspiring, brave and dedicated service of the Armed Police Force (APF) and Nepal Police who jointly guard the borders of the country, control internal riots and conflicts, external invasion and thus maintain peace in the country. These gratitude cards were handed over to the SPs of APF and Nepal Police during one of the days Festival of peace. Their joy knew no bounds. They reciprocated with very emotional speeches and inflamed the audience with passion and motivation to serve the country.



The week-long programme reached its pinnacle on 21st Sept, 2024. The students and staff took out a peace rally starting from the Lumbini Gate and ending at the Nepal-India border giving the message of Peace. The



school band led the rally capturing the attention of the public. Students held high placards and hand-made Nepal flags and marched silently. At market squares and street corners, the students performed skits to give the message. Chief District Officer, Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Buddhist Monk, Brahma Kumaris were all part of the rally and imparted the message of peace through their eloquent speeches. Christ's message of peace was propagated by Rev. Fr. Vijay Toppo SJ while he addressed the public. The words of Mayor "Amar Jyoti Boarding School is an icon of Peace, love and justice in my municipality and they will continue to stand as a model for all to follow." These words of Mayor gave me goosebumps. Electronic and print media took this message to the wide range of public and families by capturing and broadcasting the glimpses of this event. In short, the whole town was set on fire with the message of peace.

eyes were welled up with tears of gratitude. I would wish to conclude my experience of working for peace with the words of St. Paul to the Colossians : "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ well in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." (3:15-17)

We are five sisters in the community. Working together for this great cause gave us feeling of oneness and joy. We experienced joy of living a life we are called to in this Hindu country. At the end of the day when I sat at the foot of the Cross in our chapel I experienced a deep joy and my



THE HIDDEN JOY OF A MISSIONARY



Sr. Madonna Mary Cyril
Province of Guwahati

"And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:19)

With great eagerness and openness, I arrived at the Guwahati Provincialate on June 22, 2023, warmly greeted by Sr. Annie Varghese, the provincial, sisters, and pre-novices with a traditional Assamese welcome: a song, gamosa (stall), and a japi (cap). I was assigned to the Changsari community, to be with the candidates, and every moment there has been a cherished encounter with God through these young girls and the sisters.





Though I was in an unfamiliar place where language was a barrier, God guided me gently, shaping me alongside the candidates just as He formed Moses and the Israelites. Each day felt like an Exodus experience, and I continually sought God's presence and wisdom, as Moses did. It was as if I was in the nursery school. In fact, the candidates became my teachers, each a storehouse of knowledge enriching my ministry.



God's providence showered me with joy even amidst challenges and scarcity. Each morning, I noticed in the candidates' eyes their hopes and aspirations. They taught me practical skills from cooking and gardening to Saturday-marketing, demonstrating a contented lifestyle rooted in acceptance of daily realities. Their passion for singing and dancing renewed my spirit, and their communal harmony was inspiring.



SAILING TOGETHER: PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF THE PROVINCIAL CHAPTER 2024

Sr. Arul Sheela
Province of Tenali

I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to share my profound spiritual journey during the Provincial Chapter of our Tenali Province. I was humbled to serve as one of the delegates for the 2024 Provincial Chapter, centered around the theme "Pilgrims and Prophets of Paschal Hope." This chapter, held at Yercaud in the St. Louise Spirituality

I admire the lifestyle of the northeast. They eat to live rather than live to eat, embodying contentment and acceptance. They don't complain or express dissatisfaction but accept daily life as it comes. Their expectations are modest. They find happiness in simplicity and cherish what they have. Their tolerance is remarkable, they accept all conditions, be it hot or cold, sweet or spicy, plenty or scarcity. From the garden, we relish seasonal fruits abundantly, and gracefully accept their absence when they are not available.

As I live here in the northeast, I draw great inspiration from our sisters who were pioneers from France to India. Though without the knowledge of any Indian languages, they were successful in their vocation and mission in India. I also drew inspiration from a candidate of 10th standard who, despite being the only one from her community, remained happily without conversing with others for a few months.

In my journey, I visited the Kaying community in Arunachal Pradesh for its silver jubilee, witnessing firsthand the generosity of the Holy Cross Associates. The day before the thanksgiving celebration, these associates prepared a variety of dishes in their homes, knowing that the sisters were busy and in short of time. The following day, parishioners took charge of the liturgy and cultural programmes for the silver jubilee celebration. It was evident to me that the Catholic church in the parish wholeheartedly celebrated the presence and service of our sisters.

Though I didn't have the familiar comforts, I lacked nothing, for I tasted the sweetness and the hidden joy of missionary life. I am grateful to Sr. Fatima Kattar from Madurai Province and Sr. Annie Varghese from Guwahati Province for guiding me into this enriching ministry.

"To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen." (Philippians 4:20)

Centre, was an experience that profoundly shaped my faith and purpose.

A Sacred Gathering:

From the moment I arrived at Yercaud for the Provincial Chapter, I was enveloped in a sense of heightened purpose

and spiritual energy. The atmosphere was alive with hope, setting the stage for a transformative experience. As I immersed myself in prayer and reflection, I became aware of the significance of this gathering. It was not merely a meeting but a unique opportunity to contribute to our collective growth and the mission of our Congregation.

During the chapter, I experienced a deep encounter with the divine and with my fellow delegates. The Holy Spirit was palpably present, guiding us on a shared spiritual journey. As a first-time participant in the chapter, I felt the weight of responsibility and the need for sincerity in every action. The environment was imbued with prayer, meditation, and reflection, fostering a profound connection to God, to one another, and to the broader mission of our Congregation. Each delegate brought their best selves, with open hearts and minds, and I felt blessed to be part of this sacred journey. The spiritual connection we shared not only renewed individual faith but also strengthened the bonds within the community of the chapter delegates. The discussions we engaged in were both stimulating and challenging, impelling us to grow in our understanding and commitment.

Discernment at the Heart of the Provincial Chapter:

Discernment is central to the Provincial Chapter. It is a time to evaluate the current state of our Congregation, reflect on past accomplishments, and envision future directions. This process requires deep listening to the Spirit's guidance and to the voices of all chapter members. Our deliberations were not merely rituals; they were acts of communal, prayerful discernment, where each voice was valued, and decisions were made with a profound sense of spiritual responsibility. We engaged in deep listening, mutual respect, and a commitment to making choices that reflect the divine will and honour each person's contributions. I realized the importance of my role in this process and felt a deep sense of unity with my fellow delegates.

The discernment process was a powerful catalyst for personal growth. Engaging in discussions about the future direction of our Congregation, listening to the insights of others, and contributing my own thoughts led to a deeper understanding of my spiritual aspirations and values. I found myself wrestling between my personal journey and the need to contribute meaningfully to our shared discernment. The Spirit of the Lord helped me to see my own path more clearly and to understand how I can contribute more effectively to our shared mission.

A Renewed Sense of Purpose:

Returning from the Provincial Chapter, I was imbued with a renewed sense of purpose and direction. The experience reignited my commitment to my vocation and clarified my role within the Congregation and my community. I felt a deeper connection to our mission and a clearer

understanding of how my individual efforts contribute to our collective goals.

The resolutions and insights from the Chapter provided a framework for my ongoing spiritual growth. I was inspired to set new personal goals that align with the Chapter's theme and to integrate these into my daily life.

In conclusion, the Provincial Chapter was a pivotal moment in my spiritual journey. It was not an end but a beginning of a profound and enriching experience that deeply impacted my faith, providing a space for reflection, connection, and renewed commitment. The insights gained and the sense of purpose renewed during the Chapter will continue to guide and inspire me as I walk my spiritual path, contributing actively to the realization of our congregation's vision and mission.



I would like to conclude my sharing on our provincial chapter with a poem

In the heart of sacred gathering, we assemble,
Where past and future meet in grace,
A chapter of our province confined in silent dream,
Where voices rise and find their place.

Through deliberation's sacred dance,
Where each one's wisdom weaves with humble thread,
We find the threads of chance and stance,
To guide in the footsteps of Our Mother Claudine

In unity, our voices blend,
A symphony of varied sound,
Where each one in harmony mend,
And shared convictions our chapter members

As chapter close and new life start,
We carry forward, hand in hand,
A sacred vow, a hopeful art,
To lead with love, to serve, to stand.

So here we stand, as a province with a vision clear,
With faith as guide and hope sincere,
Our journey marked as a pilgrim and prophet
In unity, we walk with paschal hope.



ROOTS AND WINGS OF MY LIFE JOURNEY

Sr. Cessy Scaria
Province of Kolkata

“Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.” (Ps. 107:1)

As I look back at the 50 years gone by in the family of the Sisters of the Cross, I am bubbling with deep joy and gratitude to the Lord of my life. Indeed, the Lord envisioned and planned my birth, chose my parents and prepared them to welcome me to this marvelous planet earth. What a privilege to be born in a Catholic family where the Lord allowed the roots of my faith to run deep, to be nurtured by my parents, siblings and teachers very specially the CMC sisters in whose school I received education for six years as a teenager. The day of my first communion was the day of my first commitment, where I offered myself to the Lord in the words of St. Teresa of Avila, “Christ has no body but yours, no hands, no feet on the earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on the world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands with which he blesses the world.” I owe my gratitude to Sr. Emmanuel who taught me and prepared me for this great event.

“For I know the plans I have, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

The choice of the Congregation for my religious life was entirely the initiative of the Lord. I am ever grateful to the Lord for His choice for me. In the family of the Sisters of the Cross I was given wings large enough to fly high and reach out to his children through the ministries of teaching, formation and animation. The family of the Sisters of the Cross expanded my world beyond my dreams from the Vindyas to the Himalayas, from the land of colours, smells and tastes to Chavanod to the cradle of our congregation. Many are the opportunities that I got to be a joyful witness of Jesus in my life and mission. When I observe the expansion of my life absorbing and accepting various cultures, creeds, and languages I stand in awe and wonder. I want to sing aloud ‘O Lord my God when I in awesome wonder, consider all the works thy hand has made....’ The journey of my life as a Sister of the Cross is filled with interactions and relationships of various depths, living the death-resurrection mystery, giving and nurturing life and the generativity of my consecrated life. The guides, mentors and friends both within the Congregation and outside played a vital role in my life. Mother Marie Cecile Vionnet, Sr. Stella Chiramel, Sr. Geneieve Mani Sr. Xavier Prema, and Sr. Lissy Thomas are a few among the many

who have played that pivotal role in my growth.

My first community in Namakkal, Trichy helped me and taught me deep joys of living community life in view of the kingdom. In real freedom, openness and acceptance I grew to be creative, generous and broke barriers of culture and languages. This experience in the community facilitated me to create the larger parish and neighbourhood community. I developed deep and lasting sisterly friendship with Sr. Xavier Prema which was a strong pillar for my human and spiritual growth, by the quality of her listening to me with deep interest. I was trusted by the community and the experience here deepened my trust in God, others and self. Because of this experience of trust by my community and Congregation I grew in the art of sharing, relating, encouraging, trusting and caring relationships. Reliving this community experience rejuvenates me to this day.

The opportunity given to me by my religious obedience to be on mission in the North East especially among the Arunachal children in Harmutty was the golden years of my apostolic life. The variety of cultures, languages and ways of living and relating simply fascinated me. The original freedom and total openness in expression of the Arunachal children attracted me. They would tell to your face who you are in their perception. I was privileged to live in this mission collaborating with Fr. Kulandai Swamy who influenced me very positively imbibing the missionary spirit of this pioneer missionary to the Arunachalise.

This was the most beautiful and challenging experience of my apostolic life.

Professed in 1975 at the completion of 25 years seven of us, companions came together sharing our



life and mission for three days in Kolkata validating and celebrating our consecrated life. I witnessed and was overjoyed with gratitude for the wonders of the Lord in our lives and the expansion and growth in each of us. Thanks to the providence of God who gave the five of us who entered the 50th year of our religious life to come together in Bangalore, the institute of consecrated life: Sanyasa, under the direction of Fr. Paulson to savour the sweetness of the

experiences of our lives, recalling the joyful, sorrowful, glorious and luminous mysteries of our lives. A great time, an unforgettable time, enjoying the wonders of the Lord in each of our lives and discovering our rootedness in the family of the Sisters of the Cross.

From now on every moment and every breath of mine is yours and for your glory, the Lord of my life.

HOLISTIC HEALTH CARE THROUGH MOTHER CLAUDINE HOLISTIC HEALTH CENTRE



Sr. Diana Mathew
Province of Trichy

Mother Claudine Holistic Health Centre at Kattupatti, Viralimalai aims at providing accessible, affordable and effective alternative medical facilities to the rural people, enhancing their quality of life with a holistic approach. Since its humble beginning at Viralimalai on August 10, 2019, the centre has been serving the sick with the Homoeopathic treatment by Dr. Sr. Diana Mathew. It was a challenging task to make people aware of the effect of this system of medicine as they are used to modern system of Medicine (Allopathy). When it slowly began to bloom, there came a great blow the Pandemic and the progress of the centre was curtailed. Again in 2021, we started to introduce another therapy called Reflexology besides Homoeopathy, which indeed received a slow and progressive response from the people. The dual treatment went on well with an increase of patients. In order to reach out to many poor in the rural and to make our treatment in a comfortable place, it was decided to extend the centre to Kattupatti, a small village, where we have the Mother Claudine Farm, just 2 kms away from Viralimalai, Trichy. In June 2024, Sr. Santhiya joined the centre and extends her healing hands through natural therapies.

The focus of the Centre is to provide an exclusively effective alternative treatment, and our purpose is as follows:

- To provide holistic health care to all, enhancing the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of the people.
- To preserve and promote the use of indigenous medicinal plants and traditional healing practices that are part of the local cultural heritage.

In order to execute the above strategy, we started to incorporate different therapies namely Naturopathy, Flower Medicine, Herbal Medicine, Dorn Healing, Acupressure, Acupuncture, Cupping Therapy, Sujok etc, which enriches our healing ministry with a holistic approach. All these therapies in fact complement one another and therefore we do not handle any single therapy as great or less important but we attach equal significance to all of them.

“The Lord created the Physicians and their gift of healing comes from the Lord most High. The Lord created medicines out of the earth, and the sensible will not despise them”. (Sirach 38:2-4)

Believing in these life-giving words of the Lord, we commit ourselves in serving the sick who come from different villages with various sicknesses. People somehow seek different kinds of treatments through which they could be healed. We could see their longingness to be cured and to be relieved of their miseries. The centre takes keen interest to sort out their problems and treat them accordingly focussing on physical, mental and emotional health. People mostly come to the centre with illnesses like Osteoarthritis, Rheumatoid arthritis, Lumbar/Cervical Spondylosis, Paralysis, Children with special needs, Cerebral palsy, Fertility issues, gynec problems and so on.

A brief account of the therapies provided in the Centre:

Naturopathy promotes an overall well-being by improving the body's natural healing processes. First and foremost, the patients before being treated are advised for detoxification i.e. removal of toxins from the body through natural methods followed by a diet protocol. This process will help the body to accept any type of treatment given and will encourage healing process. This therapy also includes steam bath, oil massages and nutrition and diet.

Homoeopathy provides a holistic and gentle cure by addressing both physical and mental constitution of the patients. It is a symptomatic treatment that focuses on individualizing the patients with their characteristic symptoms reducing the likelihood of side effects. The speciality of this system is that we treat the sick and not the sickness.

Reflexology uses pressure points on the feet to stimulate nerve rejuvenation. There are nerve endings at the feet, and



areas in the feet correspond to different organ of the body. By giving pressure to these areas, we activate the organs to function well. Besides Foot Reflexology, we also provide Face Reflexology and Neuro Muscular therapy which are also part of Reflexology. It supports the body's natural healing mechanisms. Wednesday, is a day exclusively set apart for Reflexology. Besides our service, the service of the reflexologist Mr. Antony is made available both in Kattupatti and Viralimalai wherein we take up few challenging cases of paralysis, cerebral palsy and children with special needs.

Flower Medicine uses medicines derived from healing flowers to address mind-related illnesses. It offers a natural and gentle approach to mental health issues.

Acupuncture and Acupressure are Traditional Chinese Medicines (TCM) that remove energy blockages by puncturing or pressing the meridians that are believed to run throughout the body. Each meridian corresponds to a particular organ. It enhances energy flow and supports holistic health.

Dorn Therapy helps to align bones and joints, promoting proper structural alignment and postural correction, which will lead to good health. It alleviates pain and improves mobility without the need for drugs.

Herbal Medicines utilize natural herbs for treating diseases. All the plants and herbs we see on earth possess medicinal effects, which are dormant. This treatment revives the old native medical treatments that were available centuries ago. It offers a cost-effective and side-effect-free alternative to chemical-based treatments.

Cupping Therapy, also apart of TCM, is based on removing the blocks by creating a vacuum on specific body areas to alleviate pain and enhance healing. It helps improve blood flow and reduce inflammation naturally.



Through these therapies we try to bring people back to nature by correcting their lifestyle and pattern of food and nutrition which form the basis to healthy living thus making the people live in harmony with the Creator and the creation.

Keeping Jesus, the healer as the centre of our lives, we strive to become healing channels to our suffering humanity by our services through Mother Claudine Holistic Health Centre.

MY JOURNEY WITH THE LORD



Sr. Monica Dasa
Province of Sri Lanka

I have stepped into a new phase of my life, as I am in my early 90s'. As a contented and happy religious I look back at my life with gratitude towards the landscape I travelled so far. When I was young, I wanted to become a teacher to help my family. So, whenever we were interrogated by our teacher of our future plans, my answer would be that I want to become a teacher. But most of my friends said that they want to become nuns. While we were waiting for our results after the Ordinary Level exam, we always go to church in the evenings to pray. One particular evening, my friend and I went to church to make the way of the cross, our parish priest sent a message to meet him. In meeting us, the parish priest Fr. Moses Perera said, that there is a new religious congregation which has come to Sri Lanka namely Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod and whether we would like to join to become nuns. We both said 'Yes'. That first 'Yes' of mine brought me throughout these past 67 years treading joyfully and willingly. We were five girls who joined the novitiate but only two of us persevered in our call and I am the only one among the living to bear testimony to God's faithfulness in our lives.

To join the novitiate, I had to go alone by ship from Sri Lanka to India. So, I got in to the ship from Thalimannar and reached Danushkody. From there I travelled to Tiruchirappalli by train. In the ship as I felt insecure, I kept a picture of Our Lady with me and asked our Mother Mary to look after me. After a while a lady with a baby in the hand inquired of my journey and started to talk to me and kept company with me. Three-hours journey by ship led us to Danushkody. I was happy to see a sister of our Congregation waiting to receive me. The sister helped me in the customs office and did all the needful and brought me to the train and offered me lunch and told me that I have to go to Tiruchirappalli and two sisters will come to the station to take me to the convent. Once again I started my journey. As the train started, I felt some uneasiness, because I couldn't read even the name of the stations. After a while some medical students who were going to Madras started to converse with me. They told me not to worry and that they will help me and kept company with me. At last, when we reached Tiruchirappalli station, I saw our sisters standing at the station. Those students helped me to take my luggage and I reached Tiruchirappalli and I was in the hands of my sisters. During this lonely journey to India, I experienced my loving Jesus was with me. I experience His presence through all the people who came to help me. This first journey of mine enabled me to feel the guiding hands of Jesus and His presence with me.

I am happy to say that I was one of the first novices in the novitiate. Tiruchirappalli novitiate was opened in 1952. We were twenty novices and I was one of them. After two and a half years of training in the Novitiate helped us to grow as the Sisters of the Cross, it helped us to imbibe the spirit of the Congregation and to build up deep union with the Lord. Life during our initial

formation enriched our hearts and minds and we studied our rules and vows which helped us to enrich our personal lives, our life in the mission, and the life in the community.

Mission is vital to us as consecrated religious. Our mission is to make the good God known and loved by our very living and gave the first place to prayer life, while witnessing the life of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience and commitment in our ministries. In my life the vow of Obedience became a bridge to answer God's call especially to step out to the unknown. I never said no to transfers. Wherever the superiors asked me to go I went and with the help of God fulfilled the work that was entrusted to me.

In my consecrated life I am happy to mention that I had a chance of being a pioneer in some places. When I had to start new houses, to begin it was not very easy. But with the help of God who gave strength and courage I was able to fulfill my mission as God wanted, with much interest and love for the place and people. Though I did not do significant things, I feel I have given my best for the people and the ministries.

After I came to Sri Lanka as a sister, in 1957, we were at 6th mile post at Kelaniya for one year and then started our first community at Peliyagoda. I was one of the community members to start the work. In 1976, Sr. Irene and myself opened the new convent at Amandoluwa. In 1982, a convent was opened at Bibile with the help of Sr. Philomina. In 1987, with the assistant of two sisters, a convent was opened at Cholankanda. In 1992, with support of Sr. Nita started the community at Bingiriya. In 1996, opened a convent at Kekirawa with two sisters. At present Cholankanda and Kekirawa communities are closed due to various reasons.

In all these openings of the houses we had to undergo difficulties and challenges. We never felt discouraged but rather with the help of the Lord we were able to be happy and enthusiastic in order to build up the place and come closer to people in the milieu. Today I am so happy to see the mission flourishing in these places and that we are able to serve the people of the milieu and fulfill their needs. The loving gesture of the people and the inmates of the Children's Home are by being closer to me even now. This gives me joy and contentment, as I can recall how God has used me as His instrument to brave the lands of Canaan, He often asked me to go, solely believing in His Divine Providence.

At last, I am 90 years old, I am grateful to God my loving Father for being with me till this moment keeping me safe and sound in His presence. I Thank the Lord for His countless blessings and providence which I experience throughout my life and also for His unfailing guidance. It is His unconditional love that made me who I am today.

A Tribute to Sr. Christiane Morand
(March 17, 1932 – December 18, 2024)

“Death is not darkness; it is the lamp that goes out when the day breaks.”



Sr. Christiane Morand
Superior General
(1983 - 1995)

As the first rays of dawn remained unseen, Sr. Christiane Morand entered eternal light on December 18, 2024, at the age of 92, completing 66 years of a devoted religious life. Born in Charvonnex, France, on March 17, 1932, Sr. Christiane was the fifth of six children. Her parents, recognizing her intelligence and determination, made immense sacrifices to provide her with an education during the hardships of World War II. This investment bore fruit as she earned multiple diplomas, culminating in a degree in Literature and Philosophy. Yet, her calling transcended worldly ambitions. To the surprise of her family, she sought to join the Sisters of the Cross in Chavanod, entering postulancy on November 3, 1955. Sr. Christiane made her first profession in 1958 and final profession in 1963. Her life exemplified unwavering faith and selfless service, devoted to the Congregation, the youth, and the Church.

A Life of Leadership and Service

As a philosophy teacher, director, provincial, and Superior General (1983–1995), Sr. Christiane shaped countless lives. Her leadership saw the expansion of the Congregation into Latin America, Israel, and Romania, reflecting her vision of internationality and inclusion. She guided the Congregation with wisdom, fostering unity while embracing diversity. Her circulars echoed her spiritual depth and unwavering faith:

- *“Let us awaken our faith to see in everything the hand of God which leads each one of us.”*
- *“Welcome the breath of the Spirit who gives life and love.”*

Her humility and humanity touched all who knew her. Whether listening to concerns, mentoring young sisters, or interacting with coworkers, she exemplified respect and dignity.

A Light in Darkness

Even in her later years, as her health declined, Sr. Christiane's spirit remained luminous. Her enduring kindness and radiant smile brought solace and inspiration to those around her. Despite the trials of physical and cognitive challenges, she bore witness to the love of Christ Crucified and Risen.

A Legacy of Faith and Love

Sr. Christiane's legacy is a tapestry woven with compassion, leadership, humour, and humility. As one student recalled, *“She spoke to us as equals, making us feel valued and empowered.”* Her ability to foster joy and create a sense of belonging left a lasting impact on the Congregation and beyond.

She has left an indelible mark on the Sisters of the Cross and on all who were fortunate to walk alongside her. May her example inspire us to live with faith, love, and a commitment to the service of others.

Rest in eternal peace, Sr. Christiane. Thank you for being a beacon of light and love.
Watch over us as we continue the mission you so faithfully embraced.



Wishing you a season that's
merry and bright with the light of God's love.

**Merry Christmas
&
Happy New Year
2025**