

## Notre Dame at National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) in Solapur



January 23, 2022, is a historic day for the Sisters of Notre Dame of Our Lady of the Visitation Province, Bangalore. We have been visited by the gracious generosity of God in the form of starting our 16<sup>th</sup> foundation in the Diocese of Pune, Maharashtra, India. The invitation to begin a mission of the Sisters of Notre Dame on the campus of the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) in Solapur became a reality on this day.

In the early 1900's, the Right Rev. Heinrich Doring, Archbishop of Poona (1907 – 1925) and brother to Sister Maria Servatia Doring, used to visit her in our Notre Dame Generalate which was at that time in Mühlhausen, Germany. Every time he visited the Motherhouse, he invited Mother Maria Cecilia Roman, the Superior General, to begin a Notre Dame India Mission in the Diocese of Poona. It took over 112 years for this invitation to be actualized in the Diocese of Poona on January 23, 2022. May all those who went before us with great hope and trust in the good and provident God intercede for blessings on our mission in the diocese of Poona.

On January 14, 2022, the pioneer Sisters were missioned to SND NTPC Solapur in a very meaningful and spirit-filled prayer service. Most of the required items were sent by a truck from the Provincial House to Solapur by the evening of the same day. Sisters Mary Chetana, Satya, Ranjana, Shyni, Roja and Manjukta went by train on the following day, January 15, 2022 to Solapur. After 14 hours of travel, we reached our destination and went into quarantine for the next two days at the NTPC Guest House.

In the meantime, Sisters Mary Alpana, Divya, and Rosilin got ready to set out from Bangalore for Solapur on January 20, 2022, by a vehicle with the more precious things like the tabernacle, cross, statues of Mary and Joseph to be taken to NTPC Solapur. By January 21st, they joined the Sisters at the guest house and stayed indoors as much as possible.

Sisters Mary Aneeta and Shylaja started their trip from Vasai, Maharashtra on January 20<sup>th</sup> at 11 pm. They joined the Sisters at the now popular NTPC guest house on the 21<sup>st</sup> by 8 am. The joy and excitement that radiated in each of our hearts was made visible by our smiles, hugs, and “WELCOME” that echoed through the hall.

The next five days, January 18 to 22, saw the Sisters washing, cleaning, scrubbing the floor, doors, and windows, unpacking, shopping, and setting up the Chapel, dining room, community room, and the individual rooms in BLOCK C 4- Quarters 001 & 002 of the NTPC complex. This indeed is an experience that will remain etched in our memories and treasured in our hearts. Everything was in perfect order as we awaited the arrival of Rev. Fr. Louis D’Mello, our Parish Priest, to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and to bless the new Notre Dame Convent where the Eucharistic Lord will be the Heart and Centre of our lives.

Sunday, January 23, 2022, dawned bright and beautiful. It seemed all nature joined us in praise and thanksgiving for the gift of this long-awaited day. The arrival of Rev. Fr. Louis D’Mello, the Parish Priest of Solapur at Notre Dame Convent at NTPC, Solapur, marked the beginning of the reign of our Eucharistic Lord in our Convent home and among us.

The solemnity of the occasion commenced with the blessing of the beautiful ornate Tabernacle placed on a carved wooden circular stand. Every item required for the Mass was on the altar to be blessed and consecrated. Salt and water were blessed and Fr. Louis went in and out of every room to ensure the blessing of our Almighty God all-around our home. A meaningful, joyful, and highly spiritual Mass was offered by Fr Louis. Everyone felt so blessed and most grateful to God and to Sister Mary Chetana together with her team at NTPC. This was the first-ever Holy Mass offered on this campus and we consider it to be a most significant and singular blessing to have the Eucharistic Presence with us all the time. Many great and greater blessings await us as we bear witness to our Eucharistic Lord in our mission in NTPC Solapur and all around us.