

## **Welcome Adress- Community Leaders' Meet. 18.10.2023.**

Dear Sisters Bridget Kanjirakattu, Hilda, Isabella, Preethi, Bridget Joseph, Kalai Selvi, Annie, Sunitha, Pauline, Gracy, Shanty, Prema, Rosily, Shiny, Rini, Prabha and Therese Meera,

We the Leadership Team greet each one of you with Joy and Gratitude. A hearty welcome to you dear sisters for the Annual Community Leader's Meet. We were looking forward for these two days to be with you.

Our Mother Foundress St. Mary Euphrasia tells us today, the Feast of St. Luke that Nothing is more relevant than this gospel message- The Good Shepherd who seeks the suffering and the lost, strengthens the weak one, heals the sick and binds up their wounds, carries in his arms the weak and the fallen, feeds them according to their needs. The Shepherd knows His sheep and calls each one by name. He gives His life for them. His approach and solicitude differ for each one, according to each one's need and situation.

Dear sisters, this is what each one of us are called to be as Leaders in our communities and in our Mission. As we look back to the previous months and the year, we know that we have gone through various painful experiences from within our own communities and around us. For us mainly we lost our dear sisters.... May their dear souls rest in peace and pray for us....

We are very grateful to each one of you dear sisters for your commitment, dedication, reconciling love and mercy and unwavering spirit which are very inspiring and hopeful. You faced all the adverse, unexpected and unwelcomed happenings in our communities and in our ministries where ever we are placed. One of the main concerns that we face in our communities are the needs of the elderly and the sick. We really admire the way each one of you have walked an extra mile to reach out, to care for our elderly sisters for which we are very grateful to you dear sisters. Life is not easy these days in our communities due to various factors.... For everything the Community Leader is held responsible whether for good or not so good.... If the Community members, the young, the middle aged or the elder ones have any difficulties..... you are there patient enough to listen to them and do the needful. Whenever the community blamed you, accused you for no fault of yours, I know that you have gone silent surrendering yourself to your God and to His will. I am sure you have gone through loneliness and pain and silently carry out your responsibilities for you know that God is there with you and you are ultimately surrendering to the plan of God. Please be sure dear sisters for all your generous self-giving of yourselves expecting nothing in return, you are adding treasures with God for your peaceful eternal life.

In the Book of Joshua, we read that when Joshua took over from Moses to lead the Israelites, God promised him by saying, "do not be frightened, the Lord your God is with you, Be strong and courageous.... You will prosper, for the Lord is with you". Let us have the re assuring accompaniment of God as we move on dear sisters.

I wish to acknowledge to you all that I have failed in some way or the other to get in to the shoes of you all at times for which I am really sorry for the same. I know that I have done only few visits to Delhi, Madalur and Mysore communities. I might have failed to address all the

issues faced in your communities and in your ministries if I am aware of the problems. I am sure all of you experience the lack of sisters in communities and in the ministries. Some of you feel that we are not sending the novices and the TP sisters.... Based on their formation requirements as well the needs of communities we try to send the young ones and you all know how many were and are there to send to all the communities. We are very sorry for not fulfilling this great need of our communities.

As Community Leaders we need to concentrate on our community and its wellbeing as our first priority. We will be discussing the whole day regarding our roles as spiritual animation, that we as the province need to grow towards being more spiritual in turn our commitment and service become more peaceful and joyful. Our communities also will be more reconciled, inclusive and enduring. Sisters we need to concentrate as community regarding the daily reading of the Bible, The Holy Eucharist and spending time Infront of the Blessed Sacrament. These practices which are been carried on to us by the Church and by our elderly sisters, we need to preserve and practice in our day today lives. If we are not spiritually immune, we will infect the community and its peace. So as a community certain spiritual practises are essential for the peaceful living in communities.

Gospel values will take us to reach out to any pressing needs of the day. Be it be through our institutions or through our outreach ministries, wherever we maybe we need to have the spirit of our original charism and spirit with us and the values that we have imbibed from the Gospel will inspire each one of us on how best to share our charism with whomever we are sent- be it be through our education, healthcare, residential or social action ministries. Our attitude and dispositions as religious persons are blessed by God and the humanity.

A gentle reminder to all of you—whenever the formees and the young sisters are there with you in the community, make sure what we speak Infront of them motivates them to continue religious life and also give good examples for them to respect the leadership. Let us make conscious efforts in communities to avoid negative conversations and gossips.

It is good and we encourage you all, if possible, to network and collaborate with other Congregations for better mission effectiveness.

Another important concerned area is the vocation mission awareness programs. Dear sisters as community Leaders all of us need to take special care in promoting vocations to the province. Until and unless each one of us encourage and free the sisters for visits and other programs we may not get anyone. It is important that we participate in our parish activities and teach catechism, youth formation etc...

It is also important to guide and promote the Partners in Mission. I know that all of you are doing the same.

We will have some time together to discuss on the implementation of safeguarding policy in the province this evening.

Tomorrow as per the time table says we will have the outing to a resort. So, enjoy and relax dear sisters. You all deserve it.

I also wish to share the following points for some kind of feedback from you all any time during the day today.

These points I was pondering it for few months and I also shared with the PLT and wish to share with you.

1. Can we go for individual bank accounts for the sisters.
2. Allot in the campus of any of our communities a house for our old girls.
3. Sisters who have completed their silver Jubilee and above, those who have not yet gone, who are able and wish to visit Holy Land need to be permitted to visit. Now the situation does not permit, in future...

St. Mother Theresa said, "It is not how much we do, but how much love we put in the doing: it is not how much we give but how much love we put in the giving"

So dear sisters you know the more committed people get the toughest mission. These days to be a Leader, to animate the Community is a toughest mission. Please be sure that the Lord who has called and entrusted us with this mission smiles at each of us and tell us that He is with us and with this confidence and trust, continue to take on this responsibility with an attitude of gratitude. God bless us. Thank you.

Sr. Lissy Chacko  
Province Leader.

18<sup>th</sup> October 2023.