



Inter Congregational Final Vows Preparation Program

Theme: Real Spiritual Growth is Letting Go

Venue: Christian Brothers' Community, St. John's School, Chandigarh

Organized & Coordinated by: Brs. Philip Pinto & Mark DaCosta CFC

Program ascended from: 1st October 2016 to 30th November 2016.

No. of Participants: Nine

“Strength lies in differences, not in similarities” - Stephen R. Covey

We, nine participants from East, West, North and the South, belonging to four different congregations namely, Christian Brothers, Loretto Sisters, Disciples of Christ Jesus, and Good Shepherd Sisters came together for our two months' preparation prior to our final commitment. We met as strangers, but as the days went by, we realized that living together is possible at the heart of our differences. We were able to open our self-tents to create an inter-congregational and intercultural community. We began our Preparation with mixed feelings of hopes, fears, our own brokenness and uncertainties not

knowing what exactly was going to happen. The first two days for settling in and drawing up helped us to get to know the atmosphere of the new community and feel at home with one another. The day out together to Rock, Cactus and Japanese gardens in Chandigarh was an opportunity to interact, introduce, and get familiar with each other. Brs. Philip and Mark encouraged the group to make good use of this precious time of formation to strengthen our union with God because relationship of God is the heart of everyday. The sessions on different topics made us aware of the need to be born anew in our thoughts, words and actions.

All that we learnt from this program were all in line, starting from communication, journaling and dream work, religious life today, spirituality for brotherhood and sisterhood, the vows, training for transformation, the call to justice, gospel discipleship, prayer and sexuality in Mark's gospel. We were awake and active as the sessions were inclusive of sharing, reflections, discussions, and group presentations. Each facilitator has her and his own way of mentoring/facilitating the input sessions. There was enough time for personal prayer, reflection and community worship, which accompanied us into our homes (our hearts). It was a time of new consciousness and experiences of new insights especially about oneself, universal community and God. We inspired one another to be men and women of few words and bring out many actions of the Divine. The process continues as we journey with the Mystery whom we call God.

It was a real Spiritual journey on the top of the Eagle Mount in Simla as the directed retreat was included into the two month's program. Our Retreat directors Bro. Gerard CFC and Sr. Aurea were Dynamic and approachable. We were able to give space for the Spirit of the Lord to work in us. It has been a great time for screening, trimming of one's own life and prepare well to say final 'BIG YES' to Jesus. We greatly appreciate the Christian Brother's community, Chandigarh especially Brs. Philip and Mark for their ever availability and care that they have rendered to each one of us, their memories are still treasured in our hearts. We wish that this kind of program would continue in the years to come and many more sisters and brothers would benefit from it. We express our deep gratitude towards our facilitators who gave their time and energy to journey with us at different times, may God bless

them abundantly. With grateful hearts, we thank our sisters and brothers own congregations and our province, for sending us for this first venture of Inter Congregational Preparation and for their encouragement, affirmations, continuous prayers and support we received during our preparation.

