9th to 14th August 2019 were half a dozen days spent in total surrender to our creator whose we are and whom we serve.

The Retreat Cum Seminar was an enriching experience for the five of us, as we, Mrs. Antoinette Fabian Vasan, Mrs. Deepthy Menon, Ms. Leethial.R and Ms. Arthi took a step ahead to be beacons to lighten the young minds in order to save our Mother Earth for the future. Our special thanks goes to Sr. Sabina Pathrose our Province Leader for giving us this opportunity to have an amazing encounter with God present in nature.
On 9th morning all the participants arrived at NBCLC, Bengaluru to be in the meaningful presence of the Almighty God in his own Cathedral to celebrate life and make it worthy by protecting the other creations whom we share the Earth with. We and had an inaugural function. The inaugural session started by lighting of the lamp to invoke the presence of God. In the Inaugural talk, Fr. Sagaya John, the director explained to us the origin and mission of NBCLC and its functional management and the various programs that are conducted in the centre. The participants were divided into four groups. The groups organised and animated the morning prayers and Liturgy every day in a very creative way in tune with the nature and gospel which was great inspiration for all. The groups also were engaged in seating arrangements in the hall, vegetable cutting, table arrangements in the dining hall etc.

At the outset Fr. Rappai Poothokaren SJ, Gujarat Province, the retreat Preacher enlightened the group what it means to be a holiday with God in nature. He illustrated what a "Holiday with God" means. Usually our 24 hrs are spent in 8 hrs pray X 8 hrs work X 8 hrs rest = 24hrs. But he said when we holiday with God, we spend all the 24 hrs in his presence. There are several ways of looking at a retreat and explained on Tagore’s Summer Song in Gitanjali. He led the group to an experience of Eco Spirituality and Eco Conversion. The group was asked to look at the Lord’s Supper: from a ritual towards a celebration. He also enlightened the group on Eco Education, Green students and inspired to plant trees, save the earth. He also spoke about how to be Green Teachers. And invited the group to reflect on The Mosquito Paradigm, Global warming leads to Climate Change! Then continued with “Electricity is the biggest pollutant in our times” also narrated about CFL bulb campaign. Nights were always a time for watching of a movie- The Ganges. He animated the session on ecology from the perspective of Bible with the theme 'We are the universe reflecting self’. With the help of power point he brought out various examples from the Old Testament (Eg. Nature Psalm 104) and the New Testament (Eg. Luke 13: 18 -21 -The Parable of the Mustard Seeds) which speaks about the creation and other related subjects on ecology. And this was followed by a cartoon video on Laudato Si, which explains about the Care for our Common Home, the Earth based on the encyclical written by Pope Francis. And this short video gave lot of awareness, the climate changes that affect the life of the people, and it was also an awakening for the young people to change for Eco-Conversion. The resource person encouraged the participants to see 'God in Everything and Everything in God'. Pope Francis is a good model for the present world, who exhorts that to love God, love neighbours and love nature- 3 Pillars of the Church. A few clippings were shown based on ‘Nutritious Organic Vegetable Agriculture’ (NOVA). And then the participants requested the resource person to make us aware about the different methods of Organic Farming. A short video was shown about Woman and the Mother Earth. And then different movements like Vanamahostsava, Chipko movements were explained with Power Point presentation with the message of protecting the Mother Earth by protecting trees.

Sr Sheela SAB, one of the participants shared with the group a few of her practices- terrace farming, gardening using recycled materials and different ways to compost waste.
At last, possible Eco Actions were taken up by each group.

Following are our Eco Actions on Personal, Community and Institutional Levels.
1. Live simply and close to the nature.
2. Eco-friendly gifts to friends and benefactors.
3. Make conscious effort to reduce the use of electricity, of fuel, of water and food.
4. Introduce nature walks and nature meditations.
5. Use bicycles.
6. Prefer natural lemonades and drinks to varieties of Expensive Colas.
8. Plastic Free Campus.
9. Replace bulbs with CFL Lamps and LED lights.
11. Motivate students to plant gardens.
12. Use simple natural decorations, instead of artificial ones.
13. Each year plant some new trees.
15. No to burn dry leaves.
17. Proper disposal of garbage: segregate and compost them.
18. Display posters on the roads and institutions.
20. Name the trees and display them.
22. Organise awareness programmes in communities and schools.
24. Environment friendly “thoughts for the day”.
25. Collect the seeds of the local trees and propagate them.
26. Tying Rakhi amulets and trees on Rakshabandhan Feast.
27. Organize ongoing reflection on Eco-Spirituality.
29. Institutional cultural festivals on eco-themes.
30. Organise eco-tours to demonstration places such as eco parks and other success stories.
31. Use organic manure.

'You become what you love. You become what you meditate upon'.

Follow what your heart tells.....