

Presentation Sisters eNews

September 2023



Welcome to the September issue of eNews. In this issue:

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Children's Parliament

Submitted by: St Anthony's Anglo Indian High School, Egmore, Chennai

Children's Parliament works for a world where all children grow up in an environment of love, dignity and respect.

The Children's Parliament is active in St Anthony's Anglo Indian High School, Egmore, Chennai since 2019.



Presently, nineteen Parliaments have been formed in the school among the students coming from the same neighbourhoods to find solutions to their problems and act on them.

The Children's Parliament uses the Rights + Relationship based approach. The children explore their rights in the environment of their home, school and community through workshops and weekly sessions for thirty minutes every Thursday. They

share their views and experiences on local situations to influence decision-making with and for them.

Last academic year, the children implemented the following activities:

- ♣ Posters were made to create an awareness among their fellow students to instil the value of environmental consciousness.
- ♣ Distribution of biscuits and apples to the poor people in the nearby locality.
- ♣ Distribution of biscuits and stationery items to the neighbouring school (St Anne's Convent).
- ♣ Financial support given to the deserving children.
- ♣ A small amount collected and given to the management for the betterment of their school.
- ♣ Felicitated the school workers and area workers with a shawl and a packet of dates for their dedicated services in keeping the school clean.
- ♣ Planted two Neem saplings near the Egmore Court.
- ♣ Twenty Crotons potted plants given to the school.



Apart from the actions, they also learn the following skills:

- ♣ Leadership skills,
- ♣ getting on with people and working together,
- ♣ child protection and participation,
- ♣ respecting the decisions made in the team,
- ♣ child rights,
- ♣ protecting children against child neglect,
- ♣ stopping drop outs in school,
- ♣ life skills and academic education,
- ♣ awareness about drug abuse,
- ♣ problem solving,
- ♣ planning and organising,
- ♣ communication and presentation.



The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.

The students of St Anthony's Anglo Indian High School continues to dream the future,

- ◇ to inculcate leadership qualities and encourage students to become good leaders of our country,
- ◇ to develop a nation free from corruption (abolish bribery),
- ◇ reduce pollution and encourage green India by planting more trees.

Presentation Convent Inter-School Collage Competition – India North Unit

Taken from State Times News

Presentation Convent Senior Secondary School, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu, organised an Inter-School collage making competition 2023-24 – *Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav – Achievements @ 75* – under the aegis of Jammu Sahodaya School Complex, Jammu on Saturday 19 August. The event was inaugurated by Rajesh Rathore, President Jammu Sahodaya and Principal, JK Public School Kunjwani and KCS Mehta, Mentor – Jammu Sahodaya and Academic Director IDPS Akhnoor. In his opening address, Rathore hailed the host school for organising the event with alacrity and giving an apt platform to all for cross pollination of ideas. He congratulated all students for their enthusiastic participation and at the same time encouraged them for healthy competition. The chief guest, Amit Gupta, Advocate General UT of J&K, graced the event. The theme of this competition – *Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav – Achievements @75* aimed to celebrate and commemorate multifaceted achievements and bring home to all the evolution and progress across different sectors that India has made as a 75-year-old independent country. Students from thirty-three schools participated in this event.



Students of Presentation Convent Senior Secondary School, Jammu receiving first prize from dignitaries

Sister Amelina Rodrigues, Principal of Presentation Convent Sr Sec School, expressed her admiration for the participants' dedication to their craft and declared the event open.

The judging panel comprised of Shiromani Gupta, Sakshi Khullar and Nimisha Dubey who are the renowned artists and representatives from the local art community. The collage competition brought together budding artists, art enthusiasts and educators in a lively atmosphere of camaraderie and artistic exploration. The students showcased their innovative interpretations of the theme using a multitude of textures, colours and materials to create stunning collages that reflected their perspectives on unity, cultural richness and achievements of India. The participants, guided by their passion for creativity, produced an impressive array of collages that captivated all.

The first prize was won by Presentation Convent Sr Sec School, Jammu. The second prize was given to APS, Kaluchak and third position was secured by APS, Domana. Three consolation prizes were received by Stephens International Public School, Jodhamal Public School and RM Public School.

The event marked a memorable day of artistic exploration, learning and cultural exchange highlighting the enduring importance of art in nurturing creativity, empathy and cross-cultural understanding among the youth.

Colour Flourished Physically, Spiritually at 'Women Deliver Conference' in Rwanda

Submitted by: Sr Joyce Meyer (Global Sisters Report)



I was mesmerized by colour this past July attending the sixth *Women Deliver Conference* in Kigali, Rwanda. Nature and people celebrated Africa as one of the most colourful places in the world. Colour flourished in nature's trees, flowers and people. Women's and men's clothing pick up these vibrant colours of nature and celebrate them at every turn.

Rwanda's red soil was the perfect background for spectacularly green foliage and diversity of nature's beauty. It also provided a landscape for the colours of Asia and the South Pacific and other continents of our world represented at the conference.

For me, the theme of colour was prevalent, not only physically but spiritually.

There were spaces for prayer for participants witnessing their faith.

Before going to the conference, I did not know much about the organisation except what I read on its website. It grew in my appreciation as I attended sessions focussing on women's roles in every issue of our world.

What first drew me to attend was that it was the first time in its history that Catholic Sisters would be participating, at least that we knew of. My colleague, Doreen Ajiambo, Global Sisters Report African correspondent, has already written that [important and groundbreaking story](#).



On the second from the left, Sr Joyce Meyer, international liaison for Global Sisters Report, meets with, from left, Sr Francisca Ngozi Uti, Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus in Nigeria, Sr Hedwig Muse, Little Sisters of Mary Immaculate in Kenya and Sr Rosemary Nyirumbe, Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Uganda (GSR photo)

I felt very proud to be a Sister in attendance as these ten women from several countries in Africa alerted the women gathered about the ministry and faith roles of Sisters in the world and our desire to work with other women to make the world a better place.

Some years after its founding, the organisation recognised the need to give space to issues specific to girls, often overlooked even though they are women. In 2007, [Women Deliver](#) began to focus on women's health, particularly reproductive and maternal issues often marginalised worldwide and even criminalised in some places. The conference's name reflects these issues but also of women's power to 'deliver' what needs to be done in our world.

Today, the organisation describes its purpose as advocate for the rights of girls and women for

gender equality and health in societies around the world.

Today, the organisation describes its purpose as advocate for the rights of girls and women for gender equality and health in societies around the world. More than 6,000 women, girls and a few men attended the conference with several thousand online, the second-largest *Women Deliver* gathering ever hosted. It was the first time the conference was held in an African country and the Rwandans did themselves proud. I do not know how they were able to feed 6,000 people a hot meal at noon each day. There was fish, meat, potatoes, rice, many vegetables, breads, desserts. It was an amazing experience. The organisational skills required were met without a glitch.

Conference themes included 'Spaces, Solidarity and Solutions' frames for all the presentations and panels. There were only a few times when the 6,000 were gathered in one space and that was the opening and the closing. All other presentations were in a conference centre auditorium and smaller forum settings. One disappointment was that by the time my friends and I would reach a forum we wanted to hear, the place was already full, without capacity for overflow.

The 'Spaces' theme brought awareness of efforts needed from all of us women to seek out spaces where issues important to us can be addressed and also to enthusiastically support and help one another to find those spaces and use them. We were encouraged never to give up on energies of perseverance and commitment for this expansion.

It was also a call at times to open ourselves to new interior spaces of consciousness for inclusion of others, letting go of biases and stereotypes.

'Solidarity' reminded us that there are so many issues that women and girls face, but these issues are not just ours, they impact everyone around us. We cannot allow ourselves or others to be marginalised by the language. 'Women's issues' belong to the whole of humanity. We are all interconnected. No one can be invisible.

I was inspired to see the men who also attended. I learned of an organisation called [Men Care](#), initiated by [PanAfricare](#), a nongovernmental organisation out of Zimbabwe dedicated to male empowerment.

Men Care educates men to be caregivers in home-based care. It was inspired by one man who began to question why his wife should be the sole caregiver for his brother who had HIV/AIDS. He decided to go through training and encouraged other men to do the same. It takes courage at times to go against the cultural norms that inhibit such service. Other men were there to learn how they can also become advocates for the goals of the conference.

We also heard about diverse solutions to the issues and learned that enduring solutions need to respond to particular situations. Our task is to encourage one another to that creativity within each of us and at times help us 'reframe' our own situations.

I also had the opportunity to participate in two events outside the conference. One was a memorial service in a cemetery under the blazing sun for a recently deceased mother of a friend. It too, was a colourful event with relatives dressed in beautiful gowns celebrating with

songs and prayers the life of a woman who had lost three sons in the genocide and had personally survived a shooting attack on her own home. The celebration of her life continued throughout the day for relatives and neighbours to eat, remember, sing and pray together.

I also met with Sr Immaculée Uwamariya, founder of [Famille Esperance](#) (Hope for Families). She was inspired to help families learn to live in harmony, strengthen the vocation of marriage and spread God's love in the world. It complements Rwanda's policy that places the family at the centre of the country's development. Famille Esperance, founded in 2012, is especially amazing because both administration and sustainability is maintained by volunteers. Sister Immaculée brought some of her co-workers and board with her to tell us the story of their vision and commitment to this mission. For all of these years, there have been no paid employees, even the executive director. Immaculée is the principal of a school of the Bernadine congregation to which she belongs.

These five days also brought back memories of two other visits I had to Rwanda when I was director of the Hilton Fund for Sisters. I came away from my latest visit filled with joy, surprise and an energy to keep alive the spirit of persistence and endurance I experienced.

Prison Chaplaincy – New Zealand

Taken from NZ Catholic

Sr Veronica Casey, pbvm has retired after more than ten years as senior prison chaplain. She



had been a prison chaplain at the Otago Corrections Facility for six years before leading the catholic chaplaincy. Sr Veronica described prison chaplaincy, or chaplaincy of other kinds, as *a calling and a ministry, not a career. It was a calling. The position was open and I decided it was somewhere that I thought I would like to be*, she said.

Sr Veronica said that she applied for the role of senior prison chaplain in 2013 because she thought, *it was an opportunity and a challenge to try [to] improve our prison chaplaincy services to the men and women in prison. I guess I've been part of a journey to prison chaplaincy becoming much more professional, achieving a much higher standard, raising the profile of prison chaplaincy*, she said. Sr Veronica said that the Church should promote chaplaincies more in order to attract prison

chaplains. *The biggest issue that they need to overcome is finding people who are prepared to train and prepare for prison chaplaincy, she said. It needs promotion, as well as the fact of calling people forward. I think people need to be shoulder-tapped and asked to consider it.* Sr Veronica stressed that theological and pastoral formation are prerequisites for the ministry. *The recommendation is at least five years pastoral experience prior to being appointed as a prison chaplain. I don't think people are being called to do the formation. I'm not sure that they realise that it is required. You are dealing with some of the most broken people in society and, therefore, you require special skills and experience and formation, she said.*

Veronica said that she had a broad range of experiences during her time as prison chaplain, and that most of this involved *listening to the brokenness of the people that you are sitting with and hearing their stories. I think there is also a considerable amount of fear about the role, which is promulgated by media, portraying an image of prisons that is not necessarily accurate, she added.* Sr Veronica said that the Church, both at diocesan and parish levels, has a responsibility to call people forward. When asked if it was possible that there were people who feel they are being called, but do not know how to respond, she said *yes.*

She suggested that those people should *pray about it, to seek advice with their spiritual director and then to find out more about the role and what formation and preparation they would need to do to be successful.* Asked what is next for her after retiring, Sr Veronica said that she would be going on sabbatical *with a very open mind.*

It is a time of refreshment and renewal, and I'll see where I'm called to at the end of it.

The Beautiful Season of Creation

Submitted by: Sr Sukirtha Kulandai

History of the Season of Creation

As we know, the Season of Creation originated in 1989 within the Christian tradition. It is a special time to be focussed to prayer, reflection and action on environmental issues. The beautiful season spans from 1 September (the Day of Prayer for Creation) to 4 October (the Feast of St Francis of Assisi, known for his love of nature). It invites for interconnectedness of all life forms and encourages all of us to take stewardship of our Mother Earth seriously. It is our responsibility to care for the environment and advocate for sustainable practices.



Book of Genesis to Laudato Si'

We know that in the book of Genesis, it is written that God created the world and declared it to

be good. This creation narrative underscores the sacredness of the natural world and emphasizes humanity's role as stewards of God's creation. The beautiful narrative has been misunderstood by us that we can have domination over Mother Earth, that it exists for us to use. The exploitation began in destroying her. But after the Second Vatican Council, the Church has given special care to protection of our Mother Earth. The Church's social teachings are now centred upon the stewardship of our Mother Earth.



A Papal Encyclical letter by Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* published in May 2015, took a unique turn and invitation. *Laudato Si'* - *praise be to you*, is taken from St Francis of Assisi's *Canticle of the Sun*. In this document, Pope Francis has enumerated these seven important themes which is needed to safeguard Mother Earth.

- 1) **The response to the cry of the earth**; we need to hear and understand the cry of the earth which is in need of our help. We need to do a lot to eliminate this cry and safeguard our Mother Earth.
- 2) **The response to the cry of the poor**; we need to listen to this cry in which our brothers and sisters are suffering because of various injustices perpetuated against the poor and needy.
- 3) **The concerns of Ecological Economics**: this is something which is new to our globalised world. In the name of development and economical gains how we are destroying Mother Earth.
- 4) **Adoption of sustainable lifestyle** is the need of the hour. How can we balance our life, the concerns of our Mother Earth and the aspects of development?
- 5) **Ecological education is the key to our future**. We need to teach our children and youth that our future is in our own hands if we take care of Mother Earth.
- 6) **Pope Francis gives special emphasis to Ecological Spirituality**; an eco-spirituality which will lead us to wholistic spiritual growth. This aspect has to be taught and propagated so that an eco-spirituality may be accepted by all for the benefit of both the human race and Mother Earth.
- 7) **Community Resilience and Empowerment** is the last aspect which is in need of our attention. How we, as one human community, may become resilient on our conviction that we need to save our Mother Earth and all communities need to be strengthened and guided so that in their own local context they become warriors and protectors of Mother Earth.

Indian Perspectives

In Indian perspectives, the Season of Creation brings into line the spirit of interconnectedness between humans and nature. The ancient Indian philosophies state that *Vasudev-Kutumbakam* –

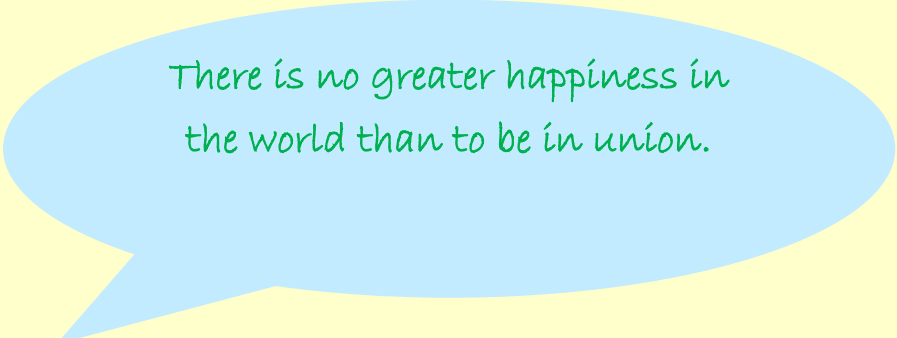
the whole world is one family, highlights the unity of all living beings. It also reflects India's reverence for the environment. It speaks about the importance of considering the well-being of the whole world and the whole of humanity. It is not self-centred but, an other-centred concept. It is a call for the greater responsibility of all of us towards the environmental concerns. It upholds the Indian idea of interconnectedness and interdependence of human beings with Mother Earth.

A Few Ways and means to celebrate the Season of Creation

- * Nature walks to appreciate it's beauty
- * Clean-up drives to keep our surroundings clean
- * Host tree planting events to promote green spaces and combat deforestation
- * Educational workshops and seminars
- * Art and craft activities centred around nature
- * Prayer services and meditations on environmental issues
- * Promote sustainable practices (composting, recycling and reducing plastic usage)
- * Foster sustainable agriculture (use of organic manure as opposed to chemical fertilizer which destroys the soil, adoption of renewable energies e.g. solar.

PBVM and Laudato Si'

As Presentation Sisters, we are women who have responded to the call to follow Christ in the spirit of our founder, Venerable Nano Nagle. The source and heart of our lives is, as it was for Nano Nagle, communion with God in Christ. This communion begins with God, leads us to our own fellow brethren and ultimately culminates with the whole of creation. We as a Congregation have grown in our awareness of the interconnectedness of all of life and the call to communion in diversity. At our Congregational Gathering 2006, we committed ourselves to a spirituality of being in communion that seeks God in the interconnectedness of the whole of creation and empowers active love for self, others and the whole of nature. We are continuing to deepen and expand our sense of being in communion with God, each other and with Mother Earth. During this Season of Creation, let our hearts ponder on the words of our founder,



There is no greater happiness in the world than to be in union.

Conclusion

The Season of Creation is a powerful call to action, urging us to our interconnectedness with the natural world and take responsibility for its well-being. It reminds us that our collective efforts can make a meaningful impact. It also encourages a shift in consciousness towards a more harmonious relationship with Mother Earth. As we reflect on our role as caretakers of the planet, the Season of Creation inspires hope, unity and shared commitment.



News from the Communications Desk

Submitted by: Aisling Moran

A Time of Farewell



The Presentation Sisters left Youghal on 31 August, 2023, when the remaining Sisters transferred to Middleton Convent. The Sisters have had a profound and positive influence on the educational, pastoral, and spiritual welfare of the parish since 1833.

To mark the departure of the community, a special Mass of Thanksgiving took place at the Holy Family Church on Friday, September 22, 2023, followed by a social occasion in the church hall.

We wish the Sisters well in this new phase of their lives.

Pictured are the Presentation Sisters with Bishop William Crean, Canon Bill Bermingham P.P. and Canon Tom Browne P.E. after the mass on Friday 22 September, 2023. You can read the Homily given by Canon Bill Bermingham [here](#)

Significant International Dates in October

There are many dates throughout the month of October that hold both humanitarian and ecumenical importance. Read about them here.

5 October – World Teacher’s Day



World Teacher’s Day is held annually on 5 October to celebrate all teachers around the globe. It commemorates the anniversary of the adoption of the 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers, which sets benchmarks regarding the rights and responsibilities of teachers, and standards for their initial preparation and further education, recruitment, employment and teaching and learning conditions. This is a day to celebrate how

teachers are transforming education but also to reflect on the support they need to fully deploy their talent and vocation, and to rethink the way ahead for the profession globally.

<https://www.unesco.org/en/days/teachers>

10 October – World Mental Health Day



The overall objective of World Mental Health Day is to raise awareness of mental health issues around the world and to mobilize efforts in support of mental health. This day provides an opportunity for all stakeholders working on mental health issues to talk about their work, and what more needs to be done to make mental health care a reality for people worldwide.

<https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-mental-health-day>

11 October – International Day of the Girl Child



In these last 10 years there has been increased attention on issues that matter to girls amongst governments, policymakers and the general public and more opportunities for girls to have their voices heard on the global stage. Yet, investments in girls’ rights remain limited and girls continue to confront a myriad of challenges to fulfilling their potential; made worse by concurrent crises of climate change, Covid-19 and humanitarian conflict. Girls around the world continue to face

unprecedented challenges to their education, their physical and mental wellness and the

protections needed for a life without violence.

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/girl-child-day>

17 October – International Day for the Eradication of Poverty



Dignity for all in practice is the umbrella theme of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty for 2023. The dignity of the human being is not only a fundamental right in itself but constitutes the basis of all other fundamental rights. Therefore, 'dignity' is not an abstract concept; it belongs to each and every one. Today, many people living in persistent poverty experience their dignity being denied and disrespected. With the commitment to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure all people everywhere

enjoy peace and prosperity, the 2030 Agenda again gestured toward the same promise established under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Yet, the current reality shows that 1.3 billion people still live in multidimensional poverty with almost half of them children and youth.

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/day-for-eradicating-poverty>

Keep up to date with our Presentation Sisters, Friends of Nano and Associates around the world. If you have a story or article you would like to share, please email it to please email it to Emily at

admin@pbvm.org

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