



MSMHC

# FERRANDO INSTITUTE OF SPIRITUALITY

## News Letter

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January-March 2010

### Editorial

Next time when you walk on a bridge stop for a while. Observe the water flowing beneath. Rhythmic flow: no disruption. Drops joined together and running downstream! Our life is similar to that. The smooth easy flow is such a pleasure, but sometimes the stream of life flows sluggishly. Sometimes it swells and sweeps. Sometimes empty and dry!

There are moments when water under the bridge is turbulent. It bangs and rocks the bridge; bites and devours the banks – an attempt to crush and destroy! When the pillars supporting the bridge are strong and deep rooted the disturbed water strikes against them and gets splintered. The weak pillars give in and the bridge collapses!

The water under the bridge is not calm all the time nor wild all the time. No one's life is a dark or lonely wilderness for all time. There comes sweet drops of comfort, and surprisingly refreshing joys. Like the water under the bridge, life flows on from known to unknown. You cannot hold it. When the water is troubled you can only keep still, and say to yourself, "wait, this too will pass away." The wilder the water, the faster its flow; and there follows a great calm.

The life of our Father and Founder, Bishop Stephen Ferrando was no exception. He went through life's vicissitudes calmly knowing that *there is a God in Israel (Est Deus in Israel)*. Not only his bridge remained firm and strong, he inspired many others to pass through turbulent waters smoothly. He was in fact a bridge, leading people to pass through life with Jesus, with support systems such as devotion to Holy Eucharist, Mary Help of Christians, patron saints and fiery zeal for souls.

Fr. Fabbian Vito's words about our Founder are worth recalling: "He became a bridge between Christ and the people. He had the characteristics and qualities of the Good Shepherd as well as the sensibility of his people. Evidently we can compare him to the figure of Jacob who saw the ladder in dream, which came down to earth from heaven. The angels of God ascended and descended through it. For me, Bishop Ferrando symbolizes this angel who descended to the people of India, and ascended to God taking along their richness of culture, sufferings, expectations and aspirations; and again descended bringing from God, the benedictions, the covenant, the graces, zeal and enthusiasm. He was like Moses who descended from the mountain all illumined; a Moses who went from his people to speak to God about his people. Your Founder became a true medium like Jesus Himself between the people and God. I am proud of having known him."

How strong is your bridge of life? Can it withstand turbulent waters? In hard times look up to the Father and Founder, he will send you unflinching support.

Sr. Philomena Mathew MSMHC



## *Annual Report 2009-2010*



Ferrando Institute of Spirituality was inaugurated on 20 June 2009, on the 31st death anniversary of our beloved Founder Bishop Stephen Ferrando, Servant of God.

We had eight Sisters in the first batch. The students put in their whole hearted effort to fulfill what was required of them. They had classes, seminars, written papers, oral examinations, field studies and regular evaluations. At the end of the second year they will have to prepare a thesis of about 100 pages on relevant MSMHC topics related to our

Founder, spirit, charism, mission, spirituality and formation. It is a demanding and disciplining study.

During the course of the first year we have covered the following topics as per our syllabus: Introduction to Christian Spirituality, Spirituality of Major Religious Families, Spiritual Theology: Religious Life: Vita Consecrata, Theology of Religious Life, History of Religious Life, Spirituality of Formation, Dimensions of Formation: Founders, Foundresses, and their Religious Families; Scripture: Spirituality of Prophets, Markan Spirituality, Pauline Spirituality, Johannine Spirituality; Specific MSMHC Topics: Bishop Stephen Ferrando; Person, Founder, Missionary; History of Devotion to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco; Man, Educator, Founder, Spirit and Spirituality; Salesian Spirituality, Marian Spirituality, Missionary Catechesis, Spirituality of Sacraments, Spirituality of Youth Ministry, Contextualized Spirituality, Feminist Theology, Asian Spirituality and Forms of Spiritual Life; Seminars: Long Rules of St. Benedict, Essential Elements of Religious Life, Catechetical Apostolate of the MSMHC; Languages: Basic Latin and basic Italian

FIS started off with a short time of intense planning and preparation. In the beginning the going was very hard. But once started we kept sailing against all odds. Sr. Mercy Philip and I together with the students, put in all our energies and resources and looked to the future with hope.

I appreciate the courage and faith of our dear Superiors, especially our Superior General Sr. Mary Thadavanal and her Councillors to leap into the unknown with tremendous faith in God. The birth of this Institute is a sign of God's passionate love for us. There were moments of anxiety and uncertainty yet with the help and support of our Superiors we have sailed thus far.

The Provincials were very supportive. They assisted us with all the financial help and every province supplied a computer each for the institute. We thank each of them and their Council members, both past and present, for their support, encouragement and keen interest in renewing the Spirit of the Congregation and the effort they make to get us return to our roots.

### **Some concerns**

The Institute is also meant to facilitate the on-going formation and also to provide updating and in-depth study on matters that are specific to our congregation - Spirit, Charism, Founder, History, Constitutions, Pioneers, Traditions, Formation, Mission, Directories, etc. A good number of Sisters - local superiors, formators and touring sisters can benefit from the programmes offered here. In



our Newsletter we inform you of our programme of classes in advance mentioning the duration of each course. Any sister who wants to join for any of the courses is always welcome.

*(An extract from the annual report presented to the Inter Provincial Council Meet at Bethel by Sr. Philomena Mathew the Directress of FIS on 26 March 2010)*

## *Students' Column*

### *Flashback from Ferrando Institute of Spirituality (FIS)*

Seasons change, life continues, memories fail but the students of FIS cherish and recall the unique experiences of the past months. Everything has its own time for growth and accomplishment, so it is with FIS. The God of surprises who had called us to be the beginners in FIS continues to strengthen us in our journey. The first three months of the year 2010 helped us to deepen our learning in the various aspects of spirituality.

We began the New Year 2010 with St. Paul, the great missionary after the heart of Christ. Fr. Jose Varicakasseril SDB led us to plunge into Pauline letters to understand deeply, the person of Paul, his spirituality and his eagerness to proclaim the Good News to different communities inculcating in them the spirit of unity, faith, and urging them to live renewed lives. The enthusiasm of Paul re-awakened in us the missionary zeal of our beloved Founder, Bishop Stephen Ferrando.

Sr. Bridget Diengdoh MSMHC enlightened the students of FIS through her classes on 'Spirituality of the Prophets.' Prophets are communicators of the divine revelation of God, who have spiritual messages even for us today. This study enabled us to recognize our role as prophets in the fast changing modern world. Prophets of the old had to undergo various types of problems and tribulations but they withstood all those and remained loyal to Yahweh. The life of prophets challenges us to face the tribulations courageously and to remain loyal to our call and to be worthy daughters of our Congregation.

Fr. Barnes L. Mawrie, SDB enhanced our knowledge of Missionary Catechesis which is an essential component of our charism. The daily growth of an individual and of the Church depends on the effectiveness of Missionary Catechesis. Therefore, Catechesis attempts to bridge the gap between theology and life. Catechesis in the context of MSMHC was presented very vividly through these classes. We presented a seminar on 'Catechetical Apostolate of the MSMHC today'. This paved way for an in-depth study of the Charism of our Congregation and the significance of Evangelization. The spirituality of St. John inspired us to contemplate the face of Jesus. Fr. Thomas Manjaly, with his profound reflections on discipleship enthused us to understand the deep intimacy which we ought to have with Jesus like St. John. Our mission will be successful when we are transformed and when our work reflects the hidden presence of Jesus. St. John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, challenges us to cultivate an abiding union with Jesus, which is the very purpose of our Religious Life.

Fr. Paul Olphindro Lyngkot, SDB motivated us to consider the importance of spirituality of Youth



Ministry today. Youth Ministry strives to lead young people to responsible participation in the life, mission and work of the faith community. It is the response of the Christian community to the needs of the young people. It also enabled us to understand our role as educators and leaders, in developing a positive atmosphere for youth to grow in faith.

Fr. Jose Kuruvachira, SDB enlightened us on the topics: Spirituality of Don Bosco and Salesian Spirit and Spirituality. Our Founder Bishop Stephen Ferrando who was a true son of Don Bosco imparted the Salesian Spirit in its fullest to the MSMHC. We understand that the MSMHC are close to the heart of Don Bosco, as our Founder was. Salesian Spirit is the special style of thinking, feeling, living and acting as the Salesians put into effect the Charism entrusted to Don Bosco by the Holy Spirit. It was an eye opener for us, to be always united with God and to practice the asceticism of daily life.

Formation is discipleship and an on-going configuring to Christ. Formation leads to transformation. It has a profound effect on individuals. Fr. Jose Kuruvachira, ignited the students with the importance of formation and its various dimensions - Human, Christian, Spiritual, Intellectual, Apostolic and specific MSMHC aspects. He stressed the importance of having qualified personnel for formation. Formation is a continued process but dimensions vary in different stages. During the course of study, the students visited Mary Immaculate Novitiate Mawroh and Ferrando Training Centre Umroi (Aspirantate) for field study and research and presented reports which touched upon the various dimensions of formation.

The first scholastic year ended with basic course in Italian. On 29 March 2010 an overall assessment of the year was done. It was also a day of gratitude to the Lord for all his blessings. On 30 March the students went back to their own respective Provinces for two months of holidays and research studies.

*Sr. Smitha John*

## *Reminiscences of the first Academic Year 2009-2010*



The past one year of my learning at Ferrando Institute of Spirituality unfolded the purpose of my existence as a Missionary Sister. I was inspired by the topic Bishop Stephen Ferrando, person, founder, missionary and man of God. Through these classes I understood the heart of our Founder for our Congregation. He was not a born missionary but he became a missionary. He had an ardent love for the Holy Eucharist and tender devotion to Mary Help of Christians. He fell in love with the poor and the suffering. His quest and zeal to make Christ known to the whole world grew passionately, so much so he was able to inspire the young and old, the poor, the women and the children, and drew them to Christ. The life of our Founder as a missionary touched the core of my being and it began to shape my thinking pattern, attitudes, values, and in short, my entire life. If many more Sisters could get this privilege of being at FIS to know our founder deeply, certainly we will become fully committed and authentic missionaries after the heart of our founder.

*Sr. Biji Mathew*



Life changes from time to time. Ferrando Institute of Spirituality has helped me to change for the better. When I began my life at FIS I was a worried and anxious person, in particular when it was a question of completing assignments and serious studies. Gradually I learnt to take life as it comes, one day at a time. FIS challenges me to enter into the mind and heart of our Founder in order to be an effective and zealous missionary. The study on the spirituality of Don Bosco created in me a desire to strive to know our founder better, to live the specific Charism to the full, while living out my religious commitment. I am also encouraged to form myself continuously by taking personal responsibility for my growth, in order to transform myself. I am proud of the Missionary call that I have received and to be an MSMHC.

*Sr. Brigita War*



The past one year of my stay at Ferrando Institute of Spirituality has helped me to grow deeper in my prayer life. Classes on the Gospels of St. John and St. Mark, and Pauline letters made me to reflect on the unconditional love of God the Father coming to me through Jesus. Contextualized Prayer made me to understand that prayer can be said all the time and everywhere. The time allotted for reading, reflection and sharing, enabled me to love the Word of God. I was deeply touched by the words of our Founder, from his Letter dated 24 April 1954: "Pray much and pray fervently... we do not pray in order to change God's Holy will but rather in order to change our own so that it may correspond perfectly with His. We do not pray in order to move God to do what we wish; but rather to obtain the light and the strength to do all things that He wishes." I learnt to integrate prayer and life. This helped me to better my relationship with my sisters, and to do my daily work for the salvation of souls. The classes, assignments and seminars on various topics have broadened my understanding and provided me with opportunities for my spiritual, intellectual, Christian and human formation.

*Sr. Meena Tirkey*



When I look into the past one year, I realize that it was a period of formation and education for me, a special time given to me to be in touch with myself, my religious life and to understand deeper the spirit and charism of our beloved Founder and the Congregation. The point touched me most was Perfectae Caritatis article no.2: "The final norm of religious life is the following of Christ as it is put before us in the Gospel". The religious spirit of our beloved Founder seen in his letters taught me much. The words of our Founder, "I want you to understand well that you should not embrace religious life in jest, because poverty, chastity and obedience are like three nails which must pierce and kill ourselves, our body and our will." (4 April 1944) This made me to analyze the conformity between my theoretical knowledge and actual life. I am challenged time and again to set my priorities right to be constantly faithful to Jesus Christ and my Congregation.

*Sr. Smitha George*



Our Founder Bishop Stephen Ferrando said, "The inner most strength of the congregation is within you." (16 November 1969) I understood the meaning and importance of these words deeply while studying and reflecting upon the various dimensions of formation. I also became aware of the importance of formation in my personal life. It was my idea that on-going formation means attending some specialized courses in some famous centers under the guidance of some experts. But now I am convinced that in order to form myself I must become aware of myself and take personal responsibility. I learnt in a profound manner that the religious community where I live is the best place for on-going formation. Sacramental life, well prepared liturgical celebrations, personal prayer, retreats, readings, good nights, sharing of views in the community, reflection on the Word of God, courses and seminars are some of the helps in the process of formation. When I form myself with emphasis on various dimensions, my life becomes worth living in the congregation, and the quality of my life adds strength and beauty to the congregation.

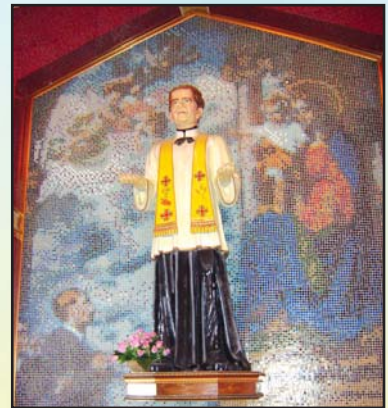
*Sr. Elvy Abraham*

### *Pilgrimage to Don Bosco's Shrine, Chirapunjee*

We went on a pilgrimage to Don Bosco's Shrine at Chirapunjee on 30 January 2010. It was our great privilege to visit this holy place, the first of its kind in India. Our hearts flooded with sentiments



of love and gratitude to God for the gift of Don Bosco, our Founder Bishop Stephen Ferrando and to all the Salesian Fathers and Sisters who took great care



of us in the initial stages of the existence of our Congregation. We had an hour of prayer there. We prayed the ninth day of Novena in this beautiful shrine, reflecting on Don Bosco's trust in Divine Providence. Sr. Mercy Philip animated the prayer session.

### *Philosophy Course 2010*

Students for philosophy course 2010 arrived on 14 April 2010. It was an exciting day for the newcomers who had come from different MSMHC provinces with mixed feelings of joy and happiness, anxiety and worry. On 15 April Sr. Philomena Mathew the Directress and Sr. Mercy Philip the Assistant Directress met the students to give them instructions and necessary information



*Students with Dr. Jose Kuruvachira, professor in Philosophy*

regarding FIS way of life. In the evening we were welcomed with a prayer service conducted by Sr. Mary Thomas the Superior of the Institute, Sr. Philomena Mathew, Sr. Mercy Philip and Sr. Biji Mathew. On 15th we began our classes with Methodology of Scientific Research. It was followed by Philosophy classes. We who had been teaching the students or animating communities now sit down in a class room to study and to learn. It is indeed a demanding task. Yet our enthusiasm is still soaring

high, excitement still drifting, eagerness still reigning as we explore the ways of philosophical thinking.

Sr. Mary Thadavanal our Superior General visited us on 16 April. In her conference she exhorted us to look at the future with hope and confidence, and to do everything for Jesus and this will keep the spirit high even when the study demands much sacrifice and hard work.

Our life at FIS demands sustained intellectual work and serious reflection. We entered the classroom with new vision and enthusiasm and soon we merged into FIS way of life. Now often we find ourselves in the library immersed in books and in serious reflection.

*Sr. Esabella Sangma*

## *New Appointments*

The staff and students of FIS extend a warm welcome to Sr. Liji James who has been appointed as staff at Ferrando Institute of Spirituality. She completed her Postgraduate studies in Formative Spirituality from Dharmaram College and Christ University, Bangalore. Currently she is a Ph.D research scholar.

We also heartily welcome Sr. Jancy Joseph who has been appointed as visiting lecturer at FIS. She has returned after completing her licentiate in Formation Psychology from the Gregorian University, Rome. She is part of the formation team of the Congregation and is based at Hatigaon.



## Programme of the Institute : 2010

### April

14-30 Philosophy

### May

1 - 30 Philosophy

### June

1-18 Philosophy

21 Inauguration of the New  
Academic Year

22 - 30 Retreat

### July

3 -7 Spirituality of Preventive System

8 - 23 History of Spirituality

26-30 Liturgical Spirituality

### August

1- 7 Psycho-spiritual Integration

9 -14 Growth in Prayer and Spiritual  
Direction

16-21 Human Foundation of Spirituality

23-28 Catechesis

30-31 Missiology

### September

1-4 Missiology

6-10 Missionary Spirituality

13-18 History of the Congregation

20-24 Major Religious Families

28-30 Seminar : Rule of St. Benedict

### October

4 - 12 Bishop Ferrando; Person,  
Founder and Man of God

14 - 23 Symposium

24 Foundation Day

27-29 Financial Administration

### November

1-3 Constitutions

4-6 Social Apostolate

8-13 Canon Law for Religious

15-20 Women and Evangelization

22-28 Devotion to Mary Help of Christians

29-30 Evangelization - Directory

### December

1-15 Language - Basic Italian

17 Seminar - Church's Teaching on the  
Essential Elements of Religious Life

20 - 31 Holidays

Ferrando Institute of Spirituality (FIS) welcomes all those who want to participate in the courses offered by the centre. Please do inform us in advance of your coming. Philosophy course is going on for the freshers. The second year students will arrive on 1 June and resume their classes. For any enquiry please contact us in the following address.

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