

SANGATI

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MARY WARD'S TRYST WITH PAIN

Maeve Hughes ibvm

Mary Ward once said: *"The pain is great, but very endurable, because He who lays on the burden also carries it."* ("God's Passionate Love and Man's Response" by William A Barry sj p.38). This "maxim" of Mary Ward's is like a floodlight throwing a lifelong suffering into relief. There is no denying the pain – physical, mental, social and spiritual that marked the path God called her to tread. She recognizes this and gets on with her life of heroic endurance that enables her to carry on her way of the Cross.

A change of scene to a relative's house for safety in those troubled times, marked her first separation from her parents with the pain and anxiety that such a move brings to a child's life. We know she loved her father greatly and the separation must have caused a heartache. The stories of the martyrs, which she heard from Margaret Garret, surely evoked a sense of shared pain in the sensitive child's heart.

When the time came for her to receive her First Holy Communion, a letter came, supposedly from her father, forbidding her to do so. Her bewilderment and pain were intense.

However, she was a lively, spirited youngster who managed to balance this personal experience of separation with the sunshine of childhood and the experience of family affection.

We first hear of physical pain when as a novice with the Poor Clares the hardship involved in her duties as an "out sister", trudging through the town, soliciting the means of survival for her community, she suffered swelling of her feet and legs. Despite this, she carried on bravely. It was only when she experienced an inner light and she revealed it to her confessor that she was advised to leave the convent. The disappointment and mental anguish of this failure was another type of suffering, a deep soul suffering that she would
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OUR EXPERIENCE IN RAVI BHARATI

Mable Rudum ibvm

'Gyanalaya' the Loreto Juniorate has become the temple of knowledge. We, the juniors, are being given every opportunity to grow and learn. One of the programmes we attended was on 'Media and Communication' in Ravi Bharati, run by the Jesuits in Patna where we were given full freedom to use all the facilities, which helped us to acquire as much knowledge as we could during our ten-day programme.

Before learning anything about communication and media we got a chance to glance through Social Analysis. This helped us to go deeper into the lives of the people. Unless we know the people and their needs we will not be very effective communicators.

Print Media is one of the means of communication, which includes different writing materials like newspapers and magazines. It was very exciting to go through every sections of the paper thoroughly. We learnt to read critically and with interest.

We were taught the different ways and usefulness of Effective Communication. Wireless Communication brings the message clearly and effectively to the people without the visuals. We too tried our best to be effective through wireless communication and recorded our debate in Ravi Bharati Recording Studio.

We learnt to use the different programmes of the computer and different electronic gadgets. We were all happy and excited to take photos from the digital camera, make PowerPoint presentations, films in the computer and to shoot with the video camera. Not only that we also learnt to edit a movie.

Really we have come back enriched and armed with many tools for our future mission. We are grateful to God, the sisters and the fathers of Ravi Bharathi for giving us this opportunity.

MARY WARD'S TRYST WITH PAIN (contd from p 1)

experience repeatedly throughout her life. This she met with the merriment of heart that characterized her life to the end. *"I offered myself so that I might suffer with love and joy everything that came to me by way of need and opposition in the fulfillment of His will."*

The opposition and misrepresentation that she experienced in her efforts to establish her convents on the continent must have tried her sorely. However, she continued to have an unbounded trust in God. The assurance that her mission was His will sustained her throughout. She had *"pondered long and seriously... whether the Holy Spirit is offering so much grace that with his help she might bear the weight of this vocation"*. (Institutum 1). Weight there was and grace was not wanting for this woman of dauntless courage and unwavering faith

Ill health continued to plague her throughout the greater part of her life. There are repeated references to her suffering from "the stone" which may have been either gallstones or a kidney stone. We do not know what remedies were available for these maladies in the 17th century, beyond "taking the waters" at some renowned spa. The journeys involved could hardly have been comfortable but we know Mary made them. Roman fevers too she could scarcely have escaped. It may have been one such wasting fever that brought her to death's door when she was imprisoned in the Anger Convent.

The Bull of Suppression, when it finally reached her, was a crushing blow, especially her conviction of heresy. Mary, that woman of faith, how could she be a heretic? She deemed it her mission in life to save her country from heresy. With her life's work in ruins, her health waning and restrictions on her movements, Mary's faith remained the anchor of her life and of the lives of her faithful companions. Her return to England brought only the briefest relief. War, danger, homelessness drove this small remnant back to York and uncertain shelter.

Her final hours of intense suffering could not rob her of her *"joy in the Lord"* as she encouraged her grieving companions to *"be merry and doubt not their Master"*.

Finding God's Will – An Ignatian Way of Discernment Priyanka Topno ibvm

The nine days Novena on discernment, organized by the Kolkata Jesuit Provincial, as part of the celebration of their 150 years mission in Bengal, brought us alive to the active presence of God and the discovery of ourselves. It helped us understand better the meaning and value of leading a life of discernment and guided us to seek the will of God in our daily life. Deep insights and new learnings were the fruit which I gained being a beginner in religious life. It helped me focus on the great love which God our creator has for me and the whole of creation. Listening to the experience of what others have been through gave confirmation and a feeling of readiness in my life to continue striving for union with God while being actively involved in the Mission of our Institute. All this taught me awareness and sensitivity to the movement of the Spirit which blows where it will according to God's plan. Life doesn't have a smooth flow and there are ups and downs and even blocks keeping us far from our true selves and God.

The talks helped us to have a wider view and knowledge both at mind and heart level and to practise the method of the Ignatian way of discernment in our every day lives.

The nine days Novena was a renewal of Ignatian Spirituality which is being followed by many congregations all working to give greater glory to God.

We in the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary are in the privileged position of being in the process of revising our Constitutions and taking the full Ignatian Constitutions as our own. This was the dream and strong desire of our foundress Mary Ward but it is only today 400 years after her 'glory vision' that the sisters are able to fulfill this dream to the fullest.

For me just being newly professed the Novena was an opportunity to come closer to God and discover my inner self which is so loved by God my creator and to uphold the glory of God in and through me as I move ahead in my journey as a pilgrim in the Ignatian way.

Vocation Promotion

Bernadette ibvm, Anupa ibvm, Baishakhi ibvm

I, **Bernadette**, feel that Vocation promotion is mainly trying to help others who are searching for GOD'S will.

We were asked to do vocation promotion work while we were on our home holiday. **Mable** and I went to Darjeeling on 19th May and we were privileged to go to our own school Loreto, St. Teresa's and talk with the girls. The next day we had an opportunity to meet the girls from Loreto Convent who were also enthusiastic and interested.

Our Big Day was 21st May at the Vocation Camp in Panighatta. Many from St. Teresa's Hostel, Panighatta Parish and Gayaganga Parish came for the camp. We felt the girls were very appreciative of all we put before them. We had talks on vocation, our Institute and Mary Ward. We taught the girls to sing the maxims of Mary Ward with actions. There were times of prayer and reflections to help the girls find out if God's

call to Religious Life was for them. There were also times when they did drawings and plays based on the vocation stories from the gospel. Sisters Agnes and Gloria led these sessions. They had many questions about religious life. We helped them understand that 'vocation' means not just to religious life but any choice of life they will follow and which will give them peace. We too were very happy to share our vocation stories with them. They were inspired by our stories and they also told us that many were interested in joining Loreto. We feel there is great hope for the future of the Darjeeling Region.

I am **Anupa** and I did my vocation promotion work differently. The schools in my area were closed and I could not even meet the girls after Sunday Mass because every Sunday there was some meeting so I decided to meet the girls individually and ask them what they were doing. Then I told them a little about myself. When visiting my relatives I also

met girls interested in religious life. Then I decided to visit every house in my village. I talked to many girls and some visited my house to talk more. I feel I have sown the seed of religious life among many girls in my village and hopefully they will answer the call, should God choose them to be sisters.

My greatest joy was to bring some girls with me when I returned to Kolkata.

I am **Baishakhi** and this was my first time doing vocation promotion work and it was not easy. From the beginning of my holiday I began visiting houses whenever I got the chance. Sharing about myself and our way of life helped both me and the girls I talked to. My mother accompanied me throughout even though she is not a Catholic. She shared her experiences and how she had encouraged me to be a religious. It was a very precious time for us to share the joy of answering God's call as well as her pain of parting with me, her only daughter.

LORETO BOWBAZAR & LORETO ALTRINCHAM

Mrs. Marie Gasper, Principal

In April 2005 the first letter to our 'Twin' school, Loreto Altrincham, was sent. Since then letters have gone back and forth. Emilia, the Head girl of Loreto, Altrincham visited us in July 2006. She spent time with the members of the Students Council and the Teachers Day programme of 2006 was worked around our twin school. Mike Dunn, a teacher from Loreto, Altrincham who was keen to keep the relationship alive, visited us a couple of times. The Principal too showed a lot of interest and on 11th July 2007

Mike Dunn and Mrs Cainen, school chaplain, arrived with eight girls. Two of the girls, Emilia and Anna, stayed at Loreto Bow Bazaar and worked with the Ashadeep children on the "Each one Teach one Programme". They supervised the evening study of the Night Shelter girls studying in Loreto Bow Bazaar. They also interacted with the regular day students. They were invited to special assembly. The PT master also organized an Exhibition Basket Ball match. The Home Science teachers and a few captains took care of their food. It

is an enriching experience for both the schools.

On 12th July 2009 twenty two final year students accompanied by three staff members arrived. It was their first trip to India on a Service Education Project. They stayed in Seva Kendra and came in each day to work with Loreto Bowbazar Outreach (Asha Deep) and Loreto Sealdah (Rainbow). They came well prepared with teaching aids and some games. It was a pleasure to watch their total involvement and commitment. The staff members were equally geared and focused.

The students were carefully selected. Each girl had to get a Spiritual Director who would guide and prepare her and there was a church service before they left England. The students, parents, teachers and Spiritual Directors attended the Service.

The Principal of Loreto Altrincham, Mrs Beaver, and her husband arrived on 19th July.

They were welcomed to Loreto Bowbazar at a Special Assembly. The students of Loreto Altrincham made a power point presentation on their school and said a special prayer for the two schools. The Principal too joined her girls in the teaching programme. It was humbling to watch the Head of an institution squat on the floor and get down to business. The Student Council

members of Loreto Bowbazar organized a get together of the two schools

. The team left India on 25th July 2009 with a heavy heart and are making plans to come back.

May be this is what Globalization is all about: "BONDING".

Loreto Sealdah Teachers & Rainbows Spread their Wings

This year **Theresa Mendes** was invited to be a resource person for the National Conference of the Irish Christian Brothers' Schools in Australia. She spent a month there and here is what they wrote about her :

"Theresa's visit was highly successful and her presentations to our Principals and various groups of teachers and students were inspirational, thought-provoking and moving and led to significant discussion around possibilities for preferential options for the poor based on the wonderful example of the many projects set up by the Loreto School .

Theresa was an exceptional ambassador for the school and its community and it is indeed special that we have now established a different level of partnership with Loreto School".

Then **Magdalene Gomes** went to Ireland on a special programme funded by the Irish Government with the intention of building links between Irish schools and others across the world. Loreto Fermoy chose to invite a teacher from Loreto Sealdah to visit them in May 2009. Here is what they write about her: *"We thoroughly enjoyed Magdalene's visit and have*

benefited tremendously from her vision of education. Our teachers and students alike have been inspired by her ideas and indeed joy and passion for human rights and the central role of education in the improvement of human rights in India . Ms. Gomes is a wonderful person and I feel honoured, both personally and professionally to have hosted her during her visit."

Debolina Ghosh, a past pupil of Loreto Sealdah and back here, working for the past year as a Science Teacher, has been awarded a fellowship to do research in Bio Technology in the US. She will return to us after she has completed her work there and will continue to collaborate with the Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Illinois, USA on her return.

Shefali Biswas, one of our older Rainbow girls, has just been made permanent in the AMRI Hospital where she is responsible for recording all medicines of patients and guiding them to their respective departments.

Sharine Lazarus, another of our older Rainbow girls, has been taken on as a trainee for research on Cancer at the AMRI Hospital and has been given charge of keeping a record on the reason of spread of Cancer and the kind of Cancer patients coming to the hospital.

A NOTE OF THANKS: **Sr Celine Pinto** thanks the Sisters who prayed for the recovery of her dislocated and fractured arm. Her Jesuit Brother, Fr.Agnelo Pinto, who was operated at the Tata Cancer Hospital in Mumbai, is recuperating in Goa and experiencing the mercy of God having escaped Chemo therapy and Radiation.

She requests prayers for Mrs. **Jeanne Street**, Principal of St.Dominic's College, Shillong who is being operated for cancer in Mumbai.