



Nazareth Sr. Jincemol Chacko, chief therapist of the Nazareth Nature Cure Centre, conducts a yoga session for the participants. (Thomas Scaria)



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A few months ago, Sidharth Jayakrishnan underwent a nature-based treatment at the center managed by the Nazareth Sisters in Kunnoth, a village in Kerala state.

He is among more than 10,000 people who have achieved holistic recovery at the Nazareth Nature Cure Centre in the past nearly four decades, said Nazareth Sr. Jincemol Chacko, the chief medical officer.

Jayakrishnan, an advertising and information technology expert, was recently able to travel to New Delhi to join thousands of young people to protest the Indian government's education policy.

"I would not have been able to attend the Gen Z protests if I had not taken a holistic therapy and regained my strength at the Nazareth Nature Cure Centre," the 26-year-old Hindu youth told Global Sisters Report on his return to Bengaluru.

Surrounded by misty hills and greens, visitors to Nazareth Nature Cure Centre are greeted with the slogan "Returning to Nature is Returning to God."

"This slogan has helped us promote a drugless therapy to cure ailments since 1987," Chacko, who was trained in naturopathy in Karnataka, told GSR.



The newly built Nazareth Nature Cure Centre with modern facilities that can treat 50 patients at a time at Kunnoth, Kerala state in southwestern India. (Thomas Scaria)

The 36-year-old nun said the center uses naturopathy, "guided by God's grace and providence" to provide holistic healing.

She said their patients have disorders such as hypertension, anxiety, depression and other medical issues.

"Our naturopathy treatment helps them return to normal life," Chacko said.

Jayakrishnan, who underwent a three-week course at the center in early 2026, said he was a victim of work stress, unfinished goals and fast food.

"Initially it was difficult for me to adjust to a slow life, but gradually I became closer to nature and started experiencing true healing," he said.

Chacko said they create "a center of peace, wellness and divine happiness where people can heal naturally and rediscover balance in body, mind and spirit."

The Nazareth Sisters were founded in 1975 by Bishop Sebastian Valloppilly of Tellicherry, who was a proponent of a drugless and nature-based lifestyle, said Sr. Anila John Pathippallil, who has served the center for two decades.

"Our vocation and charism are linked to nature," said Pathippallil, who is in charge of various therapies in the center.



Sr. Anila John Pathippallil applies herbal medicine for knee pain on a patient at Nazareth Nature Cure Centre at Kunnoth, Kerala state in southwestern India. (Courtesy of Jincemol Chacko)

The Nazareth Sisters first set up a nature cure clinic in the 1980s to treat mostly rural children who suffered from various respiratory infections, malaria and fever.

"Natural herbal medicines really helped them recover fast, which encouraged us to establish a naturopathy clinic at our mother house in Kunnoth, which grew to the present center with capacity to accommodate nearly 50 patients at a time," Pathippallil said.

The diocese's social work department aided the center's launch in 1987 while Gabriel Br. Mathew Kavunkal from Rome funded the center's initial construction. A new building with more accommodation facilities and therapy space was inaugurated two years ago.

Pathippallil, said the center is in line with the "simple lifestyle" of Valloppilly, popularly known as the "father of farmers."

The bishop was "a great follower of Mahatma Gandhi, who popularized naturopathy in India," the nun told GSR.

Chacko says real health is a harmonious combination of body, mind and soul.

Naturopathy, she said, is based on "panchabhoot," which refers to five basic elements of creation in Indian philosophy and Hinduism: earth, sky, water, fire and air.

"We use mud therapy to bring persons closer to the earth and absorb toxins and cool the body, water therapy to boost circulation and digestion, sun baths for metabolic stimulation, breathing exercises to regenerate vitality, and fasting or diet food to give space to heal," Chacko said.

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The center follows a flexible time table which gives space for balanced food, spiritual practices, massages, steam baths, sauna baths, mud therapy, sun baths, yoga and other nature-based treatments without using any drugs or medicines.

She said several priests and nuns come to their center to "rejuvenate themselves."

One of them, Fr. Michael Sebastian, a diabetic patient who underwent a 10-day holistic package in July, said the center gave him "a perfect blend of a spiritual retreat and treatment at the same time."

Sebastian, a member of the Congregation of the Sons of the Immaculate Conception, celebrated Mass for the nuns and patients. "The center provided holistic health to my body, mind and soul," he told GSR.

"I celebrate Mass every day for the sisters and the inmates, and they nurture in me a state of well-being and holistic health," he said.

Sr. Smitha George, the center's administrator, said a six-member team of sisters and trained therapists manage the treatment which is recognized by the federal government's Ayush Ministry.

"Naturopathy at our center focuses on identifying the root causes of illness, detoxifying the body, and restoring health, balance and vitality through natural therapeutic methods," George told GSR.



Nazareth Sr. Jaseentha Sebastian, superior general, has a discussion with Sr. Jincemol Chacko, chief therapist of the Nazareth Nature Cure Centre, at their generalate in Kunnoth, Kerala state in southwestern India. (Thomas Scaria)

Sr. Jaseentha Sebastian, the congregation's superior general, said they took up nature cure as a mission and ministry which underlines the fact that returning to nature is returning to God, the real healer.

"Those who come here are helped to restore their balance in life and attain a true human well-being," she told GSR.

She said most people have lost their balance in life by moving away from nature and adapting to a fast life with fast food, too much dependence on electronic devices, less sleep and work stress.

More than 150 nuns of the congregation, attached to several parishes, are involved in the holistic ministry in various ways, Sebastian added.

Abdul Khader, a Muslim who underwent nature therapy at the center, told GSR that he experienced a great time at the center with Hindu, Muslim and Christian companions.

Franciscan Missionary Br. Philip Kallikattu, another patient, too liked the community living experience at the center.

"The sisters give personal care to everyone and the various therapies not only heal, but teach a nature-based lifestyle," said Kallikattu, who was able to control his diabetes and hypertension.