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NEPAL REGION NEWSLETTER

Nov - Dec 2021

Regional Superior speaks...

I have been fascinated by the large-scale Christmas celebrations of Syria where Syrians still practise certain traditions that are unique to them. As we know, in the West, children associate Christmas gifts with Santa Claus, pulled on a sleigh by twelve reindeer, who visits each house to place gifts beneath the Christmas tree; but in Syria, it isn't a Santa who brings the gifts but the smallest camel of the biblical Three Kings. Legend has it that during the long journey to Bethlehem, the youngest camel continued to persevere despite of its weariness and exhaustion. Jesus Christ is said to have blessed this camel with immortality. Thus, on Christmas Eve every year, children leave their shoes out, along with hay and water for the camel, in hopes of them being filled with gifts the next morning.

Along with the children of Syria, let us leave our hearts open hoping and praying that they will be filled with the love, peace, joy and compassion of Jesus; may we remain grateful, prayerful and open to receive His blessings.

May the divine love of God descend into our communities to make them a piece of heaven. This Christmas, I wish that you may find peace and prosperity in every sphere of your life. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, 2022!

- Sr. Jessy Puliyanthuruthel

St. Mary's, Gorkha

Sr. Neena returned to the community after spending a restful and refreshed time with her dear ones at her home. Srs. Veronica and Mariette were spiritually renewed after the annual retreat and the Bonding programme in Pokhara.



Soon after Tihar holidays, the primary section too returned to school and so now we are happy having the entire school in the campus; regular classes are going on peacefully. The students will soon begin their second term exams which will be followed by a term break for Christmas and winter holidays.

We were also happy to spend time with Sr. Jessy during her visitation to our community.

- Sr. Mariette Pinto

St. Mary's, Biratnagar

We warmly welcomed our students to school on 15th November after a long interval of pandemic lockdowns. They were excited to meet their classmates and their teach-





ers and the compound was noisy and lively once again. Anuska Dhakal, a student of class VIII was awarded as the 2nd runner-up in a singing competition in our municipality. She was laured with a certificate, a trophy and a guitar. We are indeed proud of you, dear Anuska.

Plus Two students went for an educational tour to Pokhara and Lumbini along with Sr. Amrita and five other



teachers. They came back hale and hearty having visited some of the historical places in the western parts of Nepal.

-Sr. Marilyn Murickal

Mary Ward, Lubhu

The feast of Christ the King was celebrated in our quasi parish in Don Bosco School premises with a devotional procession after the Holy Eu-



charist. We recited rosary and mercy rosary, sang devotional hymns and offered prayers during the procession.

17th November was spent in intercessory prayer and fasting for the St. Paul of Chartres' (SPC) Sisters and their volunteers who were in a prison in Pokhara. By the grace of God, they were released on bail shortly after the prayer day.

In the beginning of December, Sr. Asha went to St. Mary's Pokhara for the Superiors' Meet and to participate in Sr. Deepa's Silver Jubilee celebration.



The school had the investiture ceremony of the school captains. By donning the mantle of responsibility, the captains pledged to do their duties to the best of their abilities. An alumna of Mary Ward School, Kathmandu, Ms Purnima Kayastha, who is part of an organization known as 'Child Protection Centre' conducted a talk programme for our senior students. The talk covered various topics including online child protection and cybercrimes like, cyber bullying, sextor-



tion, child pornography, morphing and their after effects. The topics were indeed relevant and the information shared was very useful for our students.

- Sr. Nancy Edamanasseril

Mary Ward, Sirsia

All Souls' Day was celebrated in a befitting manner in Sirsia. A large number of people paid



homage to the departed souls of their ancestors and loved ones in their families by reciting their names, decorating their tombs and lighting candles. After the Mass all the beautifully decorated graves in the cemetery were blessed and surrounding fields too were blessed. Similarly, the feast of Christ the King was celebrated very solemnly in our parish. On that great day, eighteen children received their first Holy Communion.

Srs. Jyoti and Marina returned to the community with rejuvenated spirits after their retreats and home visits. Sr. Marina continues to volunteer in Hanuman Government Primary School. To our great joy and relief, the harvesting and threshing of the paddy of our field is over. We were very happy to have Sr. Jessy in our midst for a short time.



Being the next Silver Jubilarian of the Region, Sr. Neelu went to Mysore with six of her companions for a spiritual renewal programme. They had a grace-filled time together; some of them met one another after sixteen years.

- Sr. Neelu Carmel

St Mary's, Kathmandu

With the dawning of December, intense preparations for exams began. The students were galvanized and got glued to the text books as physical examinations were conducted after two years of a gap. The installation of interactive boards in our class rooms has added a new dimension to our teaching-learning process. A brief training session was given to the teachers on using these boards.



It was indeed a graceful moment to attend the Holy Mass of His Excellency Archbishop Loepoldo Gireli, the new Nuncio to Nepal at Assumption Church, Dhobighat. It was followed by a felicitation programme and supper with all the

priests and religious. It was the Nuncio's first apostolic visit to Nepal, where he met with priests, religious and the laity.

The Catholic Religious of Nepal (CRN) organized a short welcome programme for His Excellency at St. Mary's. Sr. Jessy, the national CRN president, and her team hosted the event. On-site and online, a large number of priests and religious participated. The session was engrossing with the active participation of all; several participants got to ask questions directly to the Nuncio. There was also a PowerPoint presentation on the history of the church in Nepal by Fr. George SDB.



Our community has decided to plant a tree each week of this Advent. Each week, by planting



trees and bringing Jesus into the center of creation, we are reminded to care for our common home.

The CRN Central Zone held the Advent recollection on the 10th of December at St. Mary's School, Jawalakhel. Sr. Gemma Lucia Kim SPC shared her experiences in the jail which piqued everyone's attention. Sr. Gemma's experiences moved the assembled religious, inspiring them to endure hardship for the sake of Christ. Rt. Rev.



Bishop Paul Simick's gracious presence added blessing to the occasion. Following the spiritual nourishment, some religious communities hosted games. Everyone took part in the games with delight in their hearts. With their melodic and happy carol singings, the

Salesian family brought us the feeling of Christmas. After all the spiritual nourishment and recreation, everyone was hungry for dinner, which was prepared by various religious congregations.

– Sr. Karuna Shrestha

Mary Ward, Jhamsikhel

Mary Ward School reopened on 8th November, after a long break of several months. The little ones looked all lost in the new premises though the older ones were happy to meet their teachers and friends. There was a lot of laughter and noise and children looked very serious to learn. They were very conscious of the Covid-19 safety measures and many of them brought to school sanitizer for their own personal use. Parents too expressed their relief to leave the children in school and hoped they would study. At first we had classes only till noon. The first few



days were devoted to distribution of uniforms which had been donated by ASMAN for the year 2020. Everyone enjoyed the laughter and noise of children around which made us feel that Corona is out of bounds already. A big change for our children is that they no more are given mid-day meal in the school. Now they bring their own frugal meal and enjoy it in the company of others like picnic days.

The Advent Season was welcomed with due preparation and the community began its spiritual journey from the first day. On Saturdays we go to Assumption Parish for Mass. Sr. Shobha takes Catechism classes for the First Communicants. We joined the parish to welcome the Apostolic Nuncio who was on his first visit to Nepal to present his credentials to the government.

To the joy and surprise of all of us, every parent came to meet the teachers and pick up the report cards for the half yearly term exams. Srs. Shobha and



Charlie distributed prizes to the best academic performers from each class soon after the exam results.

The community and the school wished Sr. Margaret Mary on 2nd December, anticipating her birthday. ASMAN president and her team visited Sr. Margaret Mary to plan and discuss

further programs and support for the children of Mary Ward School. – **Sr. Margaret Mary**

St. Mary's, Pokhara

Sr. Deepa celebrated the 25 years of her consecrated life in the community as well as in her home Parish back in Kerala. They were occasions of thanksgiving and reminders of God's faithfulness and everlasting love for her. We were happy to have Rev. Bishop Paul Simick for the Eucharistic celebration in the community. The presence of Sr. Jessy, the Regional Consult, the Superiors from all the communities and many Fathers and Sisters from the valley added joy to this occasion.

Rev. Bishop in his homily highlighted the fidelity of God to Sr Deepa for the past silver years of her consecrated life. Sr. Deepa expressed her gratitude to God and thanked those present. The whole Jubilee programme was meticulously planned and well organized by our community. Following the Eucharistic celebration, the festive atmosphere continued as the guests were invited for a felicitation programme and thereafter for a fellowship meal. The school and the co-workers too had a beautifully organized Jubilee celebration initiated by Sr. Catherine, teachers and students. The students had a musical drama enacting the life of Sr. Deepa, and songs, speeches, dances and poems honouring her. Sr. Deepa extends her heartfelt thanks to all who made her day a memorable one for her.



Congratulations dear Sr. Deepa! May you ever be faithful to God in the days to come!

Every gathering and celebration add a lot of joy, merriment and brings the people close to each other. We were glad to welcome eleven of our sisters from different communities for the Annual Retreat under the guidance of Fr. Amrit Raj. We too had the joy of welcoming Sr. Jessy and all the Superiors for the Animators meeting for a day.

We were able to conduct the physical classes after a long period of online classes. The students were excited and was happy to be back to school and to be with their friends. Though in the initial period the students took some time to focus and concentrate as they were glued to their phones and laptops, they were quick to get back to normal days of schooling. We managed to have a few extracurricular activities such



as investiture ceremony and various competitions in the school.

Keeping in mind the care for the common home as suggested by Sr. Jessy we had four saplings bought for the Four Weeks of Advent and



each of us took a sapling representing the four themes of Advent - Peace, Hope, Joy and Love.

– Sr. Deepa Olikunnel

CJ Nepal JPIC Unit

International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women falls on 25th November every year. The 16 Days of Action plan began to be implemented on that day and continued until 10th December (International Human Rights Day).

UN/JPIC Nepal joined the United Nations in creating awareness about violence against women. The six CJ schools in Nepal waged a 16-day campaign to create awareness and put an end to all forms of violence against women and promote human rights of every individual.

In Jhamsikhel, the students of Class IV conducted an assembly to create awareness about violence against women. It was very well organized by the supervision of Mrs. Shobha Pariyar, the JPIC coordinator for the school.

St. Mary's Gorkha joined in solidarity with the Orange the World campaign by celebrating the Orange Day, i.e., International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Stu-

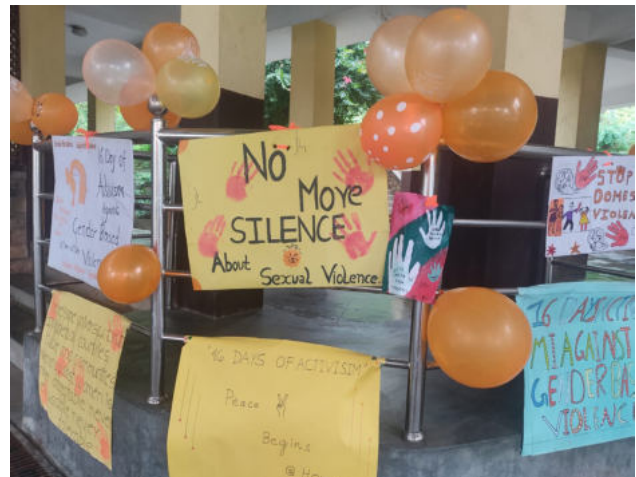


dents prepared placards and posters to participate in the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence.

The local JPIC units involved students and

teachers in creating short videos, making posters, placards and raising awareness through speeches and poems. All activities were later posted in the school Facebook pages and YouTube channels.

Six students from St. Mary's, Kathmandu participated in the working group of the Global Conversation Circle that began on 11th December 2021, on the topic 'Impact of Climate Change on the Lives of Girls'. The mountain women from Nepal bear the brunt of climate change. When men leave their homes and migrate to foreign countries or to the other parts of the country with better facilities to make a livelihood, women are forced to stay back at home and perform all the agricultural and pastoral work. The girls walk



for miles in harsher climates in search of water, fuel, food and medicinal herbs for their families. They are often left with no time to attend school. During disasters like flood, drought and landslides girls are at increasing risk of violence, trafficking and rape. Climate change has resulted in the scarcity of water and women in many part of the country have to walk kilometres in search of clean drinking water.

The students have also been working towards creating a video for raising awareness against human trafficking.

– Sr. Smitha Muthu

FMW Nepal

Uniting for a Better Tomorrow

The FMW units have adopted electronic meeting procedures as a result of the recent pandemic, and carried out meetings virtually on the Zoom platform. This has not only made it safer

for all members but also given all the members an opportunity to attend meetings wherever in the world they are physically at that time.

During the sessions, every member is given the opportunity to animate the sessions in turns. The students are guided by their Spiritual Leader and the Teacher Animators, who teach them to know and love Mary Ward deeply and to help them to become living examples – holy and pleasing to God.

With the intention of keeping alive the legacy of our foundress, the members thrive to work hand in hand, reaching out to the needy when and where required with whatever means necessary; these means include food, clothes, medicine and sometimes money. The FMW Movement continues to grow, reaching out, spreading love and holy vibes, and helping and consoling, but most importantly, giving meaning to one's life.

- Ms. Jaya H. Subba
(President of Teachers' Unit)

Superiors' Meet - 2021

The Superiors' Meet with the theme, 'Love' began with a meaningful prayer service by Sr. Neena. Sr. Jessy started her session with the first reading of the second Sunday of Advent, which also pointed out the need for genuine love for one other. She thanked the animators in her welcoming address for carrying out their responsibilities faithfully. She also asked the animators, "How do they feel as animators of their respective community?" The positive responses such as 'taking the responsibility as a God-given task' encouraged one another.

Sr. Asha shared with the superiors her reflections and experiences as the superior of various communities for many years. She took the themes of the upcoming synod which Pope Fran-



ces wants all to reflect and practise – Communion, Participation and Mission. Each theme was taken for reflection and later there was a lively interactive session. The question, "How can we cope with the difficulties and try to make our communities a Trinitarian community?" stirred the group and led to an interactive session. Practical examples helped each other to improve their role as animators. The last session was led by Sr. Jessy; she went through the Region Policy book concerning the qualities and role of the animators.

- Sr. Asha Singh

Bonding II

The second group of retreatants after spending eight days in silence with the Lord in Pokhara, had two days of Bonding programme to spend quality time in the company of one another on the 11th and 12th of November 2021. It was arranged by Sr. Jessy, with the help of our community in Pokhara. All were curious as well as interested to know how the get-together called 'Bonding' would be like and were looking forward to it.

The following day of the retreat, the eleven of us along with Sr. Jessy went to the outskirts of the valley, in Saharankot, a tourist spot for trekkers.

Our anchors, Srs. Lillian and Pratibha with a fitting introduction, initiated the programme by welcoming our Regional Superior Sr. Jessy to conduct the first session. Sr. Jessy led a heart-warming session instilling in us a sense of belongingness to the Region. The exercises on personal interaction and sharing of our life, mission and our experiences, helped us to know one another in a more personal way and get connected.

After a short break, Srs. Catherine, Monica and





Charlie led the group into an hour of evening prayer. The theme of the prayer was on breaking bread and communion. The highly creative prayer service was amazing and moved everyone present. The climax of the prayer was the sharing of the word of God as well as sharing of wine which animated everyone with joy and happiness. The group then dispersed for supper and subsequently gathered for an organized recreation in the conference hall.

Sr. Nancy along with the younger Sisters of the group conducted many exciting games which could be participated by both the younger as well as the older members of the group. Everyone enjoyed the games and shared great laughter. The next day morning, Sr. Karuna led us into a deep reflective prayer on being the body of Christ. All were invited to sit in a circle with our hands

joined with our neighbour's and the prayer led all into a spirit of peace and tranquility.

The next session was again conducted by Sr. Karuna where Sisters were guided into different games and group sharing exercises highlighting the value of community life and togetherness. The session was energizing and brought about a feeling of togetherness. After a short break, the group gathered for the last session led by Sr. Mariette. The main theme of the session was on cultivating "An Attitude of Gratitude" in our life. This topic on gratefulness gave a fitting finale to the whole long programme of retreat as well as the Bonding programme II.

The programme finally ended with Sr. Jessy, as a token of her love and appreciation, gifting a shawl to each sister.

– Sr. Nancy Edamanasseril

