

**First Report on the Founding of the PSOL Lay Collaborators Association in Mumbai on 9th March 2014 and its Evolution since then till date (09th March 2014 to 12th March 2017)**

The ninth general chapter of the congregation of the Poor Sisters of Our Lady was held on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2008. During this time the Chapter delegates prayed and reflected on various topics and one of it was the incorporation of laypersons in our congregation, since our founder too had lay persons working with him. The Chapter members approved of introducing lay collaborators in the Congregation.

Mother Teresa took a keen interest to **seek** permission from the Archbishop of Mumbai to introduce this Lay Associates to the Congregation, as a result Sr. Norma Fernandes was given the charge of animating this group under the direction of Mother Teresa Pinto and her councilors. But God knows what's best for our life in our journey with Him. Sr. Norma took ill for some time and could not continue with the proceedings. But God has a plan for our life unless and until we finish the race he holds onto us. It was a Miracle Sr. Norma recovered from her illness to continue his work that was entrusted to her. Therefore she together with the help of some of the parishioners from Chakala parish motivated individuals to join as Lay associates from different parishes in the Congregation of the Poor Sisters of Our Lady.

The whole assembly was called on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2014; it began with the Eucharist where the Main celebrant Fr. Placid Fonseca SJ briefed the group about the Origin of the PSOL Congregation and the purpose of having Lay Collaborators in the Congregation, during his homily. Soon after Eucharist Mother Teresa Pinto addressed the Lay Collaborators by extending a warm welcome to the Congregation. The Programme ended with a fellowship meal for all.

A meeting of the Lay Collaborators was held on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2014, at Holy Family Convent Chapel, Andheri. The meeting began with the Eucharist celebrated by Fr. Joe Dias SJ. There were about 40 Lay Collaborators, along with the community of Ish Prabha and Holy Family Convent. Soon after the Eucharist Sr. Norma welcomed the Collaborators after which the newly appointed Superior General Mother Matilda D'Mello addressed the Collaborators with words of encouragement and support. Mother explained the types of membership- namely, the first one, prayerful membership (Passive is open to all those who wish to be a part of the Poor sisters of our Lady by their prayers in the growth of their mission). Second- participatory membership where they can actively be involved in the work of the Congregation. They were asked to mention their choice of membership. The core-group was also formed. A copy of the prayer of the church and history of the congregation was given to thirty Lay collaborators, the meeting ended with fellowship meal in the refectory.

On 13<sup>th</sup> July 2014, a meeting of the Lay Collaborators was held at Ish Prabha at 5.30pm during which the following members were selected as office bearers. Animator Sr. Norma Fernandes,

Secretary Sr. Juliet Pullokar, Jt. Secretary Mrs. Carmeline Fernandes, Treasurer Sr. Anna Thomas and Jt. Treasurer Xavier Sanches .It was decided at the meeting to have corpus fund.

On 27th July 2014- Lay collaborators had an introduction to the prayer of the church. On the same day envelopes were distributed to the members for the love offering. We were grateful to Sr. Lorencia for her generosity to print envelopes for the love offering and also for her contribution of Rs. 6500/-

Our Lay Collaborators participated in the followings events of the PSOL family:

Sr. Matilda's Birthday on 26th July 2014.

Final profession of our seven juniors on 7th Sep 2014

First Profession on 8th Sep 2014.

Vespers on 14th Sep 2014 at Holy Family Convent Chapel on the eve of the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows.

Eucharistic Celebration at Holy Family Convent Chapel on the occasion of our Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows on 15th Sep 2014.

At the 15th October 2014 meeting the following suggestions were made:-

To give acknowledgement/ receipt of the money contributed to the corpus fund.

Area wise groups were formed to come together to pray the prayer of the church.

To sponsor a child from Divya Prabha, Vasai home

20th December 2014 Platinum Jubilee of PSOL. Eucharist was celebrated by His Eminence Oswald Cardinal Gracious followed by cultural program & dinner. All actively participated in the celebrations and also mobilized advertisements for the souvenir published on the occasion.

On 27th December 2014 the Lay Collaborators joined the Sisters from Holy Family Convent and Ish Prabha for the Outreach Visit to the Remand Home at Bhiwandi.

On 7th March 2015 Lay Collaborators gathered for the evening prayer at the residence of Asha Jayaseelan.

On 14th March 2015 we went on a pilgrimage to the Churches in Vasai and also visited Divyaprabha Vasai and sponsored a child with Rs. 25,000/-

9th March 2015 was the first anniversary but being a week day, it was held on following Sunday ie. on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2015. Fr. Joe Dias was the main celebrant. Out of 35 members 16 of them made their commitment to collaborate with the members of the congregation.

On 12th July 2015 Mother Matilda met the Lay Collaborators and informed them about the recent projects of the Congregation. On the same day new members joined Mr. Jerome Cardoz from Bandra , Pauline and Hazel from our Hostel Holy Family convent.

On 9th October 2015 we visited Holy Family convent infirmary from 5.30pm to 6.30pm during which snacks and ice cream were distributed to the sisters.

On 10th October 2015 Rosary was recited at 6.30pm at Ish Prabha Chapel

On 18th October 2015 an Interactive meeting was held with the novices at Ish Prabha.

On 24th November 2015 Rosary was recited at Mr. Noel's residence at 6.30pm.

All PSOL Collaborators joined Ish Prabha community for the Advent Wreath Prayer service on all four Saturdays during the season of Advent in 2015.

On 10th January 2016 a whole day programme was conducted for all children of Divya Prabha, Vasai & Thane from 9.30am to 4.00pm at Divine Child High school. They conducted sports and competitions and cultural programmes added beauty to the programme.

On 14th February 2016 an interactive talk was arranged for the lay collaborators given by Fr. Ittoop SVD on the Charism & Spirituality of PSOL congregation.

On 21st February 2016 Way of the Cross was held for the lay Collaborators at Atma Darshan

On 28th February 2016 we visited Holy Family convent Infirmary and had a fruitful evening with our Aged Sisters.

On 13th March 2016 the second Anniversary Mass was celebrated during which 20 of them renewed their commitment for another year. Fr. Joe Dias was the main celebrant. Soon after the Mass Mother Matilda addressed the members with her encouraging words and thereafter breakfast was served for all.

On 10th April 2016 a meeting was held during which the following two decisions were taken:

A. To give a suitable name to the group. Thereafter the shortlisted names suggested by the members were forwarded to Fr. Ittoop to advise us as it was he who had advised that we should name the group. Then the same was to be conveyed to Mother Mathilda for her approval.

- Lay Collaborators & Companions of PSOL
- Lay associates of Our lady,
- Helping hands of Our Lady,
- Power house of Our Lady,

- Followers of Our Lady.

B. To elect the new office bearers

Sr. Norma informed at the meeting that she has been elected as a Regional Superior of the Congregation and will be transferred to Yavatmal. She said at this meeting since we have crossed the inception phase, this is the time for the association to take up and carry out the work of the Congregation as Lay associates and will have a sister from PSOL as a spiritual animator and guide. Since we were less in number, the members decided to select the office bearers instead of electing them. -

President – Mr. Noel Fernandes

Vice President – Mrs. Clara D'Souza

Secretary – Mr. Xavier Sanches

Treasurer Mrs. Veronica Pinto

Spiritual Animator Sr. Juliet Pullokaran PSOL

On 21st June 2016 Xavier Sanches represented the PSOL Companions at the Opening of the Home for stressed girls in Colva, Goa \*On 24th June 2016 Noel Fernandes and Janet his wife represented the PSOL Companions in Karwar for the opening of the Regional Home. On 29th June 2016 Noel Fernandes and Janet represented the PSOL Companions to Yavatmal for the opening of the new regional house.

On 26th July 2016 Mr. Noel Fernandes, Mrs. Janet Fernandes & Mr. Xavier Sanches visited Colaba to wish Mother Matilda on her birthday on behalf of all the lay collaborators.

On 30th July 2016 we visited the aged & sick Jesuit Fathers at their infirmary at Vinalaya Everyone who attended were enriched seeing the joy, peace and love prevalent during their interactions. A skit was put up by our novices of Ish Prabha which was entertaining and with a clear message on God's Merciful love.

On 27th July 2016 we visited Divya Prabha, Thane along with novices.

Sponsored Rs.10, 000/-towards Ms. Sonu's college fees through Sr. Annie Fernandes, Superior of the Holy family convent. It was decided to sponsor the cutting cake for occasions like silver and golden jubilee and first & final vows professions of PSOL sisters as a uniform practice.

On 8th Sept.2016 attended the Silver jubilee of Sr. Romana Fernandes

On 8th Sept.2016 attended the First profession of Aswini Misal

On 15th Sept.2016 attended the Golden jubilee of Srs. Philomena Machado & Cecilia D'Mello.

Triduum 11th, September to 13th and Vespers on 14th Sept 2016 and Feast on 15th 2016.

For the month of October 2016 it was decided to have the rosary on all Saturdays' of the month at 6.30pm at following places:

1<sup>st</sup> Oct 2016 the holy Rosary was recited at IshPrabha Chapel with the Blessed Sacrament exposed.

15<sup>th</sup> Oct at Mr. Noel's place, on 22<sup>nd</sup> at Mrs. Nelly Rego's & on 29<sup>th</sup> at Veronica's place.

3<sup>rd</sup> 17<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>, December 2016 (Saturdays) Advent wreath prayer at Ish Prabha at 6.00pm

On 10th December 2016 A Talk was given by Mrs. Suzan Noronha, President of the Disciples of the Divine Word (DDW), the Lay Collaborators of SVD followed by a short fellowship.

On 28th December 2016 the lay collaborators joined the sisters of Holy Family Convent & Ish Prabha for a day long visit to the Remand home at Matunga. T shirts for all the children were sponsored by us for which we incurred an expense of Rs. 12,500/

Bal Mela was held on 15th Jan 2017. This has become an annual feature of PSOL Companions and undoubtedly one of the best programmes organized by us. The children numbering over 50 enjoyed by participating in sports, games, competitions etc. Besides delicious breakfast, lunch and evening snacks were served.

On 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017 Mr. Noel Fernandes, Mr. Xavier Sanches and Sr. Juliet Pullokaran attended a monthly meeting of the SVD Lay Collaborators which would help us to take ahead our Lay association in a better way in view of their existence for the past 18 years.

## **Feed back**

Most of the members expressed their joy in being part of the PSOL family.

Many expressed their deep loyalty as members of the PSOL Companions to the great family of the Congregation PSOL.

Without exception everyone has been touched by the warmth and positive energy in the group and the PSOL Family.

Felt the need to be more generous towards our love offering and with our time & talents so that we can reach out to the less fortunate in a bigger way. “

On 19<sup>th</sup> Feb 2017 Superior General Mother Matilda and her councilors came to an agreement to name the Lay associates as PSOL Companions and this will be officially announced at the address of Mother Matilda D'Mello today.

As I end this report I would like to say that we are blessed indeed to have such gifted and generous friends as our PSOL Companions. We wish to thank you for the support, dedication, and open-minded thinking and for your readiness to help with very prompt response to requests. When we turned to you for assistance, you immediately responded and did your utmost to provide it as quickly as possible.

Your steadfast commitment to the Congregation and the Church is a remarkable one. As we journey in faith we pray that we may grow in love and devotion to God and seek to build a world where all can experience the hope, joy and peace of Christ's Resurrection. Let us continue to work together as a "community of people united in Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit in our journey of pilgrimage toward the Father's kingdom and bearers of a message for all humanity.

Let us go forward in hope, relying on the help of Christ, the Son of God, who became incarnate two thousand years ago out of love for humanity, and is at work even today, we need discerning eyes to see this and, above all, a generous heart to become the instruments of his work.

Thank you so much God Bless.