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Magnificat



A NEWS-LETTER FROM CBCI COUNCIL FOR WOMEN

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EDITORIAL

Edith Stein (St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross) wrote extensively about women and their role in the world and the Church.

"Christ embodies the ideal of human perfection: in Him all bias and defects are removed, and the masculine and feminine virtues are united and their weaknesses redeemed; therefore, His true followers will be progressively exalted over their natural limitations. That is why we see in holy men a tenderness and a truly maternal solicitude for the souls entrusted to them while in holy women there is manly boldness, proficiency, and determination."

We all have something valuable to offer, whether male or female, but neither of us have everything, therefore we respect our differences and build each other up. Gender equality is a universal partnership of brothers and sisters. There is an essential equality in man and woman, since they are created in the image and likeness of God. Both of them are equally capable of receiving the outpouring of divine truth and love in the Holy Spirit.

Jesus chose to bring salvation to the world through a woman – Mary. Jesus never discriminated women, instead always stood for them against the tradition and culture of His time. 'Mulieris Dignitatem' observes "it is universally admitted - even by people with a critical attitude towards the Christian message - that in the eyes of his contemporaries Christ became a promotor of women's true dignity and

of the *vocation* corresponding to this dignity. At times this caused wonder, surprise, often to the point of scandal".

Women were appreciated by Jesus as valuable messengers of His gospel of love, while respected for the different role they would play in evangelization from the men. The women were the first at the tomb. They were the first to find it empty. The Gospel of John emphasizes the special role of Mary Magdalene. She is the first to meet the Risen Christ. She is the first to witness and to announce the truth of resurrection to the world and to the Apostles, thus became the **Apostle to the Apostles**.

This year International Women's Day is focusing on gender parity and forging a better working world which is more inclusive. We want to explore a number of the barriers which prevent women from actually feeling either the confidence or having the skills or the ability to actually reach their full potential. Gloria Steinem, world-renowned feminist, journalist and activist once explained: "The story of women's struggle for equality belongs to no single feminist nor to any one organization but to the collective efforts of all who care about human rights." The efforts we make collectively will inspire and emancipate women to fly high in their own careers.

Happy Women's Day to you all! Wish you all the Joy and Peace of Easter too! ❖



EASTER GREETINGS

Happy Easter to all readers! The Biblical account of the morning of our Lord's Resurrection focuses on the women who went to the tomb of Christ very early in the morning. Why did they get up so early, carrying with them perfumed oils to anoint the corpse of Jesus of Nazareth, their *Rabbi*? True, the previous days, Friday and Saturday were so terrible. But these women 'headed' by Mary of Magdala were determined to anoint the dead body of the master, which was not given elaborate anointing on the day of his death, as the day was going to an end and the Sabbath to begin, they gave him a petty burial. So these women planned to anoint his body after the Sabbath. They did not think of any danger that may come across early morning, because the love for their master drew them to the grave donated to the master by Joseph of Arimathea. It is this love that enabled these women, especially Mary of Magdala to be the first heralds of the resurrection of Christ to the Apostles.

Easter is the true story of God's great love for every human being. But it is also the story of love, the Disciples of Christ, especially the women had for Jesus, their master. Their love for the master was so strong that they were able to take up the risks. Today Christian women are challenged to take up their apostolate and service of Christ. We find that only a few embrace consecrated life especially the vocation to be contemplatives and missionaries outside their diocese and villages. Even very pious mothers discourage their daughters from choosing the vocation to live the consecrated life.

These women of Easter morning were courageous to face trials to do their final service to the body of Jesus. Neither the stone at the mouth of the grave nor the soldiers who kept watching in the garden could stop them. They are mentioned in the gospel as women who followed Jesus and provided for the needs of Jesus and his apostles. They were generous. John narrates of a woman who brought the costly perfumed oil to pour at the feet of Jesus.

Our Lord appeared to them and made them the first proclaimers of the Gospel. It was their love, courage and generosity that gave them the experience of the joy of Easter. They met the Lord. Let us also meet the Lord by our love, generosity and courage. God bless you.

✠ **Most Rev. Paul Antony Mullassery**
Bishop Of Kollam Diocese



Roshni Hansda - Against all odds

I am Roshni Hansda, from Azimganj, Murshidabad, West Bengal. I was born on 21st March, 2002 as the third among 4 daughters. We belong to a middle class family. Although my father works for West Bengal Police, we struggle to make our ends meet every month. The Physical, Financial, Mental and Societal problems are our daily partners.

When I was three years old, my father got transferred to Krishnagar. I started my school studies in Krishnagar. Being an alcoholic, my father has been really struggling for the past 20 years, spending all his money on drinking. He works for a month and then drinks for the next two months which added to our financial struggles. It is a very hard situation for all of us. Every month we ask ourselves a big question – How will we live, what will we eat, how will we study, what will we wear, how will we get medicines if we get sick? Because of his excessive drinking habit, he has been often admitted to the hospital. Due to which we struggle to pay fees, electricity bills and to buy food and cloths. My mother

borrows money from a money lender every two - three months for our family.

My father does not understand what he is doing, but when he is not drunk he is very good and sincere, and always feels guilty but struggles to quit drinking. Besides, my elder sisters are prone to diseases and they are admitted to hospital every year. Jesus has always been there for us. Many a times my father and sisters have got miraculous healings.

I remember when I was five or six years old, my parents were washing and cleaning some Brass (Peetal) Plates, Glass, Candle stands and Bowls. I asked my Mom why they were cleaning that, she answered that my father would bring new plates, glass and bowls in exchange of those old ones. But I knew he sold them to buy food from the money he got.

On another occasion, our financial situation was becoming worse and **we did not have anything to eat for two days**, not even some vegetable leaves or vegetables. We had two pet rabbits and one night I saw

the rabbits eating small pieces of paper; after seeing this I started crying and prayed, "God give us strength to fight with and overcome this problem". **I promised myself that in the future, I would help those people who do not have food, clothes and place to live.**

My sisters and I usually went to school without having any breakfast. Every day I used to take big tiffin to school and filled it with rice and curry from mid-day meal. My classmates called me "Bhel puri wala", because I used to carry a big tiffin, but I did not care. I was happy to bring home food so we all can share and eat together contently. I spent 12 years in Krishnagar like this.

During Christmas and Good Friday, we could not afford to buy new clothes and I saw other people wearing their new dresses. I used to get sad, but when I saw the beautiful and glorious face of Mother Mary, all my sorrows disappeared.

I did not want to go to Azimganj, but it was the wish of Jesus Christ, I came with my mother and younger sister. My father and elder sisters stayed there because of their studies.

My mother tried to get admission for us in a government school. But though our results were very good they did not give us admission for no reasons. Later we got admission in Don Bosco High School. I was in class VIII and my sister was in class V. But there was no money to purchase our school uniform, books, notebooks, shoes and socks. **My mother sold her two small gold earrings (the only ornaments she had) to get some money so we can get uniform and books.**

I promised her that I would study hard and get good marks every year, and so did I, got 1st rank every year. Now I understood why God brought us here, because every Sunday I can attend mass and study catechism. I read the Bible and biographies of the Saints to be inspired. We are happy in Azimganj but we still struggle financially and physically. My parents and sisters have been admitted to the hospital many times.

During my tenth grade summer vacation, my mother got a tumour in her stomach. It was removed by an operation. But after the Operation we did not have enough money to buy medicines for her. And I decided to cancel my Bolpur trip from the school and get my money refunded from the Headmaster to buy



medicines. But my Headmaster Br. P.A. Jose allowed me to go for the trip without any fee. I prepared for my Board exams in between these situations.

Every month the money lender comes and takes the money. Fifty percent of my father's income goes to him. If we are unable to give him the money, he will insult us in front of the people. But constant 'Rosary' made us strong. We do not have any brother. Our parents love us equally and they never compare us with boys. **Many times people commented that we were girls and that after a few years we would get married and go, but I was able to tell them, "though I am a girl, I too am a human being and I have the right to live. I can do everything that boys can do."**

I learned from my life that life is a journey and there will be many problems but we have to overcome them. When I pray to Mother Mary and Jesus, my sorrows seem too small. Mother Mary and Jesus Christ blessed me with 84% in my board exams. I am grateful to God for receiving the award for academic excellence from CBCI Council for Women. **I know all the problems of life can't destroy my studies, family and future.** I want to be an IAS officer with the blessings of God.

(Roshni Hansda has won the state topper award for Dalit and Tribal Girls- Academic Excellence from the CBCI council for women in collaboration with CBCI offices for Dalit and Tribals.)



Responsible Parenting of TEENAGERS

your teenagers better and lead them in the right path.

1. Be good friends of your children. Create opportunities at home such that in-depth open-hearted conversations are possible with them. Parents themselves should initiate this.

Spend time to listen to their school and college stories. Do enquire about their study place atmosphere and about their friends.

2. It is natural for teenagers to undergo certain physical and mental changes during their teenage years. Children should be made aware of these and must be equipped to face these challenges.

Never be reluctant to talk to them about the changes happening to their bodies. Keep them well informed of all these things as they move through different stages of their growth. 3. Teenagers may face emotional instability due to imbalance of hormones such as

testosterone and oestrogen. Support them in handling problematic situations.

Encourage them to do things that can aid in bringing peace and happiness in their lives. Share with them your life experiences and how you handled similar situations.

4. Don't attempt to force your decisions on the teenagers. Accept reasonable things. Make them capable to take reasonable decisions. Give suggestions only after listening to their side of the story.

5. Children tend to express their anger and be more stubborn during their teenage years. And they become even more stubborn when parents go against their wishes.

Children will have a feeling that their parents don't understand them, that they are constantly going against their likes and desires. Try to advise them in love rather than shouting at them.



6. Teenagers give a lot of importance to beauty and external appearances. They tend to skip meals and spend a lot of time in the gym. Parents should make sure that they don't do this out of inferiority complex or lack of confidence about their bodies and looks. Don't measure their beauty based on their skin colour and body structure.
7. Encourage healthy friendships. It is best that they have friends of the same age. Respect their privacy. Don't interfere in their friendships and privacy so much so that their personalities are affected.
8. Be aware of the pros and cons of mobile phones and internet. Make sure that teenagers below 15 years of age should be allowed to use phones and internet only under your supervision.
9. You should be aware of the people to whom your children chat with online. Get to know their favourite games and their facebook groups. Make them aware of the dangerous traps hidden online.
10. Have scheduled time for the use of gadgets. When family members gather, all should completely avoid the use of mobile phones for atleast an hour and parents should set an example in this case.
11. Don't encourage or excessively support drinking when family comes together. Strictly forbid the use of drugs and intoxicants. Sometimes, it is these small teenage curiosities that go on to making them addicts in the future.
12. It is during the teenage years that children develop sexual interests. They often fall in

trouble because of the wrong information and misconceptions acquired from friends of their same age.

Make sure that the children have got proper sexual education. Teach them about the related dangers.

13. Teach them to not be vulnerable to physical and mental abuse and how to deal with them. Keep them updated about the violence, crimes and abuse that's happening in the society.

Make them equipped for self- protection. Give them confidence and assure them of your presence and support in times of crisis.

14. A lot of misconceptions about periods and menstruation exist even among the youth. It's very important that the children are given precise and clear cut knowledge of menstruation and related topics at their teenage itself.

15. Talk to them about their menstrual cycles and give useful tips to take proper precautions and maintain hygiene during these days. Make them understand that mood swings that occur during periods are only natural.

16. Try your level best to have meals together as a family. Avoid televisions and use of mobile phones at the dining table. Use this opportunity to talk, share and have important discussions. Make sure that the children, especially teenagers are given important role in these conversations and discussions.

17. An increased awareness of male- female gender differences develop during the teenage years. Start entrusting them with

small responsibilities. Make them a part of important tasks so that they get a taste of their duties and responsibilities starting right from their home.

18. Children also sexually identify themselves and sometimes discover homosexual tendencies around this period of their life. Remember that homosexual inclinations are not something that can be treated clinically.

Such behavioral patterns and inclinations are due to genetic causes. Create opportunities for such children to open up about the problems they face.

19. Teenage years are also when children develop their personalities and their personal views about the things happening around them. At this age, children should have ideas and views about their life. Don't compare your children with others. Your child's personality, intelligence, interests and tastes will be different from that of other children. Accept your child's good qualities as well as limitations equally and help them to overcome their shortcomings.

20. Children face a lot of academic related stress during this time period. Teach them to develop their own learning styles and also help them to prepare systematic study plans. Also allow them ample time for other co-curricular activities.

If you find it difficult to handle the problems of your teenagers alone, do feel free to approach a psychologist.

(Courtesy: Mangalam Newspaper, Translated by - Sruti Pious)

नशा मुक्त परिवार

प्रकृति की सुंदरता हमारी है,
प्यार की ज़िंदगी हमारी है,
हर शाख हमारी है, हर फल हमारा है,
ईश्वर ने हमें बनाया तो अपनी जान प्यारी है।
खीस्त में प्यारी बहनों !

जीवन हमारे लिये अनमोल है जिसे ईश्वर ने बखूबी सँवारा है। आज मैं नशा सशक्तिकरण की ओर आपका ध्यान आकृष्ट करना चाहती हूँ। नशा विमुक्ति जीवन में नयापन लाता है जिससे जीने की सार्थकता पूरी होती है।

पहला प्रश्न—क्या नशा एक बीमारी है?

उत्तर—जी हाँ! नशा एक बीमारी के रूप में है।

दूसरा प्रश्न—कैसे शराबी कहते हैं ?

उत्तर—जो हमेशा शराब पीता रहता है और अपनी पारिवारिक ज़िम्मेदारियाँ नहीं समझता है।

हमें ये ध्यान रखना चाहिये कि पहले व्यक्ति भौक—भौक में शराब को पीता है, फिर शराब ही शराब को पीती है। एक समय आता है जब व्यक्ति इसके बिना रह ही नहीं पाता है। अंततः शराब ही व्यक्ति को पी जाती है।

आज परिवार में नशा पर विशेष ध्यान देने की आवश्यकता है। इसे हमें गंभीरता



से लेना चाहिये। नशा अच्छे से अच्छे परिवार को बर्बाद कर देता है। जिसे नशे की लत पड़ गई है वह न तो अपने को देखता है और न अपने परिवार के बारे में सोचता है।

परिवार में 12 से 15 वर्ष के बच्चों को सही देख—रेख की बहुत ज़रूरत है। माता की परिवार में अहम् भूमिका है। अपने बच्चों, अपने पति और अपने को भी शराब से दूर रखने की ज़िम्मेदारी माता की है। परिवार में पहले से शराब की जो लत लग गई है, उसे तो हम सुधार नहीं सकते लेकिन कोशिश तो कर ही सकते हैं। अपने बच्चों का भविष्य सँवारने में माताओं का योगदान महत्वपूर्ण है। आजकल माता—पिता कामकाजी होने के कारण बच्चे को कम या बिल्कुल भी समय नहीं दे पाते हैं। बच्चे के जीवन पर इसका बहुत बुरा असर पड़ता है। बच्चे का जीवन छिन्न—भिन्न नज़र आने लगता है। आपका बेटा कहाँ जाता है, क्या कर रहा है, कैसी दोस्ती है, क्या खाता—पिता है, नशा लेता है या नहीं इत्यादि। इन सब बातों से अधिकतर माता—पिता अनभिज्ञ होते हैं। जबकि माता—पिताओं को इन सब बातों की जानकारी होनी चाहिये। विशेषकर माँ की ज़िम्मेदारी अधिक मायने रखती है। बच्चे ज्यादा लगाव माँ से ही रखते हैं। शराब से बचाव या दूर रखने में माँ की अहम् भूमिका है।

शराब घातक नशीले पदार्थ शरीर के लिये घातक हैं। जैसे, शराब, पान, खैनी, गुटखा, सिगरेट ये सभी

नशीले पदार्थ शरीर के लिये नाशक हैं। इनसे फेफड़े, श्वसन नली, मुँह का कैंसर, किडनी इन सब अंगों पर बुरा असर पड़ता है और व्यक्ति रोगों का शिकार हो जाता है।

गांजा, भांग, चरस, हशिश, ब्राउनशुगर, स्मैक, हेरोइन, व्याटनर ये सब ड्रग्स हैं। ये सब हमारे मस्तिष्क को नुकसान पहुँचाते हैं। आदमी इससे पागल हो जाता है। इन सब के प्रयोग के कारण बच्चे आत्महत्या तक के शिकार हो जाते हैं। इस प्रकार जानलेवा बीमारी के साथ—साथ हमारी आर्थिक स्थिति पर भी बोझ पड़ता है और हम कर्ज़दार बनते जाते हैं। रोगी तो कई बार ईश्वर को प्यारा हो जाता है पर दूसरे परिजन दुखी होते हैं।

नशा से बचाव के लिये हमारे ईसाई समुदाय में कई स्थानों पर नशा—विमुक्ति मोर्चा यानी केंद्र खोले गए हैं। ये सभी धर्मों के लिये लाभप्रद हैं। इससे कई लोगों ने तो शराब बिल्कुल ही छोड़ दी है। इससे केंद्र को सफलता मिली है।

आज हम सभी माताएँ संकल्प लें कि अपने घरों में बच्चों को समय दें। बच्चों के साथ काफ़ी समय बिताएँ। आपस में बातचीत का आदान—प्रदान किया जाए। अपनी आप बीती घर में सुनाएँ ताकि कोई निदान संभव हो। परिचार में ईश्वर

की उपस्थिति हो, इसके लिये पारिवारिक प्रार्थना हो। माता—पिता मिलकर अपने परिवार को एक समृद्ध परिवार बनाएँ और परिवार में खुशियाँ लाएँ। अंत में अपने बच्चों के सुंदर भविष्य के लिये ईश्वर से मनोकामनाएँ और दुआ करती रहें जिससे परिवार पर ईश्वर की असीम कृपा बनी रहे तथा प्रभु की विशेष आशीष और शांति घर—परिवार पर बनी रहे।

हे प्रभु

मन में दीप जला

सपनों में सोया है

जाग जरा मतवाले

मन में दीप जला।



निर्मला वीरेंद्र

काथलिक चर्च,

मोकामा, पटना बिहार

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY – 2019

- BY JANE ANCIL FRANCIS.

The first National Woman's Day was observed in the United States on 28 February, 1909. It was during International Women's Year in 1975 that the United Nations began celebrating International Women's Day on 8 March.

Every year, the day is observed with a theme which in turn is used as a rallying cry for women's causes throughout the year. The major purpose of this day is to focus on various themes such as innovation, the portrayal of women in the media, or the importance of education and career opportunities.

UN Theme for Women's Day 2019 is: Think equal, build smart, innovate for change, the international community has adopted the theme, #BalanceforBetter. Both the themes will focus on innovative ways in which we can advance gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Women have come a long way, but there are still miles to go. The original aim of Women's Day is to achieve full gender

equality for women in the world. Every day we hear of stories of suppression and oppression – women being silenced and pushed to the margins of the society. In a world where a woman is not safe in her house, workspace, or public space, there's much that needs to be done. At the same time, we hear stories of survival against all odds, and stories of victories in the face of odds – these stand testimony to the indomitable spirit of women. This is a sign of hope that things could change for the better. It is work in progress and events organized as part of Women's Day plays a major role in promoting the cause of women all over the world.



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Activities of Women Commission, Kollam Diocese



Socio –Political Leadership Training Camp
Kerala Latin Catholic Women’s Association conducted a two day Camp at Kristujyothi’s Animation Center kollam, on 17th and 18th Jan 2019. The intention was to prepare for the upcoming panchayat Election 2020. A two day workshop on - How to impart active Political Leadership to the community was conducted.



KCBC Women’s Commission Trivandrum Zonal Conference
KCBC Women’s Commission Trivandrum Zonal Conference was hosted by Quilon Diocese at Bishop Jerome Engineering College Auditorium. KCBC Women’s Commission Chairman Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Karikkasseri inaugurated the function. Kerala Fisheries Minister Mrs. Mercy Kuttiyamma delivered the keynote address. KCBC Kollam Diocesan Secretary Ms. Jane Ancil Francis presided over the meeting. Haritha Keralam project was declared and saplings were distributed to the members. Rs 2000 was given to each of the diocesan representatives under (widows) Scheme, Kaineetam. KCBC Trivandrum Zonal Director, Zonal Secretary, and Women’s Commission Secretary, Delcy Lukachan also spoke on the occasion.



A Symposium for Youth
Pope Francis declared 2017 to 2018 as the year of youth. Hence, the Quilon Diocesan Women’s wing decided to conduct a program for youth. The theme was – The Right of the Youth is the Hope of Tomorrow. The delegates were from the Unit of Diocesan youth wing. A very interesting symposium was arranged by Kerala Latin Catholic Women’s Association Kollam unit. The interaction session was very fruitful. Our Diocesan youth Leader, Delin David, got the ICYM award this year. On this occasion, we felicitated him and gave a memento to express our love and affection. KCBC State joint Secretary, Jane ancil Francis Chaired the meeting Rev. Fr. Jolly Abraham, Joint Secretary Freeda Fernandez, and Treasurer Valsala Joy also spoke the occasion.



Women’s role in the participatory Church and the society
Kerala Region Latin Catholic Bishop’s Council Women’s Commission conducted an awareness Program at State level. Women’s commission Secretary Re. Sr. Selma delivered the keynote address. Representatives from 12 Latin Dioceses attended the meeting. The theme was – ‘Women’s role in the participatory Church and the Society’. Our Diocesan spiritual Director, Rev. Fr. Jolly Abraham lighted the Lamp. KLCWA State President, Jane Ancil Francis, Presided over the meeting. Zeera Yohannan, Valsala Joy, and Freeda Fernandez also spoke on the occasion.



Footsteps in the women development

Mary George Thekkayyam was born in 1930 to George Gracian and Philomena. She was the eldest of five daughters, all who became educated, career persons. She studied at St. Joseph’s Convent High School, Holy Cross College, Trichy, (Intermediate), S N College, Kollam (B.A.) and Govt. Training College, Trivandrum (B.Ed). She joined Govt. service as a High School teacher and retired in 1985 as the Deputy Director. Encouraged by her husband George Thekkayyam, she became involved in social activities for catholic women who were socially and economically backward. Mrs. F.X. Periera, was the main source of inspiration for organizing

women to take leadership to work for their disadvantaged sisters. Mrs. Pereira, whom she addressed as ‘amma’ became her mentor and guide. At their initial stage, their activities involved conducting tailoring classes for women in the coastal areas, to empower them and to make them self reliant. Later more women were organized into groups and given training and orientation for various programmes. After becoming a member in the National Council of Catholic Women, Mary George was invited to attend various state

and national level meetings with women from different parts of the country. This enabled her to receive new perspectives in women’s development programmes and train the next generation of leaders. Today the legacy of committed leadership of Mrs. Pereira is carried forward by Ms Jane Ancil Francis and her organization. Mary George Thekkayyam was active till her disease and age slowed her down. She passed away at the age of 86, in 2016.

ANNIE KADAVOOR: AN INSPIRATIONAL POET



Pessimists often allege that poetry really serves no purpose and poets are idle dreamers and visionaries. In fact the statement is far from truth. Poets share the burden of passion, tears, laughter etc. of their fellow beings. Poetry cannot ignore any aspect of life, however trivial it is. “Peithu Thorathe” (incessant rain) is a collection of 52 small poems written by Annie Kadavoor. The book is a debut work of Annie in Malayalam. She finds more fulfilment and joy in writing for herself when she thinks

(Husband) etc. clearly depict family bonds. She also speaks about the fragile ecosystems, the surroundings, the living beings in and around us. She has made a name as a poet to be reckoned with through her debut work. Annie, a postgraduate in Malayalam Literature, works as a teacher in Government HSS Ashtamudi, Kollam. The book “Peithu Thorathe” reaped a lot of accolades when it was published a few months ago. A few of the poems and the ideals they entail find an echo in our contemporary setup and cry aloud to be taken note of. Her colleagues note that she is known for the deep sincerity and dedication in teaching the Malayalam language. She is the youngest of eight children of her parents. Born and brought up in a rural area of Kollam, she had her elementary and secondary education at Sakthikulangara and College education in Kollam. Her husband, Ignatius, is working abroad and her two children, Ida Mary and Elias, are students.

AWARD CEREMONIES

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE TOPPERS!

“Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1Cor15:57)

As part of encouraging the less privileged girls, the CBCI Council for Women along with the CBCI Dalit and Tribal Affairs offices, invited applications for Dalit and Tribal girls who passed 10th& 12th in 2018 under BPL Category. We Congratulate and wish the Toppers best of luck with prayers!



NATIONAL & STATE LEVEL TOPPERS OF CLASS 10 & 12 FROM A.P



SALOMI BAXLA, NATIONAL TOPPER (CLASS 12) & MAGDALINE RUTSA, STATE TOPPER (CLASS 10) KOHIMA DIOCESE, NAGALAND



ROSHNI ROSALIA HANSDA (CLASS 10) KRISHNAGAR DIOCESE, WEST BENGAL



PRAGYA PRANJAL (CLASS 12) - BUXAR DIOCESE



I Pragya Pranjal, will always be truly obliged for this great honour and recognition given by the CBCI Council for Women. I was extremely honoured to receive such an important Award. I want to convey my heartiest thanks to Sr Talisha and all who were present. I only believe that nothing is impossible in this world. You can achieve anything you want, if you have right faith in yourself

and in God. Just follow the path of God as He says "I am the way". **There is nothing you can't do if you really want to.** Last but not least, I will always be thankful to my parents who are my backbone, my support and **I would like you all to be the best version of yourself and make your parents feel proud on you.**

(Pragya is a B.A 1st year student of Philosophy Honors at Miranda House, Delhi University)

GENDER EQUALITY IN THE CHURCH AND THE SOCIETY: Measures we do have to take for a better gender balanced society - Views



TESSA TOMS, DELHI

We are asking for gender equality in the church but for 'optimal participation for both genders'. This means that there are certain tasks that are prescribed for men, such as all the pastoral duties of a priest.

"We are asking for gender equality in the church but for 'optimal participation for both genders'. This means that there are certain tasks that are prescribed for men, such as all the pastoral duties of a priest. Understanding this as a sacred tradition, it may not be opened for the women. However, it does not mean that women don't have a role. Just like Mother Mary's role at the Pentecost was nurturing the church by being available to the disciples, being sensitive to their needs and catering to it, leading them into prayer, and uniting them under one 'Home', so is every woman's role, that is to unite the church and nurture it.

Since the Trinity has given utmost importance and respect to Mother Mary, church as the body of Christ must lead the culture of giving great respect for women in the society and inspire them to do the same! It can be done by fighting against sexual violence, domestic violence, spreading awareness about the sanctity of marriage, etc".



RHEA JOSE, DELHI

We need to work towards the upliftment of women in the church. We need to have more women centric programs and outreaches where awareness about women and their role is created.

"Jesus is a feminist! We see it very clearly in the Gospels. And as Christians we are called to be Christ-Like. We need to follow the example of Jesus towards building a gender balanced society. We need to work towards the upliftment of women in the church. We need to have more women centric programs and outreaches where awareness about women and their role is created. Most often women don't trust themselves and their abilities, so it is important that we bring them out of the cocoon and make them heard and wanted."

GENDER SENSITIZATION & AWARENESS ON CBCI GUIDELINES ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT

PAVANATMA COLLEGE, MURIKASSERY, IDUKKI



NORTH REGIONAL MEETING AT DELHI, 19 - 20TH JAN, 2019





ROURKELA DIOCESE



SEMINAR ON YOUTH TRAVERSING THE WORLD OF IDEOLOGIES AT BISHOP JEROME INSTITUTE, KOLLAM FOR THE COLLEGE GIRLS ORGANIZED BY MS. JANE ANCIL FRANCIS



IMPACT OF EDUCATING GIRLS - A MOTHER SPEAKS



- Mrs. Phungla Angela, Kohima

I grew up in an extremely poor family with seven siblings. My Dad passed away when we were very small. My Mom practically did everything to feed all of us. She used to get up early morning and fetch water to sell, during the day she used to work in somebody's field. She used to bring us the food that was served in the field. My Mom barely ate, I think. Some nights, we slept without food. As a family without a Dad, people really looked down on us and on top of that we were six girls and one boy so you can imagine. We became the object of ridicule from every corner. Growing up for me was not easy at all.

You see, I was born in an uneducated and illiterate family with literally nothing in the house so going to school was beyond impossible, in fact nobody had any idea about schools! But one day my Mom asked me to go to school and told me to study on behalf

of all my siblings (imagine) so she sent me to study in Mokokchung. I studied at Edith Douglas and stayed in the hostel, Douglas Memorial Children Home. I stayed there for two years. I was actually a bright student and automatically became a favourite of the teachers. Whenever we got holidays the hostel Warden did not send me home, she used to make me stay. During my holidays I used to weave clothes. And since I was good in my studies, I was selected for adoption when an American missionary couple came to visit my orphanage home. All necessary arrangements were made and papers were signed. They asked me to go home and say my goodbyes to my Mom and my siblings.

Among all my siblings my Mom used to trust me a lot. And two years without me was a torture for her. When I came home my siblings told me that Mom used to cry every night calling out my name. So before I could come home for the final 'goodbye' she sent my brother-in-law to pick me up. And that's when my desire to study, to be educated came to a screeching halt.

I was brought back home. And within few months, I was engaged to a man who was 20 years older than me. I was sixteen. I did not want to get married, I wanted to study. You have no idea how much I wanted to study. I was very obedient to my Mom so I could not say 'No', never. I worshipped my Mom. The mother-daughter bond was actually very strong between us. The thought of not obeying her and hurting her was the last thing I'd imagine. And even if I did say No, what could I do? There was nobody to support me, nobody to correct and stop my Mom. Nobody to tell her to educate me

instead of marrying me away. The man I was about to get married was so matured, and he had a job (imagine in those days, a man with a job). So my Mom was already on his side. I got married on 28th November 1984.

He was 37 years old. All set and ready to settle down. He was working as Soil Conservation Assistant in the Department of Soil and Water Conservation. He was such an understanding gentleman, a kind and compassionate person who loved me unconditionally. Because of his big heart, I enjoy a happy and beautiful married life. And with his wholly support I was able to give the best to my children which I had wished as a child.

Today, I thank my Mom for keeping me in the hostel for at least two years. Because of that I can at least read! And as a result, I did not send my children for extra tuition after school. I was able to teach them their school lessons.

And yes, I do wonder sometimes what would have happened to me if I had left? I think, I would have studied as much as I could. I would have been an officer or something, or at least employed! But I look at my life today, I would not change it for the world. I am exactly where I am supposed to be, Fate.

I got married at 16. I practically grew up together with my two older kids. Even after having two, three children the love for reading did not stop. My husband used to bring novels and other books for me, he was posted in Wokha, Tuensang and he travelled a lot to Kohima and Dimapur when our children were very small. Since my husband was out of station most of the time, I raised my five children mostly by myself. My



utmost job was to raise my children right, teach them and educate them. And today I have educated my five children equally (I

school was the one and only target.

***To everyone who is reading my story.....**
If your parents are doing everything they

not saying this because I have kept my girls in school, but I am also saying this because I kept my girls in school.

To the mothers, please make sure you keep your children in school especially your girls. The one most important job as a mother/woman is to keep your girls in school. I am not saying this because I have kept my girls in school, but I am also saying this because I kept my girls in school.

say that with my head held up high). I was deprived of education because of poverty, uneducated and illiterate parents (I don't blame them of course) and knowing the importance of education through the basic education I received, I made sure my children stayed in school. I think i have achieved my goal because for me keeping my children in

can to keep you in school, please take it seriously and study really hard, because at this age to exist without education will be very difficult.

To the mothers, please make sure you keep your children in school especially your girls. The one most important job as a mother/woman is to keep your girls in school. I am

But, **don't just send them to school to educate them. Teach them moral values at home, because without that their education will be incomplete. And most importantly, teach your sons at home. Empower your girls through your boys.**

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION AT SHELTER HOMES FOR GIRLS, CHERUTHONI, IDUKKI



SPIRITUAL ANIMATION FOR WOMEN OF BELGHANA PARISH AT CENACLE ASHRAM, BILASPUR ON 17.02.19



A VISIT TO FLOOD AFFECTED AREA WITH DR. ROSAKUTTY ABRAHAM



WOMEN: ACCOMPANYING YOUNG MINDS IN TRAVERSING THE WORLD OF IDEOLOGIES

EXPECTATIONS AND VIEWS OF YOUTH AT THE WEST BENGAL REGIONAL MEETING



A leader is the one who knows the way, shows the way and goes the way. Today's young people are tomorrow's leaders. Servant leadership is the sole method to set an example before the growing generations. What we are demonstrating at home, in the families, in the church, at school, at the playground, etc. the youth are living it out. So it is important that we set the right examples for them.

Launch Pad enables the spacecraft to shoot against gravity. Likewise **in order to accompany young minds we have 4 parts of a Launch Pad –**

- (1) **Earnest Prayer (Mathew 21:22)**
- (2) **Passion for Holiness**
- (3) **Motivating People**
- (4) **Authentic Community**

Marian Sharma (Teacher, St. Paul's school, Calcutta)



Mind is the window of the body. To accompany young minds we should know what's on their mind. Every time we open Facebook, the first question Facebook asks us is, "What's on your mind?" Likewise we should ask the youth, what's on their mind, what are their likes and dislikes, what draws their attention, etc. Therefore, the first step is to **'Know'** what's on their minds. Secondly, we have to **'Understand'** the young minds in order to

accompany them. We are not just being part of their journey, but we are truly accompanying them, by holding their hands and walking with them. Jesus never forced anyone to follow him. He gave everyone freewill. Hence, we should do the same with young people, we cannot force them to act in a certain way, but have to truly understand them. We have to accept them just as they are and be more empathetic towards them. We have to learn to be good listeners so we can hear them speak out.

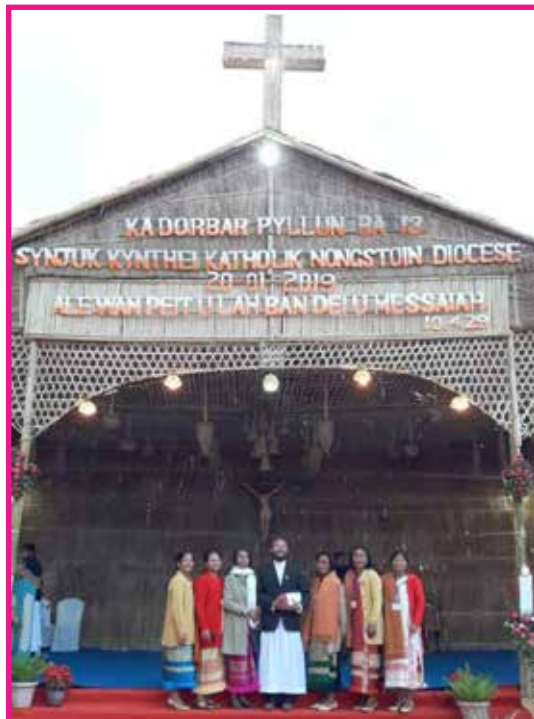
Thirdly, we have to truly **'Accompany'** them. When we know the young minds, we understand them and when we understand them, we accompany them. In the Holy Bible the word "Leader" is used 10-20 times, but the word "Servant" is used around 700 times. Teach the young mind to be a servant leader (a leader who serves) like Jesus, as we see in the Bible that He washed the feet of His disciples. Help and **accompany the young minds to traverse the world of ideologies like Jesus did, i.e. with Love, Compassion, Acceptance and Humility.**

Shubhodeep Biswas EFI (Regional Youth Secretary, WB, Sikkim Region)





13TH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF WOMEN HELD ON 19 – 20TH JAN, 2019 AT HOLY REDEEMER RENEWAL CENTRE, MAWKHLAM, NONGSTOIN DIOCESE



सिंधुताई सपकालः हजारों अनाथ का बनी सहारा

आज के समय में हर इंसान सिर्फ अपने बारे में सोचता है। पर ऐसे दौर में भी सिंधुताई सपकाल जैसी शख्सियत भी हैं जो समाज में अपने अद्भुत योगदान से आम धारणा को उलट कर 'खास' होने की दास्तां लिख रही हैं।

नापसंद 'चिंदी' का बाल-विवाह

महाराष्ट्र के वर्धा जिले में 'पिपरी मेघे' गांव है, जहां सिंधुताई सपकाल का जन्म हुआ। उनके पिता जानवरों को चराने का काम करते थे। क्योंकि सिंधुताई बेटा नहीं, बेटा थी, इसलिए परिवारवाले उन्हें नापसंद करते और उन्हें 'चिंदी' (कपड़े का फटा टुकड़ा) कह कर बुलाते थे, लेकिन उनके पिता अपनी बेटा को जीवन में आगे बढ़ते देखना चाहते थे, इसलिए सिंधुताई की मां के खिलाफ जाकर वे उन्हें स्कूल पढ़ने भेजते थे।

मां का विरोध और घर की आर्थिक परिस्थितियों की वजह से सिंधुताई की शिक्षा में बाधाएं आती रहीं। दस साल की सिंधुताई जब चौथी कक्षा में पढ़ रही थीं, तब उनकी शादी तीस साल के श्रीहरि से हो गई। महज बीस साल की उम्र में वे तीन बच्चों की मां बन गई थीं।

मुखिया के कहने पर घर से निकाल दी गयी सिंधुताई

एक बार गांव के मुखिया ने लोगों को मजदूरी नहीं दी तो सिंधुताई ने उसकी शिकायत जिलाधिकारी से कर दी। अपने अपमान का बदला लेने के लिए मुखिया ने सिंधुताई के पति को आदेश दिया कि वह उन्हें घर से निकाल दे। उस समय सिंधुताई गर्भवती थीं। जिस दिन उन्हें घर से बाहर निकाला गया, उसी रात एक गौशाला में उन्होंने बेटा को जन्म दिया।

श्मशान में गुजारी रातें

इसके बाद, जब वे अपने मायके गईं, तो उनकी मां ने उन्हें सहारा देने से इनकार कर दिया। उस समय उनके पिता का देहांत हो चुका था। सिंधुताई अपनी बेटा के साथ रेलवे स्टेशन पर रहने लगीं। दिनभर वे वहां भीख मांगतीं और बेटा की सुरक्षा के लिए रात श्मशान में गुजारतीं। जीवन के संघर्ष के दौरान उन्होंने अनुभव किया कि देश में ऐसे कई बच्चे हैं जिन्हें मां के साये की जरूरत है। तब उन्होंने निर्णय किया कि वे अब इन अनाथ बच्चों की मां बनेंगी और उन्हें एक अच्छा भविष्य देंगी।

बनी हजारों अनाथ का सहारा

सिंधुताई ने अपना पूरा जीवन अनाथ बच्चों के लिये समर्पित किया है। इसलिए उन्हें 'माई' (माँ) कहा जाता है। उन्होंने 1050 अनाथ बच्चों को गोद लिया है। उनके परिवार में आज 207 दामाद और 36 बहूएँ हैं। है। 1000 से भी ज्यादा पोते-पोतियाँ हैं। है। उनकी खुद की बेटा वकील है। है। उनके द्वारा गोद लिए बहुत सारे बच्चे आज डाक्टर, अभियंता, वकील हैं और उनमें से कई आज अपना खुद का अनाथाश्रम चलाते हैं। है। सिंधुताई को कुल 273 राष्ट्रीय और अंतरराष्ट्रीय पुरस्कार प्राप्त हुए हैं, जिनमें अहिल्याबाई होल्कर पुरस्कार भी शामिल है जो महाराष्ट्र राज्य द्वारा स्त्रियों और बच्चों के लिए काम करनेवाले समाजकर्ताओं के सम्मान में दिया जाता है। है। पुरस्कार से मिले इन सारे पैसों का उपयोग वे अनाथाश्रम के लिए करती हैं। है। उनके अनाथाश्रम पुणे, वर्धा, सासवड (महाराष्ट्र) में स्थित हैं। है। सिंधुताई ने अपने पति को एक बेटे के रूप में स्वीकार किया। है। ये कहते हुए कि अब वो सिर्फ एक माँ हैं। है। आज वे बड़े गर्व के साथ बताती हैं कि वो (उनके पति) उनका सबसे बड़ा बेटा हैं। है।

साल 2010 में उनके जीवन पर आधारित मराठी चित्रपट बनाया गया— 'मी सिंधुताई सपकाल'। है। इसे लंदन फिल्म महोत्सव के लिए भी चुना गया। है।

सिंधुताई इच्छाशक्ति और दृढ़निश्चय की एक ऐसी मिसाल हैं, जिन्होंने कथनी को करनी में बदल कर एक ऐसा इतिहास रचा, जो युगों तक कायम रहेगा। है। उन्होंने अपने जीवन में ऐसे उतार-चढ़ाव देखे जिनसे उबर कर अपने आपको कायम रखना नामुमकिन होता है, पर सिंधुताई ने न केवल इसे संभव कर दिखाया बल्कि अपने साथ-साथ हजारों बचपन को संवारा और उनके भविष्य को एक मुकम्मल तस्वीर दी। है।

जन्म के बाद परिवार ने सिंधुताई को इंसान से पहले 'एक लड़की' के रूप में देखा, जिसके भाग्य में दर-दर भटकना लिखा था। है। जिसके परिवार तक ने 'उपेक्षा' की, उसने वह कर दिखाया जिसकी कल्पना किसी ने नहीं की थी। है। वक्त को कौन जानता है भला, कि जिस लड़की को अनचाही-अभागी मान कर 'चिंदी' बुलाया जाएगा, वह अपने संकल्प से एक दिन हजारों अनाथ बच्चों की ममतामयी आंखों में आंचल बन जाएगी। है।



Office bearers of Women Commission, Kollam Diocese



***Most Rev. Paul Antony Mulaserry,
Rev. Fr. Jolly Abraham (Sptl. Dir.), Ms. Jane Ancil Francis (Secretary),
Freeda Fernandez (Jt. Sec.), Valsala Joy (Treasurer)***

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