



The session began at 9 am on 14th February 2023. Sr. Sabina introduced Ms. A. Fabian, our Mission Partner from Chennai, to the group and invited her to conduct the opening ritual. The hymn with the very heart warming words: “You are beautiful beyond description” was played followed by praying Ps. 139. Through the description of the development of the life of a butterfly, Fabian helped us to go through our life from its inception till the present -the persons that we have supposedly become like a ‘Monarch Butterfly’. It was a good and meaningful prayer service that helped us to enter into the day’s session with enthusiasm. Thanks a lot to Fabian. There were 16 Of us, two of the Sisters were unable to be present for this session.

Sr. Sabina then read out the message of Sr. Pushpa Louis, our Provincial, who could not be present. Next Sr. Sabina introduced Rev. Fr. Freddy D’Silva, the resource person for our session.

“You are beautiful beyond description”

[Session for sisters 60 years and above 14th, 15th and 16th Feb’2023]

The topic dealt with was ‘Ageing gracefully’ The salient points were: Ageing > getting on in years. The Lord adds years to life and we add life to years. Don’t say I am old. Ageing is maturing, ripening, fruitfulness, harvest, golden years. There are three types of age: chronological, biological and psychological. The first is calculated based on our date of birth, the second is determined by the health conditions, and the third is how old we feel. We don’t have control over the first. We can take care of our health with good diet, exercise and cheerful attitude. A positive attitude and optimistic thinking can reverse the third. The dictum is interiority; surrender...surrender.... surrender!



The reality of a person is: The real beauty is within.

We are being bombarded with the message that young is good and old is bad; that ageing brings illness, depression, loss and diminishment. Be a Sanctuary lamp that remains constantly in the presence of the Lord, drawing people's attention to the Lord, substitutes people since they have to go, intercede for others.

Physical decline is normal. "All shall be well. All manner of things shall be well." Julian of Norwich. Sin, suffering and evil will be there. But all shall be well. Physical decline is normal.

With age should come wisdom. An African proverb says: "The death of an old person is like the loss of a library." Grow in self-control, have a more reflective and sober approach to life. Focus on death and higher truths.



Be grateful. Live in gratitude. Be gracious always. Gratitude is the ultimate virtue. It is synonymous with holiness.

Three things strike us about those who age gracefully:

- 1. They struggle with their diminishment but accept it.**
- 2. They keep working on love.**
- 3. They are overwhelmingly grateful.**

We need healthy, positive attitude towards ageing and infirmity. 'Erikson's Generativity Theory says: "When we are in our senior years our mission is to be generative = bring people alive emotionally, psychologically, socially and spiritually.

In the afternoon when we met, we were given the passage from the Gospel of St. John 21: 16 - with the request to make a list of ten points about senior years, reflecting on this passage. We worked in small groups and then shared the insights in the big group.

Fr. Freddy summarized the points as follows:

- 1. This passage reveals a very personal relationship between Peter and Jesus.**
- 2. A wounded relationship because of betrayal. Then repentance; forgiveness, tears of gratitude and finally reinstated to his formal position.**
- 3. Jesus gives importance to LOVE above anything else. Love is the most important value > Agape love. Love must be increasingly selfless and pure.**
- 4. Jesus gives Peter a chance to express his commitment of love.**
- 5. Jesus restores his leadership position; nothing of the past is remembered.**
- 6. Warns Peter: a time will come when others have to lead you, accept the reality of ageing.**
- 7. Dependency, allowing ourselves to be cared for by others.**
- 8. "You will stretch out your hand": a call to surrender, joyful and peaceful surrender to God and others.**
- 9. Don't bother about others too much > don't poke your nose in other people's business. Don't be unnecessarily curious.**
- 10. 'Follow me' > Live my life. Live in love, in gratitude. Labor as Jesus labored. Internalize fully your religious consecration > in simplicity, chastity and obedience.**



With this we ended the first day of session. We joined the community for the evening worship. Being April 14th, the Valentine's Day, Sr. Julia Mary conducted a very inspiring Holy hour, praying with the words of Jesus to Peter: "Do you love me?" In other words, 'Will you be my Valentine? With joyful and grateful hearts, we participated in the evening prayer. This was followed by dinner. Thank God for this day of meeting one another, learning and sharing. Age is no bar for learning and growing.

15th February, 2023 – Second day of session for 60+

The session began with a prayer by Sr. Molly Vinaya in keeping with the theme of the session leading us to be open for the second day of reflections.



Fr. Freddy continued with making us deepen the thought of: **'Feed my sheep'**.

What does this entail?

Nurturing, building up, strengthening people by the person you are, like a rose which does nothing but gives joy by its fragrance.

-Prayer: pray for others – for community one by one; speak a good word; by just a smile; act of service

-Take care of the lambs – little, weak, vulnerable, defenseless, tender ones.

Don't be others' slave.

Don't expect too much from others. Don't be over-dependent. Be contented. Don't crave for more!

Know the truth about oneself – who am I before my God, don't be slave of other people's opinion or judgement; when one cannot do something, ask for help –this is dependability, interdependence and co-operation; a covenant of love, alliance, co-operation between the young and seniors.

Do not compare with others.

When we compare ourselves with others it brings in the inferiority complex, this in turn leads to envy, which gives rise to jealousy. Comparison = rivalry = competition = conflict = violence in all forms.

Whereas Acceptance = surrender = gratitude

As we age remain in good mood,

having a positive attitude toward aging and infirmity, accepting our lot with grace and gratitude. There is physical diminishment in aging. But we, are not diminished in our personhood. We are much more than our body.

- ❖ Look at the past with thanks/gratitude;
- ❖ Look at the present with joy and passion;
- ❖ Look at the future with hope and courage.
- ❖ Repent for mistakes not regret. Every mistake has made us realize the Greatness of God and littleness of a human being

Love Jesus puts a premium on

love: Loving in an unselfish and disinterested way. Not what we do but how we love. Love in an unselfish and disinterested way. Not needing other people for your own security and gratification. We are created to receive love, to live in love and to give love. Therefore, the very meaning of our life is not what we do but how we love. As John of the Cross reminds us, in the evening of our lives we shall be judged by love. One single formula for happiness in such a state of dependence consists in the one word: "Follow Me" – following Jesus means to love Him above all people and all things and to love His people with the same intensity of love. Erikson calls it generativity – a key to ageing gracefully.

Everything is a gift-

Joy comes from realization that everything comes from my Father. Bless more and curse less; praise more than criticize; look at the bright side of reality.

Fr. Freddy gave us an exercise – look around you at each sister and write one good quality about her and they we had to express it. This gave us an exercise because some of us had not lived with some sisters, yet we had to find one good quality.

In the afternoon we had an Open Session conducted by Sr. Sabina
How Young are you?

When you are in love you are young at heart

She presented a power point presentation taken from a book written by Ellen Langer "Counter clockwise".

An experiment was conducted on men in their late 70s who were using sticks to walk, weak in their movements.

She took them to a resort and created the past to the present. The place was recreated like 30 years back. They were asked to behave like 30 years back.

They were not allowed to get the help of someone to carry their bags. They had to climb the steps on their own. No mirrors, they were asked to bring their younger day's photos and they were displayed here and there. They were asked to think and act as if they were 30 years younger.

Result of this test the group showed significant differences in Physical strength, IQ had improved. There was improvement in Physical strength, memory, cognition, perception, sense of hearing and vision improved over all, a sense of wellbeing was experienced' There are a lot of psychological factors that affect our aging process. There is a mind and body connection. If we perceive ourselves, we are capable, younger, healthy, vibrant we will be.

How to remain young at heart!

Stay in touch with your old friends.

Act and think you are 5 years younger.

We have the potential to unleash the power within us.

Do not allow our limited belief and thinking patterns to overpower you.

Being in love - As we age we move away from love. Any form of love is important. May be a passion you had, keep the spark in you alive.

Dance, sing, play games, sports, laugh loudly and heartily take care of an animal or some plants.

"Love more to live more." Allow your young self to come out. Be in touch with your old self.

Our Spirit and soul is eternal. Life exists outside of time. Live life to the fullest. Age is a mind-set. do not allow limited belief and thinking patterns to overpower you. Unleash your power. You will be surprised by your energy.

We all feel, we have something more to give, but we are stuck on the first gear. We have no road map made on what or how to unlock what my contribution might be.



I have my apprehension how I could give expression to something. I had been dreaming for. ... Desiring for. ... longing for.....

We were asked which is the richest place on the land. After giving many answers the answer was the graveyard because a lot of dreams and desires are buried there unexplored. So the next logical question was Do you want to die without fulfilling your dreams and desires?

Colourful post it slips were given to us and we were asked what to write what is it that you would like to complete before you die. Before I die I want to.....

All of us wrote it and we stuck the slips on the board. Now it is left to us to complete the work we have planned before.....

The Next day was awaited – Care for the soul

An outing was arranged for us. We went to Resort, run by the DMI Sisters in Mahabalipuram. Mr. Peter D'souza was our guide and accompanied us the whole day.

We were all excited like little girls. I think the story of the experiment and all that we had heard during the 2 days had fired us up. We did in fact become not just 5 years younger but a lot more maybe 10 to 15 years younger.

After prayer we started singing and dancing in the bus and enjoying ourselves. We reached the Joe Beach resort and were greeted there by the manager. He told us the story of the Joe Beach resort and explained the setting – that the back of the resort was open to the sea, the Bay of Bengal. They allotted two rooms and we could not wait to go and dip our feet in the sea water. It was just great, good and refreshing – open space, feel of the sea and the sea breeze. We spent time in the water and then relaxed on the lawn that faced the sea and breathe in and filled our lungs with unpolluted air. Just marvelous.



**Reported by
Srs. Deanna
and Rosily**

To top this, we had a sumptuous and tasty meal, so many items that we could not do justice to it all. Having had our fill, we went to rest for some time - afternoon nap is healthy and advised. We went back to the lawns facing the sea and enjoyed some games that we thought out by the entertainment team. We enjoyed ourselves and had good fun and laughs and each of us received a gift.

We had tea and left the resort really refreshed and rejuvenated. Thanks to all who planned this outing and the sponsors. May God bless them.

