

EDITORIAL

TO EDUCATE INSTRUCTING And TO INSTRUCT EDUCATING

Many are the events that occurred in the world, in the Church, in the Congregation during these last months. Our bulletin "Pace e Bene" reports some of the significant ones in the life of the Congregation. The letter of Pope Benedict XVI, on "the urgent duty of education", introduces a topic that implicates to all, particularly we who are called to the same duty by our specific charismatic identity. The response to the "educational emergency" has been assumed in the meeting that took place at Santiago in Chile with the title "Educate the Gospel truth in love and promoting peace and joy" in which the representatives of the educational activities of all the Organism participated. We find in this bulletin an ample explanation of the meeting which recalls the charismatic journey of the Congregation during these 147 years of life. It has taken into consideration the present educational emergency and has promoted the updating of the Educational Project of the congregation according to the times. The Franciscan life in the Church gives us continually motive of updating and spiritual renewal. On the occasion of the approaching celebration of the V111 centenary of the approval of the Rule written by St. Francis and of the birth of the Franciscan Order, the representatives of the Clarist Sisters of the whole world gathered together at As-



sisi for the first time in the history. Care and Francis with their example of life indicate us a journey of donation to God, unmistakable, who fulfils by means of a choice of faith witnessed in the capacity of detaching from the world and from everything what is dominated in the culture of today. In this "Pace e Bene" it is recalled in a very brief way the important meeting of the Extended General Council celebrated in India in December 2007. As it is mentioned in the proceedings and leaflet which is sent to every sister at that time, this significant meeting has been reaffirmed the commitment to render always more unanimous even in the diversity of the culture, the charismatic identity and the commitment to stimulate the missionary spirit, the fraternal life, the formation in response to the numerous challenges of our time.

It is always a motive of joy for all the celebration of the religious Professions of eight new sisters whom the Lord has given us in different continents. The short biography of the sisters who have left us are the rich expressions of hope and of the lived faith. With this concludes our bulletin. The past and present life of the Congregation is of symbol and nourishment to continue the common journey and to set up new ways which is born from the foundational charism and they are always nurtured.

WALKING WITH THE CHURCH...



BENEDICT XVI AND THE URGENT ROLE OF EDUCATION

On Saturday 23 February 2008, the Holy Father Benedict XVI, greeting the faithful gathered in St Peter's Square, presented and delivered to the diocese of Rome his "*Letter on the urgent task of educating young people*".

Although the document is addressed especially to those who are responsible for education in the diocese of Rome, it undoubtedly elicits our common attention and reflection, also as a sign of solidarity and sincere sharing. That is why we quote some of the passages of the presentation of the letter to the faithful in St Peter's Square:

"We are motivated by a worry: the perception of what we have called "a great educational emergency". **Educating has never been an easy undertaking and seems to be becoming increasingly difficult today**; thus, many parents and teachers are tempted to give up their task and do not even succeed in understanding what the mission entrusted to them truly is. Indeed, too many uncertainties, too many doubts are circulating in our society and our culture, too many distorted images are transmitted by the media. It thus becomes difficult to propose to the new generations something valid and reliable, rules of conduct and worthwhile objec-

tives to which to devote one's life. We are here today, however, also and above all because we feel sustained by a great hope and strong trust: by the certainty, that is, that the clear and definitive "yes" which God in Jesus Christ has said to the human family (cf. II Cor 1: 19-20), is also valid for our boys and girls and young people, valid for our babies who today are at the beginning of life. Therefore, it is also possible to teach goodness in our time; it is a passion we must carry in our hearts, a common enterprise to which each one is called to make his own contribution.



... we wish to respond to that **educational question felt by parents** who worry about their children's future, **teachers who are living the school crisis from within, priests and catechists** who know from experience how difficult it is to teach the faith, and the children, adolescents and young people themselves who do not want to be left on their own to face life's challenges... I address each one of you in order to offer you my affectionate encouragement to take on joyfully the responsibilities the Lord entrusts to you, so that the great heritage of faith and culture which is the truest treasure of this beloved city of ours may not be lost in passing from one generation to the next, but on the contrary, be renewed and invigorated and serve as a guide and incentive on our journey towards the future.

... I ask you, teachers at different kinds of schools, **to have a lofty and great conception of your demanding work** despite the difficulties, misunderstandings and disappointments that you meet with all too often. In fact, teaching

means satisfying that desire to know and understand that is inherent in man and which in the child, adolescent and young person is expressed in its full force and spontaneity. Your task, therefore, cannot be limited to providing notions and information, leaving aside the important question concerning truth, above all that truth which can serve as one's guide in life. Indeed, you are properly qualified educators: the noble art of forming the person is entrusted to you, in close sympathy with parents.

In particular, those who teach in Catholic schools bear within them and express in daily action that educational project centred on the Lord Jesus and his Gospel.

And you, dear priests and Religious, catechists... Be trustworthy friends, therefore, in whom young people may tangibly feel Jesus' friendship for them, and at the same time be sincere and courageous witnesses of that truth which sets us free (cf. Jn 8:32) and points out to the new generations the path that leads to life.

Education, however, is not only the work of educators: **it is a relationship between people** in which, as they grow older, the freedom and responsibility of those who are educated comes increasingly into play. I therefore turn with deep affection to you, children, adolescents and young people, to remind you that you yourselves are called to be the architects of your own moral, cultural and spiritual growth. It is up to you, therefore, **to freely accept in your hearts, your minds and your lives, the patrimony** of truth, goodness and beauty which has taken shape in the course of centuries and whose cornerstone is Jesus Christ."

Sister Antonietta Pozzebon

"Education is not only the work of educators: it is a relationship between persons..."



WALKING WITH THE FRANCISCAN FAMILY...

ONE CHARISM

On 28 January 2008, the Minister General OFM Fr **José Rodríguez Carballo**, addressing the **Clarisse Sisters who had gathered for a meeting in Assisi**, focused on some aspects of “Franciscanism” that can also be useful to our reflection.

He says “It is was the right occasion first of all to share our faith and become pilgrims in the places that keep the original fascination of our charism alive... express all our love and thanks to the Lord for calling us to follow him on the trail that St Francis and St Clare blazed for us”. Fr Carballo stressed the fact that the meeting took place just when the Friars Minor are preparing to celebrate the **eight centennial of the approval of the Rule written by Francis** and they, the Poor Sisters, move towards the **eight centennial of foundation of their second Order**. He dwelled first of all on the “thanksgiving, together with you, to the Father of mercy, to our Donor, for everything we receive daily from Him, but above all for the gift of our vocation to holiness, by contemplating the face of our Lord Jesus Christ and following in his footsteps in holy unity, in minority and poverty. This was the Lord’s revelation to Francis and, through him, to Clare as well (see *TestsC* 2 and 5).

Theirs was a vocation that was shared right from the start, even before the Lord gave Francis some brothers... Clare herself felt bound

to remember that fundamental moment of her life both in her Testament and at the centre of the Rule she wrote: «After the most high heavenly Father saw fit in his mercy and grace to enlighten my heart, that I should do penance according to the example and teaching of our most blessed father Francis, a short while after his conversion, together with my sisters, I willingly promised him obedience» (*R&C* VI,1; cf *TestsC* 24-25).

With this gesture Clare comes to be part of the *fraternitas* with every right and to share, just as the Friars did, Francis’ *forma vitae* (form of life), although she lived it in a way that was different from that of the other Brothers. ...It was, therefore, **one fraternity in which each individual, having chosen to live according to the perfection of the Holy Gospel, in obedience to the Spirit, made it come true in the service and fidelity to the Holy Church, but through his/her own lifestyle**. At the beginning, this charismatic communion must have been so evident that Celano himself, a few years later, wrote that «only one spirit made those friars and poor women leave this world » (*2Cel* 204).

The ways, so different and yet so similar in their radicality and passion, with which St Francis and St Clare lived their call, have fascinated many men and women of every social condition, race and culture. For eight centuries of history, priests, religious and laypeople, belonging to the great

Franciscan Family, kept taking that precious and binding legacy to «live according to the example of the Holy Gospel», and witnessed it in the Church and to the world.

Therefore, like them, **we too are called to a spirituality of communion**, first of all because the charisma that we have embraced is born from communion, sharing and participation... To live the Gospel as Franciscans means, therefore, make this common **charismatic** belonging visible, in which the **fundamental** reciprocity becomes a stimulus to support our particular differences in order to express and share all the richness and beauty of our form of life.

In order to implement this exchange, it is indeed indispensable to know what we have to offer, that is, to be increasingly aware of the call that we received. As a matter of fact, we have, before God, the responsibility to look constantly for the meaning of our vocation, «for which, all the more by way of its being more perfect and greater, do we owe the greatest thanks to Him. Therefore the Apostle writes: “Know your vocation”»

*“Fear and honour,
praise and bless,
thank the Lord,
God almighty in the
Trinity and in the Unity
Father, Son and Holy Spirit
Creator of all things”*



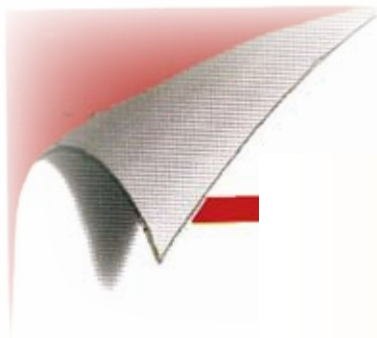
(TestsC 3).

This is the big challenge that our life faces continually. We can find the question that lies at the beginning of Francis' conversion also at the start of every single day: «Lord, what do you want me to do?». How can we live our vocation for it

to be meaningful? Ours is a time of questions and doubts. The people that turn to us, the environment in which we live, the Church itself

often become enigmas for us, which shake our certainties and question our lifestyle. We must not fear this, but like Francis in front of the Crucifix, we must ask for «wisdom and perception» (PCr 5), to be able to live with the “discernment” that Clare asked so much from her Sisters. It consists in being able to discern what is necessary from what is superfluous, always going back to the essential: «because by divine inspiration you have made yourselves daughters and servants of the Most High King, the heavenly Father, and have taken the Holy Spirit as your spouse, choosing to live according to the perfection of the holy Gospel» (RsC 6,3)”.

Sr Antonietta Pozzebon



THE GRACE OF THE ORIGINS

FROM THE MUSEUM OF “ST MARY OF THE ANGELS” MOTHER HOUSE
(Continuation...)

Laura Leroux: THE PASSIONIST EXPERIENCE (1856 -1859)

On 21 May 1855, Laura left Paris and moved to the south of France, attracted by the desire of a spiritually richer life. Near Bordeaux, she hoped to start a new Institute of Carmelite Tertiaries, but the project was not approved by the ecclesiastical and religious authorities.

During the month of May 1856, followed by a small group of five French and Swiss aspirants, Laura left France and, in the month of September of the same year, she arrived in Rome. Here, she came into contact with the Passionist Fathers and started a new foundation of Passionist Tertiary Sisters, but the necessary approval by the Church was late.

This second stage in the life of our Foundress is documented by some objects about which the information we have is not complete. However, we can associate them with the Passionist experience of Mother Giuseppa and her first disciples.



E. PIETRO PAULO

Devout Exercise for St Therese of Jesus' novena

Published by Merletti in Venice, 1756

The book recalls Laura Leroux's adhesion to the Carmelite spirituality. In 1855, she tried to found an Institute of Carmelite Tertiaries.

DOCUMENT CERTIFYING THE AGGREGATION OF SR MARIA GIUSEPPA OF JESUS AND HER FIRST DISCIPLES TO THE ORDER OF PASSIONISTS

Rome, 28 April 1857

Issued by Antonio di S. Giacomo, General Provost of the Order of Passionists.



WRITING BY THE PASSIONIST PRIEST CIRILLO MARIA DI S. PIETRO

Rome, 29 June 1859

In the text there is the following passage in Latin: “*what had been omitted in the Baptism of Mrs M J Laura Leroux de Bauffremont, in her private chapel, under mandate from His Most Reverend Eminence Cardinal Patrizi, Vicar of the City, was duly completed on 29 June 1859.*”

We suppose that the document was needed by our Foundress who, in the absence of a certificate of Baptism, was able to demonstrate her Catholic status, since she had to travel across Protestant countries.



BOOK REFERRING TO THE PASSIONIST EXPERIENCE OF OUR FOUNDESS AND HER FIRST DISCIPLES.

The first page of the book is missing. The place and date of publishing are not indicated.

It is a book of great value both from a historic and artistic point of view. The binding and paging were made following the suggestions of the customer, who had parts drawn from five books of different periods gathered in one volume.

In the pages, there are notes written in French, among which we can read: “*What holiness and what union there is between the Mother and the Son! How much Jesus loved Mary and how much Mary loved Jesus! Af. Ch. Rome, 25 Sept.*”.

The book is enriched with engravings that depict episodes from the Gospel, images of Saints among which three portraits of St Paul of the

Cross stand out.

At the four corners of the covers, the coat of arms of the Passionists (at the centre) and the instruments of the Passion of Jesus are dry printed.

COAT OF ARMS OF THE PASSIONISTS

Two-colour embroidery on fabric
Six of them are kept in the museum.



STATUE OF ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS



Wooden sculpture

It is a big statue that stood in a hall of the Convent. In the first half of the twentieth century it was replaced by the statue of St Francis.

Originally its colour was deep brown, then it was painted using the present colour. This has changed the original aspect of the statue, especially the expressiveness of the face.

It is interesting to note that every stage of the beatification process for this Saint is documented by some objects: the book *Life of the Venerable Servant of God, Fr Paul of the Cross*, published in Rome by Lazzarini in 1786; on the pedestal of the statue there is an inscription: “Blessed Paul of the Cross”; some printings feature Paul of the Cross in the glory of Saints.

LETTERS WRITTEN BY ST PAUL OF THE CROSS

The Saint, who was born in

1694 and died in 1775, deserves a special attention not only because he was the founder of the Passionists, but also as one of the most famous mystics of the Church. Three periods may be distinguished in his mystical life: from 19 to 31, he reached all the degrees of contemplation and attained the spiritual “nuptials”; from 31 to 76, he experiences inner martyrdom, darkness, desolation and sharing in Jesus’ abandonment on the Cross; from 76 to his death, his sufferings diminish and he begins to foretaste the joys of heaven.

The letters in our possession can be situated in the transition between the second and the last period of St Paul of the Cross’ spiritual life. Indeed, he describes that is he experiencing “sufferings”, “trials of God”, “aridity” and “desolations” but, at the same time, he expresses the sweet comfort of faith and contemplation, which are “like drops of precious balm”.

Here are some quotes from the:

- Letter of 10 February 1767, sent to Paolo Giacinto, deacon in St Angiolo:

“...Please, please, devote yourself increasingly and voluntarily to the practice of every virtue while you are young, because the cold of old age makes the leaves fall and those who have done nothing in youth, shall do nothing when they are old”...;



- Letter of 27 June 1769, sent to his brother Fr Luigi in Paliano:

“.....I tell you that in order to reach perfection and the union with God, we need the sufferings and the trials of God that His Divine Majesty uses to bestow his servants by means of aridity, desolation and other troubles, which, if they are suffered with resignation to the Divine Will, purify the soul as the fire does with gold, and make it willing to fly high to the Supreme Good. Therefore, patiently suffer aridity in prayer; keep dedicating to it the fixed amount of time, take no heed of temptations and suggestions from the infernal enemy but despise them and chase them away as you do with flies, and do not worry nor be troubled by those nuisances, but rather abandon yourself to God... In your studies, form time to time revive the faith in the Divine Presence within you, and with sweet affection and holy Love thrust yourself into the Divine Bosom of the Heavenly Father and rest there like a baby, but then keep studying faithfully and diligently, since when we study it is not time to pray, and it would be a temptation to put off studying to pray: rather, it is a very good rule to elevate from time to time our mind to God, by some prayer or ejaculation, as the Saints used to do, and then go on studying with much attention and diligence”.





CROWN WITH THE EFFIGY OF ST PAUL OF THE CROSS

Ivory

OUR LADY OF SORROWS

The painting is a colour reproduction on glass of a charcoal drawing of Our Lady of Sorrows, the copy of an ancient and precious painting that the Foundress kept always as her private



property.

Sr Lilia Nascimbeni wrote that: *“The afflicted starters of the Institute invoked Our Lady or Sorrows’ help and comfort and, in front of the copy of the precious ancient painting, exposed on the Holy Sepulchre on Holy Friday, all those present in St Mary of the Angels gathered for the act of special consecration to She who had adopted them as daughters in times of such extreme distress; in this way, they perpetuated a tradition that was born with the Institute itself”.*

The original charcoal drawing was placed by the duchess herself in the Chapel of Our Lady of Sorrows, that was later named Chapel of the Sacred Heart (1905).

The painting was later moved to the Sisters’ Choir, but, adds Sr Lilia, *“since the restoration of the Choir required harmony in placing the sacred images... the charcoal drawing of Our Lady immediately looked out of place beside the nice Sacred Heart and St Anthony, which were oil painted. Therefore, an attempt was made at reproducing Our Lady in colour on the glass that covered it. As it miraculously looked very similar to the original, the black image was brought back to the small Chapel of the Sacred Heart, at its original place.*

PASSPORTS OF :

SR MARIE ROSE BERAUD (1839-1872)

“ She was welcomed by the Foundress in 1858 with the formal promise that her desire to be a missionary in distant regions would be satisfied”.

She followed the Duchess, first as a Passionist, then as a Franciscan sister. She first donned the religious habit on 19 November 1860.



She kept her own Christian name in religion.

In the passport we read: *“Beraud Marie Rose, religious, born in Palud (Vaucluse), who is going to France. This passport is issued in Rome, on 22 September 1860 upon deposit of a passport issued in Marseille on 4 October 1859.”*

The first visa was issued by the French Embassy in Rome on 9 October 1860 and was valid for Venice. The series of journeys ended with the visa of Dresden for Amsterdam on 26 October 1867.

The booklet was printed in Rome by Vincenzo Vesci.



SR LUDOVIQUE STADLER (LUISE STADLER, 1839-1868).

She was one of the first disciples of the Duchess. She followed her first as a Passionist and later became a Franciscan sister. The first visa was issued on 15 September 1858 by the Apostolic Nunciature in Switzerland and was valid for the Papal State. The last registered date is 12 October 1860.



SR MARGUERITE WEBER

Joséphine Weber was born in Lucerne in 1854. She and her sister Camille (who would too become a Franciscan sister by the name of Sr Laurence), when they were six and four, were given by their parents to the Duchess, who had offered to be their guardian, and were to be entrusted to the orphanage that had been planned in Rome, in the Celio neighbourhood.

She professed in 1874 and died in Gemona in 1900.

The first document was issued in 1858 by the Apostolic Nunciature in Switzerland and was valid to travel into the Papal State. The series of journeys ended with the visa of Verona for Gemona on 21 October 1860.

It is worth to make it clear that the relations with the Passionists, especially with Fr Cirillo Chino, were kept alive even after the departure of the Foundress up to the 1880s, both by several sisters, including Mother Angela, and by Fr Gregory, who often exchanged letters with him.

Sister Ernesta Bilibio



LIFE OF THE CONGREGATION

Activity of the General Council November 2007 – june 2008

The General Council, following the instructions of the 2005 Capitular Document and the six-year programme, went on with its activity, paying special attention to the vitality of the charism of each Institute of the Congregation. In particular:

1. In November, special care was placed in the preparation for the **first religious Profession** of the three young women from the Interprovincial Novitiate in ViOLE di Assisi: **Mara Lorenzet, Julija Lukauskaite and Federica Imperatore**. The celebration took place in the General House on 17 November 2007; the three young sisters' mothers were attending too.
2. In December 2007 the **Extended General Council** took place in India, in the presence of the Provincial Superiors and the Regional Superior; there followed a visit to the "Holy Family" Province's flourishing communities in Andra Pradesh, in Kerala and in Tamil Nadu (see article).
3. It is with joy and living hope that the General Council confirmed **the admission to Perpetual Profession of Sr Katherine Siegel** from "St Francis" American Province.
4. On several occasions, the General Council dedicated itself to the organization of the meetings planned for 2008:
 - **the educator sisters meeting in Santiago, Chile**, which took place from 27 March to 26 April and was followed by a visit to the "St Anthony" Province communities that carry out educational activities;
 - **the course of renewal for the sisters** who celebrate their jubilee of religious life, from 6 to 20 July in Rome, in the General House;
 - **the second meeting of the historic-formative committee**, which will take place from 6 to 19 September and will also include participation in a special memorial day in Grotte di Castro, in honour of our founder Gregorio Fioravanti.
5. - At the end of the educator sisters meeting, the Superior General, Sr Emmapia Bottamedi, travelled Latin America, and namely Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile, for the canonical visit to all "St Anthony" Province communities and returned to Rome on 2 June.

6.

- As a sign of hope for the vitality of the Congregation, the general Council approved the opening of a **new community in the “Holy Family” Province, in Changland, in the State of Arunachal Pradesh** and Diocese of Miao, in north-eastern India, bordering China and Myanmar (in English: Burma). The sisters, who arrived in “Assisi Nilaya” new mission on 24 May, devote themselves to the first evangelization, to education in the diocesan school, to curing the poor and to the parish pastoral.
- in answer to the call of the Church and to the emerging needs of our time, the Council approved the **opening of “Laura Leroux” new community in “St Anthony” Latin American Province**, in Tijuana, Mexico, in a border area where the poor take refuge in search of better life conditions, by migrating into the United States. According to the rich tradition of our religious Family, the sister who will go to this new mission next August will devote themselves to evangelization, by assisting the Franciscan Fathers in the school and in the parish and youth pastoral.
- We have always nurtured the desire to be present in the native village of our founder, Fr Gregorio Fioravanti, and in the last few general Chapters we warmly hoped that we would be able to set up a **new community in Grotte di Castro** (province of Viterbo). The local priests too have repeatedly asked for the presence of sisters from the congregation founded by their illustrious fellow-citizen. Next September, the community in Grotte di Castro will be set up under the authority of the General Council. The sisters will devote themselves to the parish and youth pastoral and to assisting the old.

7.

- On request from “St Mary of the Angels” Venetian Province, the Vicar General, Sr Cecilia Subiabre, held a formative meeting for the sisters of the Province, by offering her reflexions on the theme of community life.
- The General Councillor, Sr Germana Tomat, went on a visit to Cameroun on 24 June in order to bring, by her presence and her words, fraternal support to the sisters in “Saints Martyrs of Uganda” apostolic Region.

8. In “St Anthony” Latin American Province, Sr Roxana Zapata was confirmed as Novitiate Mistress and Sr Fabiola Parra was confirmed as Pre-Novitiate Mistress.

9. The General Council has authorized the closure of the community in Paularo (province of Udine) in “St Mary of the Angels” Venetian Province, and of the “Holy Family Convent” community in Staten Island, in “St Francis” American Province.

EXTENDED GENERAL COUNCIL



The celebration of the Extended General Council is an important and significant event in the life of the Congregation. As it is programmed in the year 2005, and it took place from 28th November to 28th December 2007 in the Holy Family Provincial house at Vijayawada in India, with the participation of the General Council members and the Provincial and Regional Superiors of all the organisms. The reception from the part of the sisters of the Indian Province has been very colourful and fraternal. The meetings have been initiated with solemn Eucharistic Celebration presided by the Bishop of Vijayawada, Most. Rev. Prakash Mallavarapu and participated by very many sisters who came from various communities.

The Superior General in her opening message, focussed on the topics on which would be concentrated for the reflection during the following days; The oriented reflections to be given to the whole Congregation; creative response, the faithfulness to evangelical values, openness towards the cry of the poor and the question of helping the children, youth and the families. Recalling the original charismatic project, she stressed the importance of the work of formative- historical commission for the deepening of the charism. Our charism which is specifically missionary from the very origin, demands today the availability to accept the plan of God in the emerging need of the present history. For this it is very important to give attention and care to the initial and permanent formation. From the charism flows out the everlasting sap which nourishes the frater-





nal life and solicits all to an effort more intense and felt in the pastoral youth animation. During the assembly of one week, sharing among the members of the Extended General Council based on the “outline work” was done with the exposition of the answers to the Questionnaire that was sent at that time. From the report of the Provincial and Regional Superi-

ors emerges a global evaluation on the important topics of our consecrated life such as:
-the spirituality lived and cultivated personally and in the community level;
-the missionary spirit which gave form to our life style, to our way of thinking and of being as FMSC,



which goes constantly revitalized;

-the fraternal life, the place of continual relational conversion, to lead to unity the cultural and social unity;
-the initial and permanent formation, an unavoidable commitment of every sister, to incarnate the charism today before a globalizing world to face in a positive way the challenges that she has.

It has been elaborated at the end the synthesis of the proposals emerged for a journey of renewed faithfulness to the charism and of creative openness to the signs of the times; the same work has been sent to all the sisters of the Congregation and brought back in this article. Therefore it is a plan of hope framed in the full trust in God, an intense discernment, reflection and sharing also have been done during these days. It is another mile stone that marks the way of life of the Congregation.

The Superior General, as a remembrance of this extra ordinary event, on behalf of the General Council has offered to the Indian Province a precious and significant Monstrance in neo-Gothic style, recalling our convent of Gemona, which is destroyed by the earthquake in 1976.

From 10 December until the day of return, the group of sisters who made up the extended Council visited the Province communities, met with all the Sisters, the staff that cooperates with them in the various activities, the children, as well as the young and old people who attend the schools, are welcomed in the hostels, in a rest home and in Kalipatnam hospital.

Everybody's joy was really great. It was due especially to the meeting, the exchange of experiences, the opportunity to see new realities that could previously only be imagined. The joy was increased by personal contacts, by the admiration of works that had been done under the guidance of the Divine Providence and made possible by the generous dedication of so many sisters who operate there. There were also natural beauties in this tropical land, where the vegetation is luxuriant and the landscapes are enchanting.

Among our most vivid memories, we may recall the visit to the tombs of our deceased sisters, to the Blessed Alfonsa sanctuary and to the places that commemorate the St Thomas' martyrdom.



EXTENDED GENERAL COUNCIL

INDIA - DECEMBER 2007



Sorelle carissime,

riunite in India nel Consiglio Generale Estesio, abbiamo condiviso le vostre attese e speranze, abbiamo riflettuto sulle problematiche emergenti attraverso le relazioni presentate da noi, Superiori provinciali e regionale.

Alla luce dello Spirito del Signore, abbiamo cercato insieme di discernere le linee comuni di vita e di spiritualità, secondo il nostro carisma, in risposta alle sfide che il mondo ci pone in questo nostro tempo.

Crediamo fermamente che il ritorno alle origini ci dà la chiave per ridonare vitalità alla nostra Congregazione, permettendo ad ognuna di sentirsi parte integrante ed attiva nella costruzione del Regno di Dio.

Nel richiamo al carisma originario, ancora una volta abbiamo messo in rilievo la bellezza dello spirito missionario continuamente da ri-incarnare e ri-esprimere e l'importanza della formazione permanente anche come supporto della formazione iniziale.

Vi proponiamo alcune sollecitazioni e proposte di vita per una riappropriazione della nostra identità carismatica, nella fiducia che si aprano orizzonti di speranza per ogni sorella e per ogni comunità.

*Suor Emmapia Bottamedi
Superiora generale*

sorelle del Consiglio Generale Estesio

Vijayawada, 9 dicembre 2007

CHARISMATIC IDENTITY

“The redemptive love of the Heart of Jesus Crucified is the unifying center of our being consecrated in fraternity to live and to work in an attitude of benevolence, minority and itinerancy” (Chapter Doc.2005).

To live the richness of our charismatic identity involves the responsibility:

- to accept with gratitude the original inspirational gift of the Foundress, Laura Leroux;
- to grow in the imitation of the virtues of our Founder, the Servant of God, Father Gregory Fioravanti Ofm;
- to reflect in us the heroic example of our pioneer Sisters in their own attitude of gratitude, sobriety and perseverance;
- to have the values of religious consecration with the characteristics of our own-joy, simplicity and hospitality;
- to orient the prayer according to our specific spirituality without deviation;
- to assume in every circumstance-either personal or missionary, the typical life style as the sign of community mandate.

MISSIONARITY

“The project of the Duchess was to found an Institute of Franciscan Tertiary Sisters with the two-fold purpose of instructing poor girls of the places where they would have a house and to give personal help to the Apostolic Missions” (F1 page 14).

The love of the Heart of Jesus Crucified drives us:

- to accept the brothers who are poor with the attitude of minority and benevolence;
- to take care of the least fortunate, sharing their condition;
- to witness to contemporary people the evangelical message as the answer to their need of God.

In the strength of our being missionary, we are called:

- to accept with availability our being sent;
- to face with faith and courage the risks and adversities;
- to be ready to the sacrifice and every privation;
- to use our natural gifts and grace with generosity and creativity.

FRATERNAL LIFE

“The Community is the privileged place for growth, for living in common and the center for all formation” (Ref FD page 12).

Called together to express the beauty of consecration, we are asked:

- to build authentic fraternal relationships, founded on the reciprocal gifts of ourselves;
- to overcome with faith and love the difficulties occurring from the differences of age, formation and of culture;
- to be, with our own fraternity, the sign of communion and vocational promotion.

CHALLENGES OF OUR TIMES

“ Starting afresh from Christ means, ultimately, following Him where He has made himself present in the work of salvation and living within the vast horizons opened by Him”

(Starting Afresh From Christ 40).

The appeal of the General Chapter of 2005 urges us to face with courage and hope the challenges of our times. We feel the necessity of:

- continuing the journey of interaction between the Organisms, as indicated in the General Chapter Document 2005 (Art., 5.2);
- intensifying the sharing of the charism with the laity and accepting with trust their real collaboration in our works;
- favoring new openings towards the new forms of evangelization, adequate to the requests of modern society (Chapter Doc. 2005, 7.2).

PERMANENT FORMATION

“There is a youthfulness of spirit which lasts through time ...The consecrated persons can never claim to have completely brought to life the new creature who, in every circumstance of life, reflects the very mind of Christ”
(CL 69,70).

To attain the full realization of our charismatic identity it is necessary:

- to commit oneself with faithfulness and steadfastness in the permanent formation, drawing in particular from our Rule of Life, Congregational sources and Project of Formation;
- to live in an attitude of conversion and docility to the Spirit, in obedience and in fraternal sharing.

COMMITMENT FOR THE FUTURE

The Spirit of the Lord guides us gradually to concretize our long-term aspirations matured through reflection and sharing.

We assume, in particular, the commitments:

- to stimulate and to spread the devotion to our Founder, Father Gregory Fioravanti Ofm;
- to urge the way to recognize his heroic virtues and for the beatification of Father Gregory;
- to prepare ourselves spiritually and to get ready for the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the canonical opening of our Institute;
- to open a Community at Grotte di Castro (VT).

EDUCATIONAL MEETING

A MEETING THAT TAKES US FAR...

The meeting “To educate by loving the Gospel’s truth and promoting peace and good” took place in Santiago del Chile from 27 March to 8 April 2008. Its aim was to reflect together on the problems of educating young people and bringing our Educational Project up to date. The participants were the Superior General Sr Emmapia Bottamedi, the Vicar general Sr. Cecilia Subiabre, coordinator of the meeting, the Councillors General Sr Paola Dotto and Sr Gracy Thuruthippallil, Sr Ines Pavan, Provincial Superior of the Latin American Province where the meeting was held, and 25 sisters coming from the various institutions and mostly heads of our schools.

It was a moment of grace and an extraordinary experience of fraternal life for all of us. 17 of us travelled from Rome and joined our sisters of the Latin American Province in a group made up of 30 people.

WEDNESDAY 26 MARCH

The group of educator sisters, accompanied by Sr Emmapia, the Superior General, and by the Councillors Sr Paola and Sr Gracy (17 in all), left Asisium at 4 p.m. and went to Fiumicino Airport, Rome. We reached our destination at 10 a.m., local time (2 p.m. in Italy). An hour later we managed to leave the airport... where Sr Cecilia Subiabre, the Vicar General, and Sr Ines Pavan, the Provincial Superior, Sr Antonina, other young sisters, the novices and the postulants welcomed us heartily. In the front hall, what a surprise, what a welcome! The pupils and teachers of Mother Cecilia Lazzari Institute (MCL) were waiting for us. The younger children (17 of them) were



holding a bowl full of flowers in their hands and were wearing a white and blue uniform with a small tie; the older ones, in uniform, arranged in 12 couples, danced for us the cueca, the Chilean traditional dance. Some teachers accompanied the joyful and measured steps of the dancers by playing tambourine, guitar and accordion. At the end, the smaller children offered each one of the newly arrived a bowl full of flowers. Chile welcomed us joyfully and with a colourful, “mucho cariño” spectacle. We were tired, moved and happy to meet our sisters, get acquainted with them and to be in Latin America.



TUESDAY 26 MARCH

Visit to the MCL (Madre Cecilia Lasserri) High School guided by the director, Sr Antonina. We had the impression that it was a very organized structure, which had developed over time. Everywhere we saw the staff's smiling and friendly faces. We first visited the administrative offices, the school direction, then the primary and secondary school and finally the nursery school. Each classroom was equipped with a TV set for projections, there were two computer classrooms with many PCs (the bigger one contained 45 of them). It was a donation from the parents' association. We realized that their participation to the school activity was quite important and valued. That's the way it was right from the start, said Sr Antonina. The

parents' committee carries out initiatives and collects money to purchase items that are useful for the school. We were amazed. Sr Anna Brustolini, the first director, had set up the work really well, then all the sisters who succeeded her went on, improving and enlarging. We felt at home, in a Franciscan environment. Statues of St Francis, white or coloured, welcomed us at the entrance of the school, in the church, in the novices' building, in the small chapel... The teachers and the parents have launched the "Francisco en la calle" (Francis in the street) initiative and are committed to preparing each Friday evening 70 warm meals for the city poor. The visit of the classrooms proceeded. Everywhere, we felt at home: the faces and smiles of the children and young people, their anxieties and expectations are part of our life and vocation. We stood in admiration and were moved at the entrance of the languages classroom, dedicated to Sr Ernesta Miglioranza, who died in a road accident in September 2000, in Rancagua, a few hundred meters away from home. A memorial plate commemorates her presence in this land which she loved so much and for which she sacrificed herself.



At 12.00 we met and officially greeted the teachers' representatives, the administrative staff and the pupils. They addressed to us a speech in Italian and offered us a personalized gift. Then we watched a short projection about the story of the MCL high school.

In the afternoon we visited the Novitiate and pre-novitiate with Sr Rossana and Sr Fabiola, the two formators. The building is nice and recently built, luminous, spacious, with wide verandas. It can host 24 young sisters. For now there are six of them: 2 from Chile, 3 from Peru and 1 from Ecuador. May the Lord endow us with many holy vocations... so that the charism may live on in the church, rather than the works... well, those too, if possible, added Sr Ines, but the priority is the charism.



THURSDAY 27 MARCH

At 8.30 we started the works of the meeting "To educate by loving the Gospel's truth and promoting peace and good". Opening speech, welcome greeting by Sr Ines Pavan, the Provincial Superior of the Latin American Province, practical notices, scheduling etc. are given. Then followed the introduction speech by the Superior General, Sr Emmapia Bottamedi, which contained a historical profile of the Congregation's educational activity, a deeply felt reference to the courageous and generous work of our first sisters and finally a quick analysis of today's educational emergency with some future perspectives.



At 10, there was the Mass for the opening school year and the meeting . It was held in MCL High School's big gymnasium-amphitheatre. It was a nice and solemn moment. The pupils, clad in blue uniform, white shirt and tie, stood on the packed terraces and greeted us with long applause. It was a strong emotion that we would experience again in Puerto Montt, Puerto Chico, Chochobamba, Santa Cruz and in the other schools... hundreds of pupils happy to welcome us, gathered around St Francis' ideal, open to the Gospel's message... we really were in a privileged place of

evangelization! The platform on which stood the altar was covered in flowers. The pupils choir sang songs that were appropriate to the different moments of the celebration, devoutly and accurately, which favoured meditation and prayer.

After Mass we were expected in the high school's big refectory. The teachers had prepared a reception for us, to show their affection and esteem and to offer us their "bienvenida".

Here, like in other places, we were impressed by the good taste and accuracy of the preparations. During the reception, some pupils and two teachers, accompanied by flutes, guitars and a violin, played pieces of classical music. It was the prelude to other musical moments that we would enjoy at Santa Maria de los Angeles high school in Arrian Barros, at Felmer Niklitscher in Santa Cruz and elsewhere. At the end there was an exchange of gifts:

In the afternoon we gathered in the meeting room. Sr. Cecilia suggested that each sister should introduce herself and talk about her meaningful experiences of life and apostolate. It was a very intense fraternal moment in which we shared our joys, difficulties and accomplishments and we also felt sympathy for the history of each one of us.

FRIDAY 28 MARCH

8.30 – 9.30 The personal introduction by each sister was completed.

10.30 – 12.30 Msgr Riccardo Ezzati, archbishop of Concepción, presented the theme "Educating today in an always changing globalized world"

15.00 – 17.00 Second part of the subject which was started in the morning. The presentation was clear, consistent and fascinating. It revealed a deep knowl-

edge of the subject, of pedagogy, of the problems faced by young people as well as of today's society. It must be pointed out that Msgr Ezzati is an Italian Salesian priest with a long experience as a high school director. What we listened to would help us very much in our reflections.

17.30 The pupils of MCL high school were waiting for us for a show organized in our honour. The Italian and Chilean flags and the high school banner paraded while the respective hymns were sung. Then there followed dances by small children and grown ups: it was a feast of colour and gracious movements. We applauded especially the small children from the nursery and primary school, who showed up with typical costumes from Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador! It was really beautiful!



SATURDAY 29 MARCH, 9.00 HRS

Sr. Cecilia Subiabre presented the theme "The Catholic school as today's privileged place of evangelization", divided into the following points:

- our tradition in education
- the FMSH educator
- attitudes and reactions in the face of today's problems
- the Pastoral vocation

Our sister expressed the basic principles of our vocation as Franciscan educators in a very convincing way. She urged us not to fear the challenges presented by today's society, but to arm ourselves with knowledge and attachment, increasingly convinced of our Franciscan charism.

Four working parties were set up to answer the questionnaire left by Msgr Ezzati. The questions were the following:

- Describe three spiritual attitudes that you consider essential to face the changing times in a Christian way.
- For each one of them, describe also the charismatic strengthening offered by your vocation as FMSH
- Your life and your mission take place in the contemporary world. In this context, which are the most urgent challenges that must be faced during the initial and permanent formation of your sisters?

Presentation of the answers resumed by each team. End of reading at 13.00

Sr Maria Oliva Pian presented the theme "Charismatic principles which inspire our educational mission as FMSH". The presentation was clear and thorough, based on the knowledge of inspirational and biblical documents, steeped in spiritual strength. Thank

you, sister, for being still so "valiente" and for standing in the breach!



SUNDAY 30 MARCH

At 9.15 we left with two small buses and a car for Our Lady of Mount Carmel Sanctuary in Maipù, in the suburbs of Santiago. The Holy Mass was celebrated at 10.00. The building is a national monument, which was erected by the Fathers of the Country to thank Our Lady of Mount Carmel, who was elected as the patroness of Chile after a victory that turned out to be decisive for the country's independence, credited to Mary's intercession.

In the afternoon, at 15.30, Fr Maria José Arnaiz, a Spanish Marianist Father, presented the theme "The educational community, a privileged place for the integral formation of the individual". He spoke about the educational community as a place of encounter. He fascinated and surprised us for over two hours by reviewing the various kinds of encounter that everybody experiences, no matter her origin and the depth of her encounter with herself and with God.



MONDAY 31 MARCH

In the morning, reading of the working tool, which had been drawn up based on the answers to the questionnaires that had been sent to all the Provincial communities. This document was the starting point and the basic instrument for the revision of the Educational Project.



In the afternoon, team work for the analysis of the proposals of amendments to be brought to the new document.

Sr. Fides and the Directive Committee of MCL High School presented the functions of its different parts: Director – Technical and pedagogical Unit (UTP) – Inspectorate – Orientation – Parents and tutors Centre. We were flattered and pleased to notice the effectiveness of the organization of schools in Chile.

We finished at 19.30. We were a little tired because of the intensity and pace of our work... and yet we had just started!

TUESDAY 1ST APRIL

The discussions, analyses and discussions in the groups went on for the whole day. The two secretaries, Sr. Antonella Lago and Sr. Paola Aita gathered the remarks from the teams, selected them and wrote down 11 points, which made up the

Draft of analysis for updating the Educational Project

- New poverties
- Educator's style - attitude
- Values to be nurtured
- Education to life and love
- Vocational Christian culture
- Inter-religious cultural dialogue
- Ethics of communication
- Quality education
- Cooperation with laypeople
- Education to families and with families
- Proposal of suitable quotations for each area of the new Educational Project



WEDNESDAY 2 AND THURSDAY 3 APRIL

The team research, analysis and discussion went on.

FRIDAY 4 APRIL

The works were suspended at 10.00 in order to enable us to go to "Colegio Santa Maria de los Angeles" at "paradero 28", as our sisters say. We were welcomed by Sr Mirta, Sr Attiliana, Sr Mercedes and Sr Petrona. The pupils and teachers were lined and ready to start the celebration. They smiled at us, hugged us, presented us with a rose and accompanied us into the large hall (gymnasium-amphitheatre). On both sides there was a multitude of pupils, many of whom dressed in brightly coloured costumes, waiting to present their show, as scheduled. The "acto" opened solemnly: the national anthems of Italy, Chile and of the various countries in which the FMSH operate were sung or played and the respective flags paraded, carried with great composure and patriotic spirit by the older pupils. The show went on with dances, skating, projections, pieces of classical music played by the school orchestra, directed by a teacher that looked like a true artist to us. Then there was the visit to the school. The library is dedicated to Sr Olga Lago, the first sister who died in the Latin American Province, in August 1983, while she was travelling to Italy. She had worked lovingly also in this school.

At 16.00 we went back home.

SATURDAY 5 APRIL



There was a solemn Mass to celebrate in advance Sr Emmapia's name day here in the Provincial House of Santiago. Indeed, on 19 April, the actual day, we would be visiting the different communities and schools of Latin America. The group secretaries went on with their work until late in the evening: they thought it right to write down all the new proposals beside the text of the previous Educational Project. In this way, working would be easier, as each sister would have an immediate perception of the changes brought to each paragraph and area.

SUNDAY 6 APRIL

We were allowed a day off. We left Santiago at 7.45 by coach. We first went to Valparaiso to see the pier and the most important port in Chile. Then we went on to Viña del mar, a city on the coast, which is called the garden city. Then we went to Quisco.

In this city overlooking the Pacific Ocean, 100 km away from Santiago, at about 10 minutes' walk from the beach, our sisters own two small wooden houses, which have been transported here from Santiago. Now they are used as a base for meetings of youth groups, retreats and also as a place of rest... when that is possible!

From there we went to Totoral, a small church in colonial architecture. There was an open-air Mass with a popular decoration due to the songs and dances at the end of the celebration. Many local faithful and the parish priest were waiting for the arrival of the "Quasimodo" volunteers. This is a widespread custom in Chile, which consists in going to the remotest countryside to bring Communion to the sick after Easter. Now it has taken an almost folkloristic character. Along the road we saw carts drawn by horses and men, women and children in multicoloured costumes with accordions, trumpets and religious ornaments.

Then we went to Isla Negra for a delicious and abundant fish-based lunch. This place is famous because it was chosen by Pablo Neruda as his favourite residence. In the afternoon we visited the poet's home-museum, which is now the property of the Pablo Neruda foundation. We learned that the poet considered himself a sailor on dry land. The house is full of mementos of his numerous trips. Here, Neruda found the liveliest inspiration for his verses... and now we understood why. The view fascinated us too: the waves billowed and foamed furiously, chased one another and then broke against the black rocks corroded by salt.

Our mind was fixed on the Pacific ocean, with the green, blue and white of its waters and the measured rumbling of its waves.

Then we went back to Quisco. Unfortunately, it was already late. Before leaving, we warmed ourselves with a good hot tisane. We came back to Santiago at 21.45.



MONDAY 7 APRIL

The works resumed. It was a really feverish day, with only one break for lunch. Indeed, we had to reread the text with the additions, amendments and suppressions that had been suggested by the different groups during the previous week. There were also moments of animated discussion between those who maintained that the Educational Project should remain a tool specially tailored for schools and those who insisted that it should include other institutions whose formative role we must recognize (family homes, hostels, boarding schools, charitable aid and also dispensaries). In the end we were unable to reach an unanimous conclusion; however, the

more specific terms referring to schools were cancelled and the final choice was put off until the final draft, to which the General Council is entitled.

Maybe it was only a question of wording, because actually we all want to be educators everywhere. There were fresh debates, precise statements, we added, we erased, we chose. We worked at a brisk pace: we wanted and had to come to the conclusion. We finished at 20.00.



TUESDAY 8 APRIL

At 7.00 there was the meeting closure Holy Mass. At the right of the altar, a composition displayed the flags of the States of the differ-

ent religious provinces, amid flowers, a globe and an ebony statue of the Virgin. At offertory, a sister for each Province would place a lit candle next to her own flag. Fr Jorge Concha, a Franciscan minor, presided; at the harmonium, the master Juan Carlos accompanied the songs performed by the choir of novices, postulants and young professed. We joyfully thanked the Lord for having offered us this opportunity to check and come to a new realization of our being FMSH educators. In the morning, the secretaries edited the draft of the new educational project according to the choices made by all the participants to the meeting. The remaining sisters watched some DVD which presented our educational institutions; other DVDs had already been viewed during some planned after-dinners. The images, statistics and explanations in the DVDs helped us form an idea of the way the organizations that we did not know yet worked. It was quite enriching.

At 11.00 we left for Rancagua for a visit to the community founded by Sr Francesca Bolognani, Sr Marcella, Sr Josephine and to the Santa Rosa of Lima College. Here too we were amazed and moved by the feisty and warm welcome from teachers, pupils and parents. A teacher presented each show with a very painstaking comment that stressed its deep meaning. Let us remind the dances, a very moving power point presentation about the comparison between wealth and poverty, the visit of Rancagua through images and then the wonderful voice of a girl singing and dancing in a Mexican costume... that helped us imagine the future mission of St Anthony Province, which will open shortly in Tijuana, Mexico, near the U.S. border.

At 15.00 we had a meeting with the president of the Bishops' Conference Msgr Alejandro Goic, who gave us an ample overview of the pastoral, the educational impact and the commitment of the Chilean church in today's complex social fabric.



WEDNESDAY 9 APRIL

At 7.30 we were at gate 26 of Santiago airport and half an hour later we took off for Puerto Montt. There were only 20 of us. The missionary sisters from Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador, as well as Sr Helene Martinez from the USA, were getting ready to go back to their communities that same day or the following day. We arrived in Puerto Montt in a downpour and cold wind. The sisters from the two communities were waiting for us. We immediately went to "Colegio Arriaran Barrios", where Sr Fides, Sr Rosamaria, Sr Rosa, Sr Consuelo and Sr Claudia work. The welcome was feisty. The first to give us a hearty welcome were the nursery school children, who tried the cueca dance, all dressed in costume; then there was the salute of the pupils' band and the blessing of the new pavilion by the Bishop. There followed a reception with the parents and part of the pupils. Later some pieces of classical music were played by a group of budding musicians, some of them quite young: we counted at least eight different types of instruments.

Next, we were invited for lunch in a typical restaurant with a wall wide view of the ocean and of incoming ships. We did not know whether we should look at the delicious and tasty salmon dish or at the natural beauty... A couple of former pupils cheered us up with Chilean songs and the cueca dance. When we went off at 17.00, we found out that the gravel in the car park was actually made of crushed shells. The weather had cleared up and we watched a still veiled sun slowly disappear behind the waters.





THURSDAY 10 APRIL

Today we visited “Colegio Felmer Niklitschek” in Puerto Chico. We immediately realized it was a tourist town. The sisters beamed when they saw us. We met again Sr Maria Oliva and were introduced to Sr Alicia, Sr Loreto, Sr Annapia and Sr Vittorina. Here too the band was waiting for us for a triumphal entrance into the hall where everything was ready for the show. We relived emotionally a tale that many of us had read in our childhood, “The Selfish Giant” by Oscar Wilde, played by the children and a high school student (the giant). Another performance staged St Francis’ choice of life for God and the poor. There followed dances and finally the school orchestra, already well manned, played pieces of

classical music, among which the chorus of Nabucco “Va Pensiero”, that was also sung by a group of pupils.

At 12.00 we went to church for Mass. The glass windows reminded us of the Canticle of Creatures, through simple line drawings that “can talk to children’s hearts”, said Sr Maria Oliva. We had lunch with the teachers and, as happened in every school, we tried to understand one another by using some Castilian word or the Italian words that are more similar to Spanish. Anyway, the principle is that language from the heart is always clear. In the afternoon we visited the area as tourists. We first went along the shores of lake Llanquihue, from which we could see very well the Osorno volcano, that had finally taken off its hat made of clouds, and the Calbuco volcano. On the other side of the street flows the river Petrohué among big rocks of crystallized lava, resulting from the erosion of the volcanoes. This river forms also some waterfalls, that we visited. We came to lake Todos los Santos or Lake Esmeraldo, from its intense green waters. On our way back, we had dinner in a farm-restaurant with natural homemade products. We came back home singing joyfully, especially Sr Loreto and Sr Annapia, the songs of childhood and enthusiasm “Sì lo giurai (Yes I swore it) – In casa madre din don dan (In the mother house ding dong) – Nome dolcissimo (Sweetest Name) – Squilla”

FRIDAY 11 APRIL

At 8.30 there was the Holy Mass in Collegio Arriaran Barrio, presided by the Bishop Msgr Cristián Caro Cordero. We had breakfast in the room that once was the dining room of the bishop’s seminar; from there, we enjoyed a view of the ocean and of the fishers’ houses, nestled on the rocks, in a still wild nature. The sun was shining in all its splendour. Puerto Montt showed us its two faces: humid-rainy and sunny. The ocean was a deep blue; we admired it along the path that skirts the shore, taking advantage of the warm sun. At 15.30 we were at the airport on our way to Santiago. We arrived home at 22.30. The planned evening in the Provincial Community came down to a hasty greeting, At 3.30 we had to leave again for the airport: destination Santa Cruz de la Sierra.

SATURDAY 12 APRIL

We took off on time at 6.30. There was a call at Iquique, the northernmost town of Chile, in the Atacama desert. During the five-hour flight from Santiago we enjoyed an unforgettable view. Underneath, the ocean was lapping on the coasts, which are increasingly deserted and from which the Andes ranges gradually rise. They are placed around transversal valleys, grouped to form a mountain landscape as far as the eye can see. Hovering so high, we felt at the same time as eagles and seagulls. Then we flew over the salt lakes area in Bolivia. We landed on time in Santa Cruz de la Sierra. The pupils of Colegio San Francisco were waiting for us with a red rose in their hands, yelling “bienvenida, bienvenida!”, while the brass band played in our honour. In the community we met again Sr Elsa Verdeja, Sr Gladys Chavez, Sr Dolly and Sr Prima. In the evening we attended the 7 p.m. Holy Mass.



SUNDAY 13 APRIL

After Mass we visited the city cathedral, a 17th century Spanish building. Inside the sacred art museum we admired the precious exhibition of finely engraved or embossed golden and silver objects. We were amazed by the beauty of their design and the variety of motives in which Spanish decorative arts blends with or is surpassed by elements of indigenous inspiration. Those were the works of artists from the 17th and 18th century. We once again realized the cultural quality and richness that this people has inherited. At lunch we met the Bishop, Msgr Dowlaszewicz, a Polish conventual Franciscan, the former priest of the parish where the sisters live.



In the afternoon we visited the nutrition Centre directed by Sr. Elsa, which in its first years was animated by our dear S. Maria Todesco, who died in January 2001. We entered a room that is entitled to her and where a photograph of her is displayed. From heaven she still watches over her children and over the sisters who carry on the work among many difficulties, even financial.

MONDAY 14 APRIL

The pupils of “Colegio San Francisco” had prepared a big feast in our honour. We went into the hall and sat on the stage to watch the well-prepared show.



The younger and older pupils sat on the lateral terraces. During breaks, they were called to perform a very nice turn with flags. When the teacher asked them to prepare a flag, for example the Italian one, they prepared the colours green, white and red in rows that they then displayed with cheers at the agreed signal. We admired particularly the dances and the costumes of all the countries of North and South America. We visited the school and met with the teachers, the administrative staff and the parents' representatives in a room where the costumes of the different regions of

Bolivia were displayed. At lunch in the community we met again the parish priest, Fr Miguel.

In the afternoon we visited a re-education centre for “differently able” children, as they are called by the founder, Miss Teresa from Rimini, Italy, who has been working as a volunteer in Bolivia for many years. Actually, this institution is a nursery school that welcomes, apart from 20 normal children, some children with various difficulties of a psychic and physical nature. Mothers are invited to assist together with the specialized staff. There is also a mini-bakery and a dressmaker's, both as a training opportunity for the mothers and as a source of income. We left Santa Cruz in the evening, on board of an Aero Sur Peruvian carrier plane, which landed in Cochabamba at 20.30. At arrival, the brass band of Colegio San Francisco and Santa Clara played for us with great enthusiasm, while five couples of pupils, in very elegant Bolivian costumes, danced at the joyful rhythm of Andean tunes. We realized that none of the passengers that had taken our flight had gone, they were all there pleased, watching and clapping their hands with us, charmed by the beauty of the... free show. We crossed the town, adorned with lights, nested into the valley, surrounded by the gentle slopes of the Andean plateau, watched over by the Christ of the Concord, luminous in the night. The community is made up of Sr Fulvia, Sr Roberta, Sr Elsa Castillo, Sr Blanca and our dear Giulia Durigon, the first associated laywoman, the faithful battle companion of some of us in Cameroun and now for many years at the dispensary of the community. She will be soon celebrating her 25th year of service in the missions of the FMSH.

TUESDAY 15 APRIL

At 8.30 there was the Holy Mass presided by Msgr Tito Solary, the Bishop of Cochabamba and Sr. Giannamaria's

brother. The church is dedicated to “St Juan Bosco”, since it is located in a neighbourhood with many Salesian denominations, despite the important presence of San Francisco y Santa Clara high school. Then we met the teachers, the staff and the parents’ representatives. We were struck by the fact that the president of the parents’ association was a humble and poor campesino, with no school education. He said that he was proud to be able to send his children to the Franciscan Sisters’ school and he praised them by thanking “las Madrecitas” wholeheartedly. This person reminded us of how much the work of the missionaries was important here and elsewhere. At their arrival, many years ago, this neighbourhood practically did not exist. In the place where there



are now buildings that can accommodate 1700 pupils there was a dumping ground, a lot of poverty, very needy people living in the farthest suburbs, almost ashamed of their poverty. Today the neighbourhood is provided with structures and services, even if many people still live in precarious conditions. The same often happened elsewhere... Santa Cruz, Quito, Quayaquil... maybe it will happen in Mexico too...

Later we watched the show prepared by the pupils. It is worth to mention the story mimed by the third grade pupils on the difficult beginning of the college, as well as the dances in costumes from the different regions of Bolivia. We were amazed at the ability of the young dancers, whose agility was highlighted by the whirling of the beautiful multicoloured clothes they were wearing at the quick, sometimes frantic, but always pleasant rhythm of Andean music. At the end of the show we wanted a photograph of us to be taken with this dance company in all the richness and variety of their costumes. We greeted the 1,700 pupils of the school in three separate moments.

WEDNESDAY 16 APRIL

After the vows renewal Holy Mass, we prepared for a special day: we would visit some communities in the Andean plateau where Sr. Fulvia often goes to help the poor. We took coca leaves to chew in order to face the altitude. We were accompanied by Sr. Fulvia and the parish priest of Cochabamba, a Salesian missionary, in two minibuses. We climbed for about 100 km, on a road that had been opened on the flank of the mountain. Sr Fulvia often blew the horn to greet her campesinos friends. We halted especially in Tongo (3,800 meters a.s.l.) where, thanks to aid coming from Italy, they built a nice church, a rectory, a parish hall and a boarding school for young people living in isolated villages of the plateau. This enables them to receive an almost normal school education. A little higher up, at 4,150 meters, we visited a small boarding school for children speaking the Quechua language and learning Spanish. Our presence would really be necessary here, among those poor campesinos, Sr Fulvia kept repeating, taking advantage of Sr Emmapia and Sr Ines’ presence. We came back tired but happy. As we passed by a market, we were surprised that we were able to buy 50 big, tasty bananas for just one Euro!



THURSDAY 17 APRIL

At 7.30 we left for La Paz, where we landed after a 45-minute flight. We greeted the sisters of that community: Sr Lucilla, Sr Soraida and Sr Isabel. The nursery school pupils were very happy to meet us and they performed poems, songs and sketches among endless “Bienvenida”. In the afternoon, we made a sightseeing tour of the city and, above all, we walked to the “Moon Valley”, an area where the erosion of the tuff and sandstone rocks (so they looked to us) has formed a truly lunar landscape. The upper part of the town, populated by

the poor, struck us for its vertical development. The perforated brick buildings stand one next to the other, with very narrow passages. The slope of the mountain is plastered with small red houses, like a mosaic, and the tallest ones stand out against the cobalt blue sky. In the afternoon we visited the exhibition of the works of “Centro de aprendizaje Santa Rita”, a technical school for adults with different options: dress-making, curtaining, cooking, pastry-making confectionery, embroidery and hairdressing. In particular, there is a section where you can learn to make skirts, underskirts and shawls with the beautiful and typical ay-mara embroideries, for Cholita women.



We were amazed by the works that we could see and even taste on the tables of the exhibition. Despite the fact that the programme had been anticipated, the pupils and the teachers managed to perform a dance with typical costumes... some of them very heavy, as they weighed up to 15 kg. So we admired the agility of their step and dance all the more. In the evening came also the other sisters from Sorata: Sr Daniela, Sr Lourdes and Sr Luz Marina; Sr Enrica had already come in the morning. La Paz lies at 4,300 meters above sea level.

FRIDAY 18 APRIL

We left for Lima at 8.55 and for Cuzco at 12.50. We met Sr. Norma and Sr Emidia at Lima airport during our wait for the Cuzco plane. We arrived there after a one-hour flight. We saw the town from above, with the landing strip in the middle. The sky was clear, the plane flew over the city, then it turned to the left, flew between two mountains and started a quick descent. Our house was not very far. We were welcomed by Sr. Elena, Sr. Silvia Aro, Sr. Marlene and three aspirants: Lija, Juana and Assunta.

Late in the afternoon we visited the city that was the seat of the Inca king. King Pachakute’s statue stands in the centre of town and dominates it from above. Cuzco is rich in cuzcheña and colonial art. We were enchanted by the main square, with the richly decorated facades of its churches and palaces. There were many tourists.

SATURDAY 19 APRIL

Guided visit to Machu Pichu. A two-hour coach ride and one-and-an-half hour train trip. When we entered the sacred town, it appeared to us like in a vision, in all its limpid and magnificent beauty, protected by the “small mountain”: what we had read about and admired in pictures now stood before our astonished eyes. Once again we reflected on the richness of past civilizations, on the discoveries and organizational capabilities of peoples who did not have our advanced techniques and yet performed engineering masterworks. We were back in the community late in the evening.



SUNDAY 20 APRIL

We left for Tambobamba at 11.15, after the Holy Mass and the blessing of the new dispensary. A 230-km journey on narrow and bumpy roads, dug into the flank of the mountains. We were scared to see that the bus was running on the edge of the ravine, that is the vertical slope of the mountain. At places the road was crossed by small rivers that made the ground muddy or stony. Then the vehicle had to drive forward slowly, rocking. If it unbalanced a little more, it would have fallen in the gap ...gasp!.

There were long silences among us: each one of us prayed to arrive safely. The driver was really very good, but he often made the sign of the cross too. The least worried was Sr. Nancy, who knew the road and had travelled it many times, as she had been in mission in Tambobamba for many years. We arrived there at 22.30. The trip took almost 11 hours. The 3,200-meter high village with a population of about 5,000 is nestled on the floor of a sunny valley and is crossed by a water-rich river. The community is made up of Sr Nancy, who is responsible for the boarding school (80 children coming from the isolated villages in the plateau) and for the formation of



the teachers of religion of the district schools; Sr. Agostina, who is busy with the reception and the kitchen; Sr. Maria Firmina, director of the State Elementary School, and Sr. Lidia, responsible for the Santa Rita dispensary.

MONDAY 21 APRIL

We celebrated the 147th anniversary of the foundation of our Institute right here in Tambobamba, among simple and poor campesinos! At about 8 a.m. we went in procession to the church. Half an hour later the Bishop, Msgr Domenico Berni, celebrated the Holy Mass. At the end, always in procession, we went to the school, followed by the brass band that played for us. We thought that 147 years earlier, our first sisters too, after leaving the cathedral, had walked along the streets of Gemona amid feisty acclamations. That day we were accompanied by campesinos from the Peruvian plateau, happy that we were with them. Simple, courageous, tenacious people, rich of values. In the school, the teachers and the pupils welcomed us joyfully. They had prepared several stands in which the geography, the regions, the clothes, the economy, the religion and the gastronomy of Peru were displayed. We were amazed at the organization and at the works, especially because each stand was presented by pupils, real budding teachers! The mayor of Tambobamba offered each one of us a Cholita sombrero... as shown in a photograph. In the afternoon we had a joyful meeting with the boarding school children and visited the buildings. Then we had a joyful evening in the community, with an exchange of gifts. We left with our heart full of admiration for our sisters who work here.

TUESDAY 22 APRIL

We left Tambobamba at 6.15 among greetings, hugs and the merry yelling of the children, who had already got up to see us for a last time. We decided to take the new road: a better way, albeit longer, which however had not been



completed. Indeed, after a four-hour drive, we had to stop. During the compulsory halt which lasted another four hours, we watched the mountain-breaking works and saw enormous stones broken off with a mechanic violence from the rock roll down with a rumble which sounded like a complaint. We resumed our trip at 13.30 and drove over a part of the way that had just been opened. We entrusted ourselves to God and to the driver who, moving in rear gear for a while, drove the vehicle over the stones that had just fallen down. Luckily they held and, breathing a sigh of relief, we went on. We passed other places where works were in progress, but we could proceed without other long halts. We arrived in Cuzco at 8 p.m. We spontaneously cheered our



driver, who was really good and courageous and looked exhausted. The sisters of the community breathed a sigh of relief: they were expecting us at 2 p.m. and instead we came six hours later... We stayed with them for a short time. Unfortunately, the visit of the city historical centre had to be postponed to another day!

WEDNESDAY 23 APRIL

We left for Ecuador. First stage in Quayaquil. We came at the airport at about 1 p.m. and were happy to meet Sr. Lucia again. She was waiting with some teachers and pupils who immediately offered us a wicker fan with our

name on it. This was a sign that it would be quite hot here. Indeed it was, since the city is situated at 2° 10' South latitude, on the delta mouth of the big Guayas river. The climate is muggy and the thermometer that day showed over 37°. We had lunch and a rest; at 7 pm we were in the parish church for the holy mass. The parish priest and the population gave us a very feisty welcome.

THURSDAY 24 APRIL

“Santa Madre de Dios” school celebrated. The pupils and the teachers performed dances and songs; the nursery school children performed a mimed representation of the Annunciation. During the show, we could quench our thirst by drinking with a straw from a coconut, very natural. It was still very hot. We understood Sr. Lucia’s nostalgia for Tambobamba... In the afternoon, we had a panoramic tour of the town, unfortunately under the rain. So we took refuge in the handicraft market. We could not help admiring their beauty and variety as well as the talent and ability of the local artists. Here too we spent a joyful evening with the sisters of the community: Sr. Lucia, Sr. Elisabeth and Sr. Esther. At 11 p.m. Sr. Beniamina and Sr. Antonella saw Sr. Lucia to the coach station. She had to go to Tambo, Peru, at the border with Ecuador. The next day, on her way back, she missed the coach because of a long phone conversation with Sr. Ines and took the following one. Later, we would learn that the previous coach had overturned. Once again we thanked Providence for saving us from danger.

FRIDAY 25 APRIL.

After experiencing Guayaquil’s very heavy weather (despite the night rain, sultriness did not abate), we went back to the airport in our way to Quito, the last stage of our visit. The flight lasted only 30 minutes, while it usually takes our sisters one day to cover the same distance by coach. At arrival we were welcomed by Sr. Alexandra, Sr. Daniela and Sr. Bernarda. The San Francisco home and school are in the southern area, a very poor one, in the other side of town. The traffic was heavier because of road works. It took us almost two hours to reach our destination. We drank a mate of coca to adapt to the altitude, which was 3,200 meters, then we went to the school, behind the house. The Provincial Superior of the Friars minor, the parish priest and another priest, a friend of his, concelebrated the Holy Mass. At the end, they blessed the new school, built with the aid of the Province and of the Tau Mission non-profit organization. Soon afterwards, the children and teachers cheered us up with songs and dances typical of the different regions of Ecuador.

In the afternoon we visited the “punto medio del mundo”, the world’s middle point, the equator, where the latitude is 0 0 0. We enjoyed staying with one foot in the northern hemisphere and with another in the southern hemisphere. Then there was a guided visit to the very interesting ethnic museum nearby, where the various ethnic groups of the country are presented.

SATURDAY 26 APRIL, THE DAY OF RETURN

In the morning we visited –too quickly- St Francis church with its museum and the church of the Society of Jesus. We could dedicate just a little more than an hour to this cultural moment because of the heavy traffic and of the distance that separated us from the centre of Quito. Although the visit was so hasty, we were amazed by the beauty and extraordinary wealth of the baroque art that adorns both churches: the walls and vaults shine because of the gilded decorations, which further highlight the statues of the Suffering Christ and of the Virgin of the Revelation, light and graceful, as if she were dancing. At 2 p.m., after lunch, the group left for the airport and the flight

Quito-Madrid-Rome. There were moving greetings and hugs from all. Sr Emmapia stayed to start the canonical visit of the Province's communities, as well as Sr. Ines, Sr. Cecilia and Sr. Antonella, who would leave five hours later for Santiago.

CONCLUSION

As we visited the various communities and got to know a little deeper the activities of our sisters in Latin America, we noticed common elements:

- within each institution there lives a Franciscan spirit of fraternity, welcome and joy;
- laypeople are involved in a responsible way; even the preparations for our visit, which were quite intense, had been made mostly by them;
- the parents are part of an extracurricular organization and have a precise role;
- our sisters have chosen to live in the poorest areas of the cities, together with the neediest: we saw it in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, in Cuzco, in Tambobamba, in Guayaquil, in La Paz and in Quito. In Cochabamba, where there is now a big school of 1700 pupils, there once was a dumping ground. There are now some services, the neighbourhood has become populated, but the campesinos from the plateau, without resources and the target of loving care by Sr. Fulvia and the other sisters, are at the gates.
- The fraternal welcome and the readiness to serve in order to make us feel at home during our short stay was the feature of each community that we visited. A special thanks goes to Sr. Ernestina and to the kitchen staff in the Provincial House; to Sr Rossana Zapata for preparing diligently each day the prayer for the start of the works during the whole meeting. We have appreciated the quality of her work, the sensitivity in the choice of texts that were consistent with the theme, because those preparations helped us enter the spiritual dimension of our work.
- Among all, we would like to stress the service rendered to all by Sr. Ines, who after picking up everyone's passport, went to the airport check-in desks to send collective baggage; she had to wait patiently and sometimes discuss vigorously, but we did not worry.

As to the educational meeting and the possibilities of encounter and learning that have been offered to us, we would like to thank wholeheartedly the Lord, our Superiors, who favoured it, and our respective Provinces, which made it possible. It was a really big gift. It enabled us to see something different, to open up to other cultures, to catch a glimpse of them and appreciate their beauties. It especially enabled us to meet our sisters, whose name has now a face and a history, to share with them moments of intense joy and emotion and to catch the efforts and anxieties of their daily lives. Sr. Sylvie Assoana of Cameroun has maybe best expressed what we all think: "This experience has made me know and love even more the Congregation and the sisters, and it has made me feel a living member of our Franciscan family." The great spiritual gift that we have received and that we want to share is the ENCOUNTER. An



encounter with our sisters and with other peoples; our hearts opened even more to God, to our inner being, to our brothers. We have fortified our vocation as FMSH and educators. In each community we felt at home. The open, joyful and expecting smiles of children and young people were an invitation to stay. Once again the Lord enabled us to put his word to the test: "everyone who has given up house or brothers or sisters or lands for my sake will receive a hundred times more in this present age..." How could we not celebrate this in our life?

Sister Antonella Lago

FROM THE HOUSE OF FORMATION

RELIGIOUS PROFESSION

SISTER MARA, SISTER FEDERICA AND SISTER JULIJA

Roman - 17st November 2007

“The joy of a First Profession at Asisium”



At our “Asisium” General House, it had been a long time since we had last taken part in a celebration that was once so familiar to us, but that today causes unmatched emotion just because its precious occurrence is so rare. So we recall the solemn rite of the First Profession, which took place in Asisium thanks to the presence of three young sisters, **Sr M. Mara Lorenzet from St Mary of the Angels Province (Gemona); Sr M. Federica from the Roman Province, and Sr M. Julija from Lithyania, in St Louis IX Province, (France)**. By sharing the event that we could live on 17 November 2007, we were able to end in the best possible way the celebration year in honour of St Elizabeth of Hungary. Our founders, back in 1860, consecrated to God our first sisters right on her feast day. The presence of the three

young sisters among us helped us think about our Patron Saint who, fascinated by St Francis, managed to turn her total love for Christ into virtues and works, offering us an example of how to live unlimited patience, perfect joy, the radical detachment from earthly goods, actual love for the poor and a style of fraternity in the relationships with brothers and sisters and all the Lord’s creatures.

The three novices, Mara, Julia and Federica, arrived from the place of their international Novitiate, in Viole di Assisi, with their Mistress, Sr Eliodora Battiston. They brought us a real wave of freshness, that gradually emerged from the joyful and yet dignified enthusiasm that they conveyed during the anxious waiting hours.

To see them almost transfigured in prayer during the solemn Eucharistic celebration, or joyfully tense while listening to the Word of God, or to listen to them while they pronounced, one by one, with a firm and clear voice, their profession of Vows in the hands of the Superiora General Sister Emmapia Bottamedi, undoubtedly caused in all those attending a deep emotion, a strong impulse of involvement, a particular and indescribable feeling of sympathy. The young sisters’ mothers, who took part in the ceremony and were close to their daughters, were also kneeling one next to the other, as if they meant to mutually infuse the mysterious inner strength, which is pure joy of the heart, in the generous sacrifice in which they were united with their daughters. They stirred up in those attending an even greater beat of tenderness as well as admiration and human sympathy.

Even the celebrant, who presided the Holy Mass, Fr Mario Favretto, General Definito OFM, by offering ardently his nice homily, helped us almost feel an atmosphere of physical presence of the Spirit. By helping us all to recover, in union with the three newly professed, the profound meaning of “being called by the Lord to reread the infinite gestures of his love”, he helped us all raise a hymn of joy and gratitude “in the faithful memory of our heart”.

And after the warm and sincere embrace with our three sisters pleasantly influenced us with their immense happiness, we all felt that, once back to our daily tasks, we would carry a bag full of gratitude and blessings for what God accomplishes in every one of us always, as He did in that circumstance, when he poured on our religious family the fresh, genuine, pure perfume of the “Yes” uttered by Sr Mara, Sr Julija and Sr Federica.

Sr Antonietta Pozzebon

PROVINCE “ MARY IMMACULATE” - PHILIPPINES

RELIGIOUS PROFESSION

SISTER EDITHA SAGAYNO - SISTER MAITA HINOQUIN

PHILIPPINES - Quezon City, 17 may 2008

“Praise the Lord who is always all the good”

At the eve of the solemnity of the Holy Trinity, God welcomed us in his Church as members of what has become today our Religious Family: the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart.

On the same day we remembered joyfully and gratefully the anniversary of the priestly ordination of our Founder, Father Gregory, which took place back in 1845. To him we have entrusted our path of sanctity and fidelity.

Thanks to God’s grace we have consecrated ourselves to Him, with the desire to follow Jesus in obedience, poverty and chastity and to imitate his redemptive love. We believe that only with Jesus and in Jesus will our commitment turn into a living proclamation of his love. How much joy and emotion!!!

In his homily, the celebrant, our Father Gene Pastidio, OFM, reminded us that our “old” self must die so that we can bear fruit... abundantly. Moreover, he said that it takes a lot of courage for today’s generation to donate itself to God.

We owe everything to God for the gift of our vocation, sustained by Him through the gift of courage and fidelity.

In the celebration, Fr Gene stated strongly and passionately that all the present would witness our “change” during the rite of Religious Profession: first of all, the “Change” of clothes as a sign of removing the old identity, tied to the world’s mentality, in order to take a new one, based on Christ; the habit is the exterior sign of our consecration to Him, in the form of life of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart.

Another sign of “change”: changing our family name with the religious one. Father Gene explained that this change does not take place because our family name is not nice, nor does it mean that we should love our natural family less. On the contrary, it means that we belong to a bigger family, God’s one, and that our love for our relatives is the expression of our religious name. Editha Sagayno, who has become Sr Editha of the Holy Eucharist, must love her natural family like Jesus and donate herself totally in the Eucharist. Maita Hinoguin, who has become Sr Maita of the Heart of Jesus, must love her natural family with a heart filled with love like Jesus’.

Then, Fr Gene addressed our religious family, saying that a “change” took place also for the Congregation of Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart that welcomed us.

We feel this religious family as a gift made of sisters willing to walk together with us towards sanctity; they are our companions in this spiritual journey and they remind us that we must live faithfully the charism of our Congregation at the service of our mission within the Church.

By his reflections, Father Gene helped us and the assembly understand more deeply the various stages of the rite of religious profession. At the end of his homily, he challenged the young people who were present: there could be a “change” for them too, for those who let themselves be touched by God’s call.

Our hearts are filled with joy and deep gratitude to God. We would like to express this gratitude also to all the sisters of our FMSC religious family: to our Superior General, Sr Emmapia Bottamedi; to our Provincial Superior, Sr Ermenegilda Cavin; to our Mistress, Sr Tiziana, and to all the sisters: thanks for your prayers, you have made our Religious Profession precious and deeply meaningful. May we all attain the fullness of Consecration, with the Lord’s help.



Sr Editha of the Holy Eucharist and Sr Maita of the Heart of Jesus

PROVINCE “ SAINT ANTHONY” - CHILE
RELIGIOUS PROFESSION
SISTER CARMEN, SISTER ZARINA, SISTER MÓNICA

CHILE -Santiago, 25 May 2008

“My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord”

On 25 May 2008, the Corpus Domini Sunday, our young sisters, with their hearts full of emotion, made their first Profession of the vows of obedience, poverty and chastity.

St Damien’s Chapel, richly adorned for the Eucharistic celebration, gathered our joyful sisters, their relatives and friends. The rite was presided by the Provincial Minister of the Friars minor Fr Rogelio Wouters; our Superior General, Sr Emmapia Bottamedi, and the Provincial Superior, Sr Ines Pavan, were also present. During the homily, the celebrant said: “God is the faithful and merciful God, rich in goodness, patience and forgiving. If we are generous with Him, He will be even more generous with us; if you will be radical and generous in your Congregation, so will He be even more with you.”

By pronouncing the vows, Sr Carmen, Sr Zarina and Sr Monica reached a new stage and started another one, which will require great vigilance, perseverance and prayer on their part and, as they said themselves, a continuous path of conversion, sustained by the grace of the Lord, which has little by little revealed itself through the sisters. By the gift of bread and wine, Jesus invites us to renew our life, to turn our love into altruistic love, which offers itself to the brothers; it makes the certainty to which we are called and that has accompanied us during our formation vibrate in our hearts: “the love for Christ and our religious family”.

By starting this new path, we would like to entrust ourselves to God and to the Virgin Mary. Open to the Spirit, we would like to announce the kingdom of God by means of the witness of fraternal life and of the service that we feel called to live as FMSC.





Province "S. Mary of the Angels"

MEETING FOR THE RESPONSIBLES OF COMMUNITIES "TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF OUR FRATERNAL LIFE"

Some sisters from "St Mary of the Angels" province took part in the meeting for the Responsibles of Communities, which was organized from 25 to 29 March 2008 in Assisi by MOREFRA and was guided by two expert speakers: Fr Dino Dozzi ofmcap and Nello Dall'Agli.

"To improve the quality of our fraternal life, which is a source of new evangelization" was the leit-motiv of the speeches, even if many reflections and research have already been made on this subject lately.

The very first speech was already enlightening, in that it showed clearly how the aim of both life of obedience and service of authority are to make fraternal life easier.

Indeed, a fraternity is made up of people that Jesus has called by name *"that they might be with him"* (Mark 3:14)... *"It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you"* (John 15:16)... it is therefore a divine call and it arises from the acceptance of the Word of the Lord, in faith and obedience, from God's merciful love, and is kept alive thanks to mutual mercy.

The lifestyle of the fraternity must be humble, faithful to mutual service, characterized by mutual foot washing, and this favours communion, as pointed out by the "Communion and Community" document at point no. 3 *"Only a community that lives and celebrates in itself the mystery of communion can be subject to an effective evangelization"*. The community that celebrates communion daily:

- lives obedience by deeply imitating Christ's attitudes and lives authority as a service to the brothers;
- favours a healthy desire to be the centre of attention by each member, involving and encour-



aging everyone and creating an atmosphere of trust and serenity;

- identifies the problems and musters the strength and courage to intervene and help the individuals and the fraternity.

In their serene analysis of fraternal life in community, the speakers have drawn the participants' attention on Franciscan fraternity by describing in detail the identikit of a local Superior, whose service must be:

- maternal-fraternal,
- affective-relational
- open-creative,
- trustful-rich in proposals.

The Superior's style must express a fraternity where the service of authority is carried out by seeing in each sister and in each situation a gift from God, which the fraternity needs; she must practise and favour accompaniment and mutual care: a style that is particularly fit to our fraternities, in which, albeit with different roles, we are all educators and subject to education: we all need to be accompanied by our brothers and, simultaneously, each one of us is asked to accompany our brothers.

The Superior must animate the fraternity and make the local Chapter desirable, by considering it as a place of participation and sharing, a privileged place in which to examine the vitality of dialogue in mutual listening and respect, esteem, help, recognition of everyone's gifts and cooperation.

The speakers, in their complementarity, helped us come to the realization that the Fraternity is really a pillar of consecrated life, and for us Franciscans, it is a place of culture and evangelization that spurs us to revitalize ourselves to implement God's dream and Francis' prayer, by becoming:

- *open sisters in a closed world,*
- *new sisters in an old world,*
- *Franciscan sisters with the spirit of Assisi.*

The meeting ended with this desire turned into prayer. It gave us all and all the sisters the opportunity to express our gratitude to God, to our Superiors and our respective communities, for the immense gift that we have received.

*on behalf of the participants,
Sr Stefania Bandiera*



THE NATIONAL MISSIONARY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS

The “NATIONAL MISSIONARY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS” took place in Rome, at the Urbanian University, from 13 to 15 March. It was organized by USMI and aimed at calling back the fire of mission on our religious life, with a focus on the entire planet, where it is more than ever necessary to announce the Gospel and talk about Jesus Christ. Those were intense days of listening and personal verification, thanks to the help of fervent speakers who were sensitive to feminine consecrated life.

There was a number of reflections and they were well summed up in the title of the meeting: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you”. Jesus, the Father’s Apostle, addressed this call to the Eleven inside the Cenacle to enable them to be strong and docile instruments for the announcement of His Gospel.

The Mission is, therefore, an Easter command, entrusted by the Lord Jesus to His Church. Pope Paul VI wrote: “Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize”.

The Note of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith further stresses that: “...in the history of the Church, Providence has entrusted male and female Orders and Congregations with the wonderful task of evangelization, both as an announcement and a witness”.

The speeches highlighted witness as the most appreciated and valued quality, as well as the values of welcome, listening, attention, care and availability.

The provocations “launched” by the speakers were quite good, especially those made by Sr Elisa Kidané SMC: what is religious consecration today, in 2008? simply doing something? or rather a prophetic sign?

what are the evangelical counsels? are we convinced that they mean giving an answer to a love call?

how do we live our vow of poverty? how do we use our means?

how do we relate to the poor? what kind of problems do we have?

we combat consumerism out of solidarity for the poor and exploited peoples?

how do we live our vow of chastity? are we capable of living our relations tenderly?

are we capable of enlarging our heart to make room for the other?

are we capable of welcoming nicely and freely those who are different?

how do we live our vow of obedience?

in an attitude of serene listening, aware that God’s will is accomplished through our superiors

And where do we live all the above?

In an historic and cultural context characterized by disorientation and insecurity, loneliness and lack of affection, ideological crises, individualism and relativism; a world which is distant from the Christian faith but in which only apparently man does not seem to be looking for God.

It is our task as consecrated to help today’s men and women come out with those implicit questions about faith; it is our mission to live intensely the problems of the contemporary world, of families, young people, seniors, bringing Christian hope to them by means of our joyful testimony, trusting the Word of Jesus Resurrected: “... behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age”. Jesus walks through history to lead mankind to new heavens and a new earth.

Consecrated life is at the service of this final irradiation of the divine glory, when all flesh shall see the salvation of God.



Sr. Mara Lorenzet

“PEREGRINATIO” OF THE RELIC OF ST ELIZABETH



In the history of all times, women have always had a special role, for better or worse, and some of them stood out in a particular way. Among those we may count the figure of St Elizabeth of Hungary, who was chosen as our protector because she too was part of the big Franciscan family.

Why do we talk about her today? Because from 29 April to 1st May we “hosted” her in our Mother House.

Two hands that offered to veneration and prayer a small relic from the Saint.

Maybe we remember only the final part of her life, but we would like to remind here the message that St Elizabeth wanted to leave us, which makes of her a truly contemporary figure and draws strength from her two big passions: Christ and the poor.

The passion for Christ made Elizabeth accept the Gospel “sine glossa”, in all its spiritual and material aspects. Elizabeth, on the example of Jesus, who became poor although he was rich, followed him radically and found him in his “representatives”, the poor crucified on earth.

Our Saint Patron walked passionately the path

of Christian love and for this she can be considered a complete woman: a tireless Martha, who devoted herself to the service to the poor, and a Mary, absorbed in prayer and contemplation. From prayer Elizabeth drew the strength to love, love her husband, her children, the poor. In prayer she also found the strength to accept the many sufferings that afflicted her in her short life. Formed in St Francis’ evangelical forge, Elizabeth abandoned the vanities and ambitions of this world, the glamour of the courts, comfort, wealth and luxuries and started to serve.

This is certainly not the mentality of today’s world. On the contrary, sometimes we make others “serve” our own interests and goals, forgetting Jesus’ teachings and the goal that we must strive to attain... holiness!

Holiness is not a privilege for a few; it is a call for everyone and it consists in loving like Jesus loved. Besides, loving God and our neighbour in God is a command that Jesus gave us. This may seem foolishness... but it is the foolishness of love, which knows no limits and gives without measure.

What we can learn from our St Elizabeth is quite simple: being humble and open to God’s will, looking not for our own good and our own interest, but living authentic charity by sowing good and radiating joy and serenity always, even in difficult times, in loneliness, in pain, in order to make the life of those who are next to us more serene and joyful. To do this you need no degree, you must only have a big heart, willing to love God and man.



Sr Adele Angela Leonarduzzi

“ECCOMI, SONO LA SERVA DEL SIGNORE”

Today our “St Mary of the Angels” Province is celebrating a special event: the rite of the promise of the first three associated sisters, who enrich our religious family and the universal Church.

The suggestive ceremony took place in St Marguerite Martyr small medieval church in Arzene (province of Pordenone, Italy). It all happened in an atmosphere of great simplicity and joy, in the typical Franciscan spirit.

The three sisters, Pace, Livia and Marina, surrounded by some relatives and acquaintances and by our representatives, were visibly moved and deeply absorbed in the important moment that they were living.

The ceremony was presided by the Provincial Superior, Sr Luisangela Severin, in the presence of Arzene’s parish priest, Fr Daniele Rastelli, and of the Provincial Vicar, Sr Anna Maria Volpato.

We had the impression of being in the Porziuncola, in that corner of heaven where Francis, together with his first friars, welcomed the gift of life from Clare, the Seraphic Father’s humble small plant.

The “yes” uttered by Mary, fully willing to let herself be guided in obedience and faith at the service of God’s project on the world, and the “yes” uttered by the very young Clare, who later bore numerous daughters, were joined by those three other “yes”, from Livia, Pace and Marina, who were firmly determined to

- embrace the evangelical form that draws inspiration from the examples and teachings of St Francis of Assisi and draws redemptive love from the pierced Heart of Jesus Crucified, the source of life and salvation for the whole world;
- be faithful to the missionary call to build a world that is more fraternal and evangelical, through their humble and generous service in that portion of the universal Church in which God asks them to operate;
- welcome the new gift that the Holy Spirit offers them by taking part in the charism of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, through the promise that makes them “associated laywomen” within our religious family.

After the “Promise”, the Provincial Superior handed them the symbols that characterize this “fraternity”:

- the “statute and the rule” so that it becomes, with God’s help, the guide in the evangelical life that our three sisters started today;
- the “Tau”, as a sign of deeper involvement in the life and at the service of the Lord Jesus.

This nice ceremony, which opened the fraternal path of “Associated Laypeople” to our religious province too, was sealed by the Eucharistic Celebration, the source and life of every Christian.

Fr Daniele expressed his satisfaction and hope for this new and promising reality that was born in his parish, next to the community of our sisters Sr Antida Galante, Sr Arcangela Sartoretto and Sr Ornella Parisotto. With them, Livia, Pace and Marina have already started a constructive journey of spiritual and apostolic commitment, through community prayer and the availability to serve the neediest brothers.

The presence of the OFS Minister, Vilma Gatto, was meaningful. She had prepared the three sisters to this important stage of their life and she rejoiced with them for the benefits that God has granted to their lives.

It all ended with the fraternal agape, enjoyed in Franciscan simplicity and joy, together with the three parish priests of the Pastoral Unity of Valvasone, Arzene and San Martino: Fr Domenico Zannier, Fr Daniele Rastelli and Fr Guido Parutto.

While we praise the Lord for giving us Livia, Pace and Marina, we ask Him to bless those sisters who want to share our charism. May He grant that they commit themselves to live according to the Holy Gospel, pray with a pure heart and mind, serve Him in poverty and humility, love everyone like brothers and be devout daughters of our holy mother, the Church.



Sr Chiarfrancesca Cappelletto



Province “Mary Immaculate”

CATHOLIC ACTION “MARY IMMACULATE” “GO, I AM WITH YOU”

The Catholic Action Association year has just ended and has had as its theme Jesus’ reassuring call: *“Go! I am with you” (Matthew 28:16-20).*

We, Catholic Action members from “Mary Immaculate” Institute, spurred by this exhortation, have lived this period intensely and would like to tell you how.

Back from the beautiful party last year, in which we celebrated the 30th anniversary of our pastoral activity in the Diocese of Rome, and aware that Catholics are called to make extraordinary what is ordinary day by day, we started our journey along man’s paths.

Our group is made up of Sr Eustella, 17 educators, an assistant priest, Fr Filippo Ciampanelli, as well as two other Dehonian fathers: Fr Ciro, the vice

Provincial Superior and Fr Francesco, the Superior of the Vitorchiano house, which has been hosting our retreats and school camps for several years.

Every Saturday, this small but determined “army” guides over a hundred children, aged 4 to 16 and divided into groups, as well as the group “Parents’ journey”, whose hard core is made up of 22 couples (but often grows for other occasional activities).

We do not only perform all planned Diocesan and national activities, but we also organize and animate them, thanks to the presence of Carmela Mascio, our President and Diocesan Councillor.

That is not all. The groups’ journey is always accompanied by a theme chosen by the various associations. This year has been for us the Franciscan year.

Starting from the parents’ desire to know the Congregation better, we organized pilgrimages to Assisi, Greccio and Fontecolombo. We viewed some films to get informed about the work of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart in the world and we studied a little the Franciscan Sources.

Drawing their inspiration from the descriptions that the sources contain, the parents made a beautiful crib in





the Institute church: in a barren cave, St Francis “offers” to Mary her Son Jesus, under St Joseph’s watchful eye.

Our activities with the children consist in a catechesis based on experience which takes place on Saturdays. With the parents we examine the year’s theme from a theological and spiritual point of view to rediscover the theme of the journey, first as a couple and then as parents.

This year the families, beside the Saturday meetings, lived three week-ends together in Vitorchiano: while the children were being taken care of by the educators, the parents were busy with the priest and the Superiors.

Even the educators experienced a challenging journey made of several retreats and forma-

tion-verification opportunities.

The newborn Youth group, with which the Educators shared some meaningful experiences, helped in augmenting the joy of our apostolic commitment. We would like to remember especially the moving animation of the Holy Mass in the Rebibbia jail and the preparation of the Eucharistic Adoration presided by the Bishop and vice-gerent Msgr Luigi Moretti, who was really pleased to find our church filled to the brim with families and youth on a Saturday evening.

We would further like to mention: our quarterly magazine “Il ChiACchieRone” (the chatterer), through which we were able, among other things, to interview Pope Benedict XVI; the multidisciplinary tournament, dedicated to Pope John Paul II, in which all participants get a prize, in the style of Catholic Action; the film club, the march for Peace, the feast of Adhesion and the celebration for the 140th anniversary of Catholic Action. During the latter event, we organized the Vigil in Saint Cross of Jerusalem Church for 1,200 national delegates as well as the animation in St Peter’s square the following day! How many graces from God!



How much effort and hope it took us, humble, poor, imperfect tools, in order to carry out His invisible projects...

Right now we must still prepare for the youth and children school camps, to which some members of the family homes in Frosinone will take part.

Then... it is going to be time to start again!!! and while I am saying it, I see the anxious looks of many mums and dads, who want to love their children and are looking for the right path.

I see young people looking at their future and dreaming.

I see educators overcome by doubts, but willing to put themselves at stake.

I see adults and children, big and little ones, continuously confronting one another, wishing the best for themselves, that is happiness, even if not always consistently.

I see and feel, however, the loving and tangible presence of Sister Providence, the constant blessing of Mary Immaculate, the strong arm of God the Father, the human commitment of all of us who, thanks to the fruitful hospitality of the Sisters Community, day after day, hold invaluable treasures in earthen vessels!

For all of this, and for the wonderful year of grace that we have been given, let us thank God!

Sr Eustella Zanardo

JUBILEES - "MARY IMMACULATE" PROVINCE ROME

So was the refrain on Sunday 1st June, when the communities of the Province celebrated the solemnity of the Sacred Heart. For the jubilarians, however, the celebrations had started much earlier, with the announcements, the programme, the invitations ...! The guests of honour reached the Provincial seat on Saturday 31st May and, accompanied by Sr Ermenegilda and by the Council, during the feast of the Visitation, sang with a lot of emotion and gratitude their Magnificat in the setting of the Subiaco monasteries, shrouded in the spiritual atmosphere that characterized the life of Benedict and of his brothers.

A wonderful day, spent simply, in fraternity. We enjoyed revisiting the century-old path, drawn with mastery on the cloisters and chapels walls and imagining the fervour of life and contemplation that marked the history of Europe.

At midday there was the Holy Mass, in a chapel, only for us. *"Fidelity is recognizing constantly that the Lord has visited us. Let us thank him because every day he gave us his love"* said the celebrant, Fr Luca Rocchi, in his homily. *"A fidelity which feeds on contemplation becomes a fruitful virginity"*. Those words filled our soul and made us taste, in the silence that wrapped us, the words of Hosea:



*I will espouse you to me forever:
I will espouse you in
right and in justice,
in love and in mercy;
I will espouse you in fidelity,
and you shall know the Lord.
(Hosea 2: 18-19)*

Then there was lunch on the rocky steps that led to one of the 13 monasteries on the mountain. We could read on the inscription *"the house of heaven"*; now it is an oratory, which keeps its memory. What is more sumptuous than the harmony of nature, the stone as a refectory, the joy of fraternity?

On 1st June the celebrations reached their peak with the participation of many sisters in the Provincial House.

During the solemn Holy Mass, which had been accurately prepared, the jubilarians movingly renewed their offer, placing it in the Heart of Jesus, to whom they have entrusted their whole life.

The songs, the convivial moment and the afternoon entertainment produced an atmosphere of celebration that can be found only on big occasions. We enjoyed, in serene fraternity, the refrains sung merrily, the "little flowers" drawn from the life adventures of the guests of honour and shown in a power point presentation that elicited many joyful memories, and a lot of laughter too. Congratulations came from near and far, and they united the whole Province and Congregation in a big and joyful embrace.





Province "St. Elizabeth"

FIRST COMMUNION - LIBANO



First Communion

We are now at the end of May and we breathe a little better even if fear is still present.

There is much bustle at school and in the parish. Nine of our 3rd grade pupils will receive Jesus for the first time.

Some days ago, clad in white, they already accompanied Jesus in the monstrance by throwing petals of flowers. They were so cute!!!

On the evening of 29 May, it was Our Lady's turn, with the closure of the Month of May through a procession to Saïde sanctuary.

All of them, 7 girls and 2 boys, in white clothes, formed a circle around the heavenly mother, whom we have been praying inces-

santly for our country for two years.

Today everybody, yes, everybody is going to thank her at "Our Lady of the Castle" Sanctuary, which is so loved by the people of Menjez.

And that is not all, because tomorrow, Thursday 30 May, our First Communion children will prepare through a day of retreat, specially tailored for them. Fr Roland will stay with them from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. They have all confessed and prepared and they are waiting anxiously for 31 May.

An extraordinary day. Our guide is Mary, she who first carried Jesus in her womb, and in her heart for all her life.

Here they are, all dressed in white, following the statue of Our Lady of Fatima, with lit lamps, dancing of the music of: "Here I come, here I come to meet you my Lord"

The parish priest, Fr Simon Khoury, during his homily, reminded the parents of their duty to accompany those children, to fascinate them with their example, to give them spiritual life as they have given them physical life. They urged them to go back to the faith of their fathers and to be able to choose the true good for their children.

Then the children prayed the Credo with their right hand on the Gospel, which was held by our two angels. They made their offers and promised another dance and prayers with a song acknowledging the greatness of the Lord.

We, Fathers and Sisters, were exhausted but happy to see those serene and smiling faces after two weeks of terror and uncertainty for the future.

May God keep hearing the implorations of this people and give them at last the Peace they have been longing for.



FIRST COMMUNION IN RAKOSKI - BULGARY



This year, in the “Sacred Heart of JESUS” in Gheneral Nicolaevo, 35 children have received the First Communion. They prepared for this big event in their life with much enthusiasm and joy.

In the morning of 25 May 2008, the Church bells called the children, their families, parents and friends to the encounter with Jesus. For Jesus’ new friends, it was an extraordinary day. With their white clothes, they looked like little angels who wished that Jesus enters their hearts as soon as possible, so that they could be little apostles and announce to everybody that Jesus is Love, that he loves every man, and especially them, the children.

The Holy Mass, celebrated by the parish priest Fr Demetrio, began with the song “Praise be to Thee, my Lord”, which they sung with a lot of enthusiasm. In the faces of the children you could read a lot of joy and love for Jesus.

In his homily, Fr Demetrio addressed the parents, telling them that, together with the children, they had to thank the Lord for the great gift he has left us -His Body, which is our support and strength. Only with Him can we overcome any problem; and only by believing and trusting in Him, can we always be sure. For He is our certain hope. He urged them to attend Eucharist every Sunday with their children, so that they can thank Him for the gift they have received, first of all for the great gift of life.

Then came the moment that everybody had been most waiting for. One by one, the children went near the altar to pronounce their “Amen” and receive their big Friend in their heart.

At the end of the Holy Mass, Fr Demetrio wished everybody -children and parents- that that day’s enthusiasm should never fade from their heart, and that they may experience the joy of meeting Jesus and bring him to all, always.

CONFIRMATION - RAKOVSKI - BULGARY

Come Holy Spirit... so the 58 young people from our Parish invoked the Holy Spirit that they received on this day through the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Holy Mass was presided by Msgr Gheorgi Iovcev, the Bishop of our Diocese, and concelebrated by Fr Petko, from Sofia, and another priest who had come from Italy, a friend of Dimitar Dimitrov's.

In his homily, the Bishop pointed out that from that moment on, they had become true children of the Church and had to prove it with their life and their example. He stressed the importance of being true children of God with words and works, because without works, faith is dead.

Among the gifts brought to the altar, a youth carried a stone, as a symbol of strength in the trials of life, and of the living Church that no wind can move.

At the end of the Holy Mass, the young people offered the Bishop a bunch of flowers as a sign of gratitude for trusting them. We wish that their joy never ceases and that they can spread it, always guided by the grace of the Holy Spirit that they have received and that has confirmed them as true apostles of the Gospel of Christ and of His Love.



NEW PATRIARCH OF GERUSALEMME



On Sunday 21 June Msgr Sabbah, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, in charge for the Middle East, after twenty years of pastoral service, took leave of friends and faithful during a solemn celebration that took place in the big Church of All Nations on the Gethsemane. Among those attending, in a basilica full to the brim, there were His Eminence Cardinal Foley, the Grand Master of the knights of the Holy Sepulchre, Msgr Camillo Ballin, the Bishop of Kuwait and the representative of CELRA (Conference of the Latin Bishops in the Arab regions), the Catholic Ordinaries in the Holy Land, Fr Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Custodian of

the Holy Land, about one hundred priests, most of whom were parish priests, many religious, the representatives of all Orthodox and Protestant churches, the consuls of France and Spain, the representatives of the civilian and religious authorities, the Patriarch's relatives and many friends coming from everywhere. A grand ceremony, worthy of the celebrated event: the farewell and thanksgiving to the well-deserving outgoing Patriarch, Msgr Sabbah and the welcome greeting to the new Patriarch, Msgr Fouad Twal. At the beginning of the celebration, a letter by Pope Benedict XVI was read both in French and Arabic. The Holy Father thanked Msgr Sabbah for serving the Church in the Middle East for 20 years, bringing comfort and hope to everyone, without distinction of social or religious status. The Mass went on in Arabic, the official language of the Church in the Holy Land. The final blessing was given by the new Patriarch. Then the crowd dispersed to gather again at the Notre Dame Center, where the Patriarch emeritus was greeted again by the people that he loves and that he committed himself to keep serving through prayer and personal sanctification.



Province "St Anthony"

PERPETUAL VOWS

Sister Maria Lourdes Roca Céspedes

of the Holy Spirit

17 May 2008 -

Santa Cruz de la Sierra

Bolivia



On Saturday 17 May, the eve of the Most Holy Trinity Day, in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, Sr Maria Lourdes Roca Céspedes took her perpetual vows in the presence of the Superior General, Sr Emmapia, the Provincial Superior, Sr Ines Pavan, the

sisters serving in the other missions in Bolivia and a big group of friends and parents. They had all gathered around Sr M. Lourdes to tell her their joy for her choice, the love for Christ Resurrected, and to receive publicly her commitment before the Congregation, the Church and the world. The ceremony was presided by Santa Cruz's auxiliary Bishop, Msgr Stanislaw Dowlaszwicz ofm-conv.

At the end of the celebration, Sr Lourdes said: "I thank the Lord for the gift of life, for calling me to follow him for my whole life in the mission that He himself started with his disciples. I am grateful to my family, especially to my mother for her prayers, to my religious family, which has welcomed me and supported me all the way, especially to the Formators, who have guided me lovingly. I certainly did not expect such a beautiful celebration, with Msgr Stanislaw Dowlaszwicz; he got to know me when I was 16; since then, time has gone by, and he did not recognize me... I am glad for the very important presence of the two Superiors, Sr Emmapia and Sr Ines, as well as of the Santa Cruz and Cochabamba sisters, of my Superior, Sr Enrica Bordignon, and of Sr Isabel Oyarzun, who represents the La Paz community, which shared this big celebration with me, and for all the other sisters who accompany me with their prayer. Right now, what I can do is raise to the Lord the hymn of thanks for all the benefits he granted me during my formation and my express my heartfelt thanks to the whole congregation. Now I am part of this dear family, I enjoy a moment of happiness that will last all my life. Thanks, my sisters, for the trust you have placed in me. I ask God and Our Lady of Cotoca to be always with us and give us strength, and that we never lose the enthusiasm to serve them with joy. I have been given many things, what do I give back?"

SISTER INES AND SISTER ROBERTA GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

“Consecrated life is the announcement of what the Father accomplishes through the Son and in the Spirit with his love, goodness and beauty... and it becomes one of the concrete evidences that the Trinity leaves in history, so that man can feel fascination and nostalgia for the divine beauty” (VC 20).

It is with these words that the Eucharistic celebration of Sr Ines Pavan and Sr Roberta Paris’s golden Jubilee anniversary started in St Damien chapel, which was richly adorned to express the joy of the celebration.

The celebrant was Msgr Bernardo Bastres Florence, the Bishop of Punta Arenas, and the concelebrants were our parish priest Fr Padre Mario Scomparin sdb, Fr Rigoberto Juan Rovegno ofm, Fr Enrique Contreras ofm cap, to whom many sisters and friends were joyfully united.



In his homily, Msgr Bastres quoted a passage from St Francis’ life and stressed the importance of fidelity and charismatic identity and how the religious are called to witness the Gospel in fraternal life and love for the Church, but above all in a radical faith in the person of Christ, in order to be credible for the world today. Moreover, he added: “Our sisters Sr Ines and Sr Roberta have given us a courageous witness by leaving their land and their family 49 and 46 years ago to follow the Lord’s call to bring the Gospel to the other side of the world.” He

then addressed each one of them and added: “Sr Ines has carried out the service of authority in the Congregation for 25 years and Sr Roberta was a director and a formation teacher for many years. Fraternal life grew richer from the gifts brought by both the sisters we celebrate today: Sr Ines’ ability to welcome, listen and accompany, her kindness, co-responsibility and boldness in the Spirit; Sr Roberta’s spontaneous joy, sensitivity and love for simple things have been a gift that all the sisters have enjoyed. Let us once again thank the Lord for our two sisters and ask Him to be always at their side in all their services, so that their witness of dedication, joy, generosity and simplicity, but above all their witness of fidelity may arouse enthusiasm and a desire for emulation in young people, so that future generations can answer generously to the Lord’s call, in the style of St Francis.





*Region Apostolic "St. Martyrs
of Uganda"*

THE POLPUTATION OF SEMBE CELEBRATES



On Sunday 9 December 2007, 10 years after the start of our mission in Sembe, we inaugurated a new "Medical Centre" called "Shalom". Thanks to financial aid offered by Fr Domenico Pincelli, to material help by the "Shalom" Association and by many benefactors from Italy, Switzerland and Africa, we were able to set up this structure. The Medical Centre aims at: diminishing the mortality rate and the morbidity rate of mothers and children; allowing suffering people to undergo medical examinations

which are usually carried out in big hospitals, such as ultrasound scans, X-rays, ECGs; supporting and healing the sick by taking care of them.

Three days before the ceremony, we welcomed in our community two representatives from "Shalom", Messrs Ruggero and Luca, as well as our sisters from Cameroun. Their presence was very encouraging and meaningful. In her inauguration speech, the responsible of the Medical Centre thanked all the people of good will who helped implement this work from near and far.

The celebration was simple and beautiful.



“Lord, open my heart to know you,
the most high who rests
among the Saints”.



**SISTER GIUDITTA CESTARO
OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD**
Antonia Cestaro

Born in Preganziol (TV) on 1-03-1914
Died in Roma on 21-02-2008

Work in farm fields proceeded feverishly in the Venetian countryside in the month of March 1914 and, for now, the war seemed still far away and life went on serenely and laboriously for the patriarchal families of the province of Treviso, which were cheered up by the joyful

yelling of children. Antonia saw the light on 1st March and was welcomed with joy by Pietro and Domenica who, following the village's tradition, hastened to regenerate her in Christ by Baptism eight days later. Antonia was strong and robust and she grew quickly, enjoying the freedom of open air and spaces offered by the countryside and feeding on peasant wisdom, which she would always take pride in, and rightly so.

She received the first rudiments of education in the village school, enough to be able to read and count, a solid Christian formation in the Parish and rich teachings in the family, corroborated by the examples of a Christian life that had been handed down for many generations: those were the places of her human and spiritual formation. The little Antonia looked proudly at

her father, a member of the village brotherhood, when he accompanied devoutly the Most Holy Sacrament during processions, and his father behaviour instilled in her a devotion that would remain impressed in her eyes and in her heart.

Apart from that, she was attracted by budding life, she was aware of times and seasons, she knew all about country life, she learnt everything quickly, enjoying, almost in an anticipation of Franciscan wonder, the miracle that each year renewed fruits and harvests. So, until she was twenty, her life was marked by Church, home and the fields.

On 30 October 1936, as she was twenty-two, she knocked at the door of St. Mary of the Angels Convent in Gemona, as her sister had already done, who had donned the habit taking the name of Sr Petronilla. Her decision

To the other side

was serene, without any doubt nor prevarication. Her formation was rapid and two years later, on 6 October 1938, Sr Giuditta already professed.

Borgo Cavour, Porta SS. Quaranta, in Treviso, was her first mission. Her superior wisely entrusted her with the garden: it was her life. Ten years later we find her in Rome with the same activity and then, from 1960, in Lido dei Pini. She was a tireless worker, she did not spare herself, she asked for nothing special but was immensely grateful when someone took notice that she was toiling and offered her simply something to quench her thirst or recover her energies.

Sr Giuditta loved fraternal life and common prayer, her voice stood out clear and strong when she proclaimed the psalms or sang and praised with enthusiasm. She liked to talk with other sisters and expressed her opinion vigorously, without beating about the bush, with the wisdom

taken from old proverbs and sayings that she consciously shared and that wove intelligently the web of her reasoning.

A life that was simple but at the same time rigorous in its way of being and determined; she revealed a special kindness and delicacy in her last few years, when she was purified from the excessive impetuosity. From 2002 onwards, Sr Giuditta declined little by little in the infirmary of Saffi Avenue, with lucid intervals. A last greeting to “all those in Preganziol”, the village that she kept in her heart and a “thanks for all what you have done for me”. She passed away at 5 a.m. on Thursday 21 February 2008, comforted by the presence of the sisters who accompanied her.

May the Lord welcome her in the heavenly fields.



SR MIRIAM TESSITORI
ON THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
Domenica Tessitori
Born in Sedegliano (UD) on 16-09-1926
Died in Rome il 25-02-2008

“My little Lady, come and take me soon”, so Sr Miriam used to pray in the last few days of her illness. And the Holy Virgin certainly came to take her, putting an end to her sufferings, to the

“long and painful offer”, as she used to say. This sincere and deep devotion to the Holy Virgin had been certainly assimilated by Sr Miriam in her paternal house, from daddy Giovanni and mommy Maria, whose only preoccupation was to raise their children on a solid foundation of human and Christian values, of spirit of prayer and sacrifice.

The young Domenica –that was her Christian name- was only 16 when she knocked at the door of St Mary of the Angels convent in Gemona to answer the call of the Lord, who had invited her to follow him in the Evangelical path of perfect charity.

At 18 she consecrated herself to the Lord and, owing to her special devotion to Our Lady, she took the name of Sr Miriam of the Immaculate Conception. This name

encloses all her project of consecrated life, based on the faithful imitation of the Mother of God, in whom she constantly mirrored herself to learn to love the Lord more and more.

Since she had a refined taste in music, her Superiors decided that she had to study at the academy of music.

Later, we find her in Udine, as an assistant to the girls in the boarding school, in Lido dei Pini with the children of the family homes, in Colonnata and in “Mary Immaculate” school of Centocelle, then in the Asisium. Everywhere Sr Miriam lavished children with love, bending over them with a natural reservation and respectful discretion, but also with a lot of sweetness, to instil the beauty of God and of His Mother together with the passion for music. The harmony of music made her close to the heart of her pupils and to the heart of the Holy Virgin: she daily entrusted to her every one of them by praying the Rosary. Even in the last few days she tenderly recalled one or the other, as they were her own children.

On 25 February 2008 our sister



Miriam, after a long, painful and watchful wait, was called to the eternal nuptials with the Bridegroom, our Lord Jesus.

SR MARINA QUERINI



ON THE DIVINE MISERICORDIA

Lina Querini

Born in Pasian di Prato (UD)

on 15-04-1915

Died in Roma on 15-03-2008

The times in which Lina saw the light were not serene ones. The war was drawing close. Vittorio and Iside looked with a joy mixed with worry at their firstborn, who was unaware of the looming disaster. The family was founded on solid and sound traditions: uncles and parents were anxiously busy with the human and spiritual education of the three children and were ready to give them a robust cultural background, together with Christian faith. Lina was sent to the teacher’s training school at the Archbishop’s Seminary in Udine, where, guided by learned and wise teachers, she shaped her character, learnt the taste for poetry, literature and human sciences, and where she acquired an exquisite sensibility and refined manners.

As soon as she came of age, which was 21 at that time, she joined the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart in

Gemona and soon stood out for her intelligence and kindness. She began her task as a teacher when she was still a postulant, outlining precociously what would be her life’s mission. On 5 October 1938 she pronounced with joy her first vows in Gemona, and was immediately sent to study Arts, together with other sisters, at the University of the Sacred Heart in Castelnuovo Fogliani, near Pisa, where Fr Agostino Gemelli had founded an Institute for young sisters. Her student career was quick: thanks to her natural ability and inclination, Sr Marina –this was her religious name– graduated with ease and self-assurance.

Soon afterwards, she was a teacher in the secondary school in Piazza Pitagora, Rome, where she was appreciated and loved by her pupils and their families, whose admiration and esteem has not abated up till now. Among her many gifts we may number liveliness and discretion, respectful wit and reservedness, perspicacity and fine irony. She loved beauty with a poet’s soul, knew how to perceive its manifestations and make it emerge from the people around her, enjoying intimately the reference to another Beauty.

Sr Marina deployed all her energies in teaching, with indefatigable dedication. She collaborated as a guide for the students boarded in the annexed St Elizabeth College. She also strived to help many young sisters with their studies.

Apart from a short interval in Gemona, she stayed in the General House until 1969, the year after it was moved, together with the School, from Pitagora Square to Asisium, in Grottarossa street,

To the other side

in Rome. From 1965 to 1969 she was also a General Councillor of the Congregation.

In the “Mary Immaculate” Institute in Centocelle, Rome, she went on teaching with her usual dedication and love. Another twenty years, other pupils, other families, yet more generous dedication... another environment... so different! It certainly cost her! We cannot penetrate her heart, where her feelings were kept hidden with the jealousy which is proper to the people from Friuli, but we can imagine her suffering. There too she was a teacher who was loved and esteemed by all. She persevered with her mission until her health, which had always been a little frail, deteriorated and she had to give up teaching in the years 1990s. Little by little other pains added to an extreme weakness... until Christmas time 2007. Sr Marina never recovered from a broken tigh-bone, and she barely fed herself, assisted lovingly by Sr Agnesina, the sister who remained by her side up to the end. So she left us, humbly, almost discreetly, in the morning of 15 March 2008.

May the Lord allow her to chant her Poem for Him in heaven.

SR UGOLINA STECCA



OF SAINT FRANCISCO
Giuseppina Stecca

Born in Monigo (TV) on 26-06-1929
Died in Gemona on 18-04-2008

“The spirit of the Congregation draws its source from the contemplation of the mystery of Jesus Christ Crucified.

From His Heart the sisters draw profound benevolence, redemptive love and apostolic zeal for mankind”. (Const. 4)

This was Sr Ugolina’s life programme, which she summed up into two words: “*thanks – sorry*” that she repeated until the end of her life.

Thanks: as a sign of gratitude to God and her brothers for what she had been granted and wanted to give back, on the example of the Seraphic Father St Francis, of whom she had taken her religious name;

sorry: she was aware of her frailty and afraid to sadden God and the people she approached. Giuseppina Stecca, in religion Sr Ugolina, was born in Monigo (province of Treviso) on 28 June 1928, to deeply Christian parents, from whom she learned the most beautiful virtues, which she cultivated with a lot of fervour, so that she grew the desire to dedicate herself totally to the Lord. Her choice was preceded by her sister Sr Bernarda, who was sent by obedience to the

French province and who died of an illness in young age.

Giuseppina entered the FMSC Congregation in Gemona in 1946 and, after her religious Profession, in 1948, she was sent to the Sacred Heart boarding school in Udine as a cook and remained there for 14 years. She had a strong desire to cheer the boarders up, and therefore she took care of the canteen very diligently.

There were moments in which she was inevitably tired; then the Word of God was her true light and strength: “*Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me.*” (John 14:1)

Also in the other communities where she served, in Treviso, San Gottardo (Udine), Ospedaleto di Gemona, Savorgnano del Torre, etc., her only aspiration was to give serenity, create harmony, even by a simple tasty meal.

And with this spirit, Sr Ugolina was able to instil peace, joy, trust and hope everywhere, even in the Mother House, where she stayed since 2004 for health reasons.

Her sudden and unexpected



death was the clearest sign that all her life was a preparation to the encounter with the divine Bridegroom, in faithful obedience to his command: *“This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another”* (John 13:35).

Sr Ugolina, who already enjoy heavenly beatitude, pray for your dear ones, for your religious Family that you loved and served so much, for the whole Church and for peace in every heart.



SR CLEOFA CECCATO
OFN THE EUCHARIST
Maria Ceccato

Born in Asolo (TV) on 22-09-1927
Died in Gemona on 16-05-2008

*“Do not fear! Open
he door to Christ!”*

This is the invitation that Sr Cleofa wishes to address to all those who approached her today for the last farewell, as she is certain that only in the Lord Jesus there is true peace and joy, the fullness of all the Good.

What Sr Cleofa suggested us, before leaving us, at least physically, is the fruit of her daily journey towards the goal that she had always longed for: holiness. Indeed, since she was a child, Maria (Sr Cleofa of the Eucharist) cultivated the no-



blest virtues, striving to imitate the Holy Virgin, whose name she bore. In Her she found the courage and strength to nourish the desire for good that she carried in her heart, and like Her she wanted to live, so much so that she took the decision to dedicate herself totally to the Lord in religious life.

Although she thought that she was unworthy of it, on 11 February 1955, the day of liturgical memory of Our Lady of Lourdes, she entered “St Mary of the Angels” convent in Gemona.

After her religious profession, which took place on 11 February 1957, she stayed for some years in the Mother House and served as a cook. She could meditate on the great benefit she had been granted, that is vocation, and give thanks for it.

So she said: *“By giving up everything, with the grace of God, we entered Love and in this love we should grow day by day. If we err, God will keep loving us and if we humbly live in fraternity, we can be a good example and do good to those who come near us, so that they can say about us the same things that were said about the first Christians: “Look how they love one another...”*. In 1962 she was called by obedience in the rest home in Paluzza and she served as a cook in that community for over 20 years, offering her best

energies at the service of the old and sick until she suffered a stroke and was transferred to the sisters’ infirmary.

When she recovered a little physically, she wanted to dedicate herself to the night assistance of the sick sisters, for about twenty years, in her desire to donate her life completely, on the example of Jesus Eucharist, after whom she bore her religious name: *“I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do”*(John 13:15).

Despite her frail health, Sr Cleofa, as a true FMSH, took actively part in the congregational events, as she herself attested on the occasion of the general Chapter: *“It is with much love that I welcome this commitment for the new Chapter, within my limitations: I do not have brains to do some kind of reasoning, but I have a heart to love God, my Congregation, mankind. I will pray with all my heart that the Holy Spirit may assist this big work of uniting hearts and ideas to please the Lord and do everybody good. May the Holy Virgin and St Francis help us”*.

Love and charity towards God and the brothers has been the pair that enlightened and crowned her life, until sister death, in the silence of night, came to take her and bring her in the Kingdom of the Blessed. O Lord, grant that this solemn Liturgy, celebrated on the day of the memory of St Pasquale Baylon, a big lover of the Eucharist, by intercession of our sister Cleofa, a real “Eucharistic woman”, may be for all of us a “memorial” and a “thanksgiving”!



SR CLOTILDE TODESCO
ON THE MARY IMMACULATE
Gemma Pia Todesco
Born in Solagna on 24-1-1921
Died in Roma on 15-06-2008

When Gemma was born in Solagna, the memory of Mother Angela of the Angel, an exemplary nun, a saint, who lived in this village of the province of Vicenza years of painful donation and silence, had not yet died down. How many other nuns, who lived thanks to people's charity, shared joys and pains with the valley dwellers during world war I and II and the following reconstruction period, amid much hunger and poverty!

We do not know the influence that those memories, handed on orally, had on Gemma's vocation; we know, however, that when she was 24, she left her parents' house to go to Gemona, even if, since she was very fond of her family of origin, she kept suffering for their difficulties and misfortunes, making with them an even stronger bond. That was a precise and irrevocable decision, which already said a lot about the tenacious and frank character of this postulant.

When she was 26, right after she professed, she assisted the boarders in Gemona (province of Udine) and later continued this service in Pradamano (Udine); then she was back in Gemona with the same task until 1955. She carried out manual tasks very well, especially wardrobe-keeping and sewing and could boast good housekeeping capabilities. For that reason, her

superiors, after a two-year experience in Tricesimo (Udine), asked her to assist and educate young orphan girls, a service that Sr Clotilde carried out with dedication in Lido dei Pini and in Centocelle for 9 years. We remember how she paraded with her little girls clad with taste and elegance. If she cared for it? Very much indeed... and for Heaven's sake never find fault with her adoptive daughters! Sr Clotilde certainly did not spare herself, not even when she was sent as Superior to Fognano (Ravenna) nor when she went back to Lido dei Pini (Anzio) and Centocelle as treasurer, since 1971!

At the wheel of her "seicento", or sitting next to the driver, she could be seen driving up and down the general markets, intent on shopping with cautiousness, because money was never too much, but the sisters should not lack necessities.

She was straightforward, blunt, frank, and so was her judgment on situations and events, as if she meant to deny, under a certain hardness, her need for friendship and understanding, which were buried into the depths of her soul: it was an aspect of her character with which she dealt up to the end.

The Lord surprised her through illness. It was a strange, not well-defined sickness, that caused her strong pain and had her undergo surgery several times. From Christmas 2006 her strength declined visibly; she still had some lucid intervals and she prayed incessantly the Lord to free her from so much pain. She wore out little by little during the last few months and, exhausted, she passed away surrounded by the sisters on 15 June 2008, at 11.00, in the provincial infirmary.

Despite the Superiors' will, her sister Diomira demanded inflexibly that the body be buried in the family tomb, in Solagna, on 17



June.

SR CLEA PEZZATO
OF THE EUCHARIST
Antonia Pezzato

Born in Ambrogio di Trabaseleghe
on 28-02-1913
Died in Gemona on 29-06-2008

"I have done my best in the race, I have run the full distance and I have kept the faith.....The Lord stayed with me and gave me strength so that I was able to proclaim the full message....." (2Tim. 4: 7, 17)

Today, together with a good number of sisters who have already preceded us to the Kingdom of the Blessed, we have one more sister who celebrates the Heavenly Liturgy on the Solemnity of the Apostles Peter and Paul : is Sr. Clea of the Eucharist who left us to Heaven at the dawn of this day. Antonia, as religious Sr. Clea of the Eucharist, was born on 28th February 1913, in a simple family rich in Christian values. She is grown up by cultivating the best virtues which contributed to mature her desire to consecrate herself totally to the Lord. For that at the age of 17 she asked to join with the religious family of the Franciscan Sisters of Gemona. During her formation period she could daily experience the joy of following Christ, by committed herself always with

much generosity and faithfulness in all her undertakings.

After the First Profession in 1933, by obedience she was sent to Vedelago to give her service together with other sisters in printing where she remained for 30 years30 years like Jesus her beloved spouse to prepare for the apostolic life. In fact in 1963, she was transferred to Postioma as the animator of the community and to give her service in the nursery school and in the parish pastoral work.

The different communities which got the grace to benefit her presence and above all of her witness are Vivaro, Basaldella, Rauscedo, Paularo etc.they realized in Sr. Clea

a real lover of Christ and she wished that every person whom she met “What she has heard, seen with her eyes and her hands have touched “ (1Jn.1) being aware of carrying a precious treasure in fragile pot.

Her last mission was in Mother House, where she remained long due to her ill health. Exemplary was her daily offering through her continual prayer and the serenity. Sr. Clea was very discreet and averse in every circumstance, but very lively to manifest her unlimited trust and love in the Lord and in her Mother Mary.....joyful faith and love which was visible till the last days of her life. This year Sr. Clea celebrated

the 75 years of her religious Profession and on that occasion she was given a beautiful icon of Our Lady with Child in her arms. Her gaze on it was her last gesture of love before she closed her eyes to this world and continue to have the ecstasy in heaven where the Virgin Mary has surely received her in her arms as the sign of her maternal welcome in the Kingdom of the Blessed.

Let us pray to this our dear sister who already enjoys the beatific vision in heaven, to intercede for us from the Lord the grace to live in coherence and fidelity our lives in constant search of a real assimilation with Christ.



“Redemption is offered to us in the sense that we have been given hope, trustworthy hope, by virtue of which we can face our present: the present, even if it is arduous, can be lived and accepted if it leads towards a goal, if we can be sure of this goal, and if this goal is great enough to justify the effort of the journey.”

(Spes Salvi N°1)

