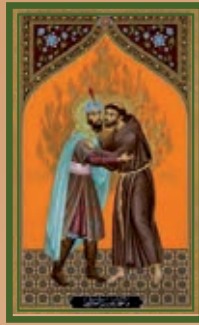




YEAR XCV – N°1/2019

# PACE E BENE

SUORE FRANCESCANE MISSIONARIE DEL SACRO CUORE



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## 34<sup>TH</sup> WORLD YOUTH DAY IN PANAMA

A few months have now passed since the World Youth Day in Panama 2019 (22-27 January 2019) and often beautiful memories and spoken words come back to mind, thanks also to the whatsapp groups that continue to send messages to friends and families we met in Panama.

It is the first WYD, I lived with a particular and beautiful group of young people from this mission in which I am living. From Turkey to WYD in Panama we left in 18 people: 15 young people, 1 Salesian priest, Don Jacky Doyen, 1 diocesan deacon, Don Nikola Dinc (from the diocese of Smyrna) and I, Sr. Miriam Oyarzo, fmsc ... we were a small group that represented our 3 dioceses of Turkey: Istanbul, Smyrna and Iskenderun. Our WYD began in the evening before the departure of 22 January 2019, when Fr Jacky celebrated the farewell Mass to prepare our hearts and minds for this wonderful encounter with the Lord, with the Pope and with many youth of the world. The spirit of the youth was skyrocketing, enthusiasm invaded us and the desire to live this moment was unique ... such a long journey to experience a universal event ... it was worth relishing!

Our experience as “Turkey” group was unique and unforgettable, why?

Because only the fact of saying that we came from a Muslim country, that we were young Christians of different rites and churches, was something that struck everyone and left us without words ... a true witness of ecumenism. Some of our youth were from the Armenian Catholic Church, other Chaldeans, other Syrians and other Latins. Therefore, this ecumenical group has left its mark on this WYD: young people together can really do great things.... together ... despite diversity and different religious traditions, which we felt there



during the WYD as true wealth.

The media impact enjoyed by Turkey meant much that many people have approached us, to ask: Are you Christians? Or Muslims? How is Christianity lived in Turkey?

In addition, a thousand other questions. The testimony of the youth, of the joy and sympathy that characterizes the Turkish people touched everyone, especially the families that welcomed and accommodated us. In reality we felt, the WYD is not just meeting other young people, but experiencing the Church, and for us as a group this has been the real treasure at Panama.

We were welcomed by the parish “St Mary” in Panama and entrusted to Ms. Debora Costarangos, our guardian angel in Panama. Ms. Debora has placed us in the different families of the parish, which have opened not only the doors of their homes but above all their hearts. It was these six families that made our WYD a unique event, they made the young Turks experience the warmth of the domestic church, the love for the foreigner brother and sister, the acceptance of the Mother Church ... We all were marveled at this cordiality and simplicity of the people of Panama.





These families have adopted us as true children; they accompanied us to every event, organizing themselves with vehicles, with food, with the time table for not leaving ourselves even a second... They truly witnessed the motto of WYD: "Here is the servant of the Lord; let it be done for me according to your word".

The most awaited moment for all of us all was the vigil prayer followed by the concluding Mass of WYD; the young people were eager to hear the message of Pope Francis.

The vigil was lived in a climate of prayer; silence reigned in every corner and the young followed everything ... the songs, the moments of reflection and the particular time in which we had the adoration of the Holy Eucharist. ..everything in an absolute silence ... and at the end the holy rosary, prayed in different languages.

Pope Francis invited us to "be part of a story of love (the Salvation of God) that is intertwined with our stories" to be able to bear fruit where we are, how we are and with whom we are. That 'yes' which He said first and then we repeat after him; that 'yes' that Mary said and that saved the world ... Mary the "influencer" of God ... To us young Pope Francis asked: "Do you young people want to be" influencer "in the style of

Mary?" And everyone in a resounding chorus replied: 'Yes!'.

Early in the morning the joy of waiting for the Holy Mass caused the whole camp in movement; young people prepared for the meeting with Jesus and to hear the words of Pope Francis and also waited to hear the announcement where the next WYD will be. The Gospel of Lk 4: 20-21, where speaks how Jesus enters the Synagogue, reads the scroll of the Scripture and announces that "today" this Scripture is fulfilled, touched at the bottom of our hearts. They all deeply struck with the words of Pope Francis when he said: "You are not the future of God: you young people are the now of God! He calls you, he calls you into your communities, He calls you into your cities to go in search of everyone ... to stand up and together to take the Word and realize the dream with which the Lord dreamed you! "

In the following days, when we did the evaluation together, all the young people in the group shared the difficulty and concern they feel for the future, they recalled how the Pope said to them in this WYD: "You are the 'today' of God". They recalled the words of the Pope who invited us to look at ourselves now, and not to stress for the future, but to do something today in our Turkey, in our churches and dioceses ... to be and to build a better world.

We are grateful to the Lord for this experience, that we have lived, for the new friendships, the known places, the prayer and the message that Pope Francis gave to the young people: "You are not the future ... you are the present". From these words spoken by the Holy Father was born the desire of the young people to continue, to live the experiences and share them "together".

This is the hope and fruit of this WYD ... walking together as a young Turkish church. We pray the Lord that this desire may come true and together we can be God's "in this land.



*Sr Miriam Oyarzo, fmsc*

**WYD 2019 PANAMA IN ROME!  
26 JANUARY 2019 ... WE WERE THERE TOO!**

Pope Francis in Panama for the XXXIV World Youth Day and we, the young sisters of Centocelle and the junior sisters of Asisium, at the Shrine of Divino Amore, Rome for the night vigil of WYD. The service for youth ministry of the diocese of Rome organized this event to allow the many young people of Rome, who for various reasons were unable to attend WYD in Panama, still to live an experience in communion with the Pope and the youth of the whole world.



We too the young the sisters from the international juniorate Asisium and the young sisters from the Mary Immaculate province wanted to be close to

the Holy Father along with more than 800 young people from the various parishes and youth groups of the diocese.

The program kept us engaged in a series of events from 8.30 pm at the Auditorium of the New Shrine of 'Divino Amore' Rome, waiting for the live broadcast with Panama for the speech of Pope Francis. Then at 5.30 am on Sunday, the Eucharistic Celebration was presided over by the Cardinal Vicar His Eminence Angelo De Donatis. The Gospel passage that guided us throughout the night was the passage from St. Luke 1: 26-38, the Annunciation, which narrates Mary's YES to the proposal of love that God gave her; with her 'here I am', Mary, offers her love to God and God takes flesh in her.



Every intervention, every moment of animation was focused on making this Word of God resound in the hearts, to tell everyone, the look of love that God has for him. The personal call to a more love that the Lord does to each one, and to inspire people to respond with courage and joy to their “Here I am” in the little things of everyday life and in the great choices of life.



It was surprising to see how, the young people, some of them very young, participated with equal enthusiasm in the moments of prayer, Eucharistic adoration, dance, rock, catechesis animated with video clips and rap and pop music ... Even more surprising to experience how these new ways of evangelizing are. It was really a reason for reflection and prayer for us also to be able to pronounce our “Here I am” and our belonging to the Lord, following the example of Mary with ever renewed joy and authenticity. With a happy heart, we wish all the young people to be attentive listeners to the voice of God who speaks to their hearts. To respond with courage and love, so that this answer is not “a passive or resigned acceptance”, but a decided YES as that of Mary: “the YES of those who want to get involved and risk, of those who want to venture everything, without any other guarantee than the certainty of knowing that they are bearers of a promise” (Pope Francis).



**TO MEET POPE FRANCIS...  
In our COUNTRY, in our PARISH  
and in our CONVENT!**

Peace and good to all the sisters of the Congregation and the friends who read this article!

Pope Francis will come to Bulgaria ... he will come to Rakovski! With this announcement, the adventure began to prepare us to welcome Pope Francis among us!

On 12 December 2018, we had a visit from the Vatican together with our Apostolic Nuncio, Msgr. Anselmo Guido Peccorari, the mayor of Rakovski Pavel Gugherov, father Dimitar Dimitrov, father Strahil Kavalenov and other representatives of the state. It was decided on that occasion, that Pope Francis would celebrate Mass in our parish, during which children from all over Bulgaria would receive their First Holy Communion.

Finally, it was also decided that the Pope would have lunch in our convent together with the Bulgarian Bishops, and after lunch, he would have stopped for his afternoon rest.

From those days, of the end of the year 2018, we started preparing for this extraordinary event. Regarding the celebration for the First Holy Communion of the children, the liturgical commission announced that the Pope wanted simple songs so that the children could sing and so it happened. Monsignor Guido Marini, the papal master of ceremonies, gave us all the indications in his two preparatory visits.

To make the preparations at home, we waited for the information from the Vatican and the Apostolic Nunciature.



The youth groups were involved as volunteers in charge of the order in the squares and churches.

They began their work during the spring holidays painting the convent, the doors and the windows with so much enthusiasm! The Sisters of the Communities of Gemona, Assisi and Rome know their effective skill in many things having met them during their visit to Italy last year.

We want to share something very beautiful with you, sisters

and all the readers: all the children of nursery, kindergartens, elementary, primary and secondary schools have made drawings that we have managed to exhibit in the whole area of the parish, the church, the convent and the square.

The young artists have created about 1000 drawings to welcome Pope Francis!



By now, we had a certain clarity from the organization and preparation. Two important points remained to be clarified. What would the menu of the Pope's lunch have been and how many children- between 245- would have received the First Communion from the Pope himself?

In the first days of April, Monsignor Mauricio Rueda Beltz, the head of the international travel organization of Pope Francis, arrived in Bulgaria and gave us the Pope's menu with the condition that the environment had to be simple, with plates, cups and utensils ordinary.

Here is the answer to the second point. A few days before the visit to Bulgaria, the Pope himself took the phone and personally called the liturgical commission, warning that he would give First Communion to all the children, not only to some, as was supposed. What a joy for everyone!



Why is Pope Francis in Bulgaria?

This is the motivation: "His Holiness Pope Francis makes an apostolic journey to Bulgaria from 5 to 7 May 2019 to congratulate the Bulgarian people and give each Bulgarian his blessing for peace and prosperity. He will meet representatives of state authorities, civil society and the diplomatic corps".



Our first meeting with the Pope took place on the same day of his arrival in Sofia, May 5, near the Orthodox cathedral, where he prayed the "Regina Caeli" and celebrated the open-air Mass in the center of Sofia, the so-called ecumenical square, precisely because nearby there are the Catholic and Orthodox Cathedrals, the Synagogue and the Mosque. It is with great joy that we have participated in these moments, accompanying the faithful of our parish by arranging buses.

The message that Pope Francis gave, was formulated in the following sentence: God surprises, God loves, God calls! These words touched the hearts not only of the Catholic community, but also of our Orthodox brothers and numerous participants.

Early in the morning of May 6, the sun shone among the first roses blooming in the courtyard, although the stormy rains were expected. Every sister started the day with the responsibility she had for this special day with a guest as unique as Pope Francis !

Sister Jyothi Kodumagundla, a missionary in Bulgaria, had the task of being in the sacristy prepared for the Pope and helping there. The Provincial Superior Sister Angelica Hadjihanni, together with Sr. Svetla Zekova, had to meet the Cardinals and Bishops in the other sacristy to welcome them and help them.

Sister Gracykutty Puthiyadath, together with the volunteers from the missions of Gitnitza and Rakovski and the Italian cook Giuseppe Lomuscio who lives in Bulgaria, organized in the convent everything concerning lunch and the service of the two groups: the Pope with the Bulgarian Bishops, the Apostolic Nuncio and the 14 persons of Vatican Security.

The other sisters, Sister Elka Staneva, Sister Krasimira Govedarska, Sister Luigia Miglioranza and Sister Lorenza Giroto headed for the Church together with Superior General Sister Paola Dotto, where we had to welcome the children, their parents for the long-awaited Holy Mass with Holy Father Francis!



Then, almost after three hours of waiting, the Media broadcasted the first video of the Pope's entrance to Rakovski, the 245 children waiting for the Pope to receive "Jesus" for the first time from Him, sang in a single voice Pope ... Pope... Pope...! There was an inexpressible atmosphere in the Church, while we expected the Pope to enter among the children.

This festival of faith has marked the hearts of the children, young people and adults. Many faithful shared that no one expected to have such an honor for our small Catholic

community in Bulgaria and even more so in our small town of Rakovski. As the Pope himself said: God surprises, God loves, God calls!

This was the answer to why this grace was reserved for us! Pope Francis and the whole procession that preceded him entered the Church and approached the altar! The children's voices were intertwined with the melodies of the characteristic Bulgarian musical instruments.

In fact, the thrill of waiting was already a reality!

During his speech, the Pope talked with the children asking them the question: What is the Christian identity card? And helping them with other questions they found together the answer: Our identity card is this: God is our Father, Jesus is our Brother, the Church is our family, we are brothers, our law is love.

In this way, the liturgical celebration took place, an unforgettable moment of grace for all.

Finally, when the Pope was on his way to the exit, a shower of white rose petals fell from the ceiling of the Church right on him!



What a beauty, what a symbolic value! The roses - symbol of Bulgaria, and at that time also symbol of the Eucharist that the children received, expressed the desire to pour abundant graces on the person of the Pope.

Here is the next exciting moment that followed. Welcome the Pope Francis to our convent! According to the Vatican's request, in the courtyard, in front of the convent entrance, the Superior General, the Provincial Superior and the Local Superior had to wait for the Holy Father to welcome him and lead him to the other sisters inside the convent.



The moment he came close to us, we saw a calm and simple smile on his face.

The Superior General and the Provincial Superior greeted him with the words: "Welcome among us Holy Father"! Instead, Sister Elka Staneva held a red Bulgarian rose without thorns, in her hands.

Giving the rose to the Pope, he said that for him the rose was without thorns! His face showed that he had several thoughts, which he immediately shared with the following words: "Then

when the rose is without thorns means, that we are in Heaven, because there are no thorns there"! Thanking, he then headed towards the entrance of the convent door.

The other sisters greeted him with emotion and immense joy. He continued going straight into the refectory of the sisters, where a hot plate of lasagna was waiting for him.

Together with the Pope, the Vatican Guard and his doctor were present.

For them there was the same menu, which they ate in the catechism room prepared for them. The youth volunteers took care of them and only the sisters were in charge of the service of the Pope and the Bishops.

After a half-hour lunch, the Pope retired to rest in the room prepared for him.



During this time in the convent courtyard, we had planned to gather the disabled people and the poor of whom we take care of in the mission. Together with them were the parents of the sisters of Bulgaria.

This is how we organized the moment, when the Holy Father would leave and continue his program with the next meetings - greeted by all the sisters, volunteers, sick, poor and parents of the Bulgarian sisters.



After the rest, the Holy Father gave us a precious gift - Triptych of Saint Mary of the Angels, made in Bethlehem.

We have also given ourselves a typical gift of our country - pure rose oil, specialty of our country and an icon of the Mother of God made of Lebanese wood.

We have all received his blessing personally and each sister has had the opportunity to share some words about her missionary life, for example, the older sister, Sister Luigia, shared that she was old and was a missionary for 60 years, also served at the Nunciature in Turkey.

The Pope listened carefully and replied, "I too am old, but old wine is good wine"!

Sr. Paola asked to bless the entire Congregation; Sr. Angelica invited the Holy Father to Cyprus and Lebanon.

The Pope followed everyone with so much concentration, listening carefully to each word.



Coming out of the convent to the street, where the Pope mobile was, the sick and the poor were ready to greet him with flowers in hand.

While the Pope watched them with his merciful and tender gaze, Sr. Elka told him that now our community is complete because these people are part of our daily life.

Hearing this, he gathered his fingers in the palm of his hand and said words of agreement that it should be so.

As he approached the sick and the poor, he greeted them all and personally gave them a papal rosary.

For all of us, who have witnessed God's special grace in these days, we have nothing else to do but to give thanks before the Blessed Sacrament for all that we have received, lived and for a blessed future!

Looking at the Pope these days we have seen and experienced that his person was full of peace!

He carried true peace within him; and the same peace he came to give to every person whom he has met in these days. Pope Francis brought the seeds of peace, he sowed them in our hearts ... and that now they must bear fruit every day! THANKS TO HIS HOLINESS!



We thank the Superior General Sister Paola Dotto for her presence among us in these days, the Provincial Superior Suor Angelica Hadzihanni, the Bulgarian sisters Suor Krasimira and Suor Svetla from the Lebanese and Cyprus missions to share and live this great joy.

We thank the sisters of the Congregation, who participated this event from far, for their prayers and for the thoughts they have communicated to us.

Finally, we share the letter we received in these days from Pope Francis after his visit among us in our mission.

*The Sisters of Bulgaria*

### DAMIETTA ... AND ITS MESSAGE

In these last months, perhaps more than once, we have heard the name of Damietta being repeated, recalling the meaning contained in it, the Franciscan spirit communicated to the world, which as we know, is also inspired Pope Francis.

Damietta is an Egyptian town, built on the convergence of the waters of the Nile, where they merge significantly with those of the Mediterranean, then flow together towards the Ocean. From where so much interest and attention around this word, long remained on the margin or in the shadow, but still able to preserve the meaning of peaceful coexistence? It is highlighted at the time of the crusades due to its particular strategic position, so much so that it was chosen as the seat of the Islamic government, the usual residence of the Sultan A-Malik Al Kamil. This personality comes to the forefront every time he remembers the bold achievement of Francis of Assisi, accomplished 800 years ago. Moved by the desire to visit the great Ottoman Authority, Francis stopped a bit with him and made a peaceful dialogue, as men created and loved by the same God. What really happened in Al Malik's tent is impossible to know. There are certainly many questions, which we can ask ourselves. The unimaginable episode that took place in a context of war, of the actions of hostile force and the way that became an event of historical significance, demonstrate the possibility of a coexistence of peace and harmony even in a contrary or adverse situations. The originality of the meeting, in fact, lies in Francis who must be oriented towards openness, acceptance, the gift ... of what the other can tell him or show him, humble and poor, 'even mild and naked, without a common habit', observes the sultan.

The outcome is also unexpected for the saint, who is surprised, impressed by the kind of hospitality offered by the Sultan of his reaction, of wisdom, not of revenge, thus overturning every sign of power, but demonstrating an overwhelming humanity. In the transparency of the lived experience, Francis cannot but return to his brothers in his seraphic simplicity, in his virtue of 'poor and stranger' with everyone and always. He too is transformed thanks to the spirit of justice of the sultan, which induces peace, open, free and blessing dialogue.

"This time - the Sultan concludes - I will go against the law. May it never be that I condemn you to death ... it would be a wicked reward to

have you killed, that you risked death to save my soul in the hands of the Lord."

That is why the anniversary of Damietta - as the Custos of Jerusalem again underlines, Fr. Francesco Patton - whose spirit has remained for 800 years in the background, it must become today more than ever, an appeal not to give in to any violence, to always meet and welcome without creating emptiness, breaking humanity with religious pretext. The grandeur of this event goes far beyond, therefore, with respect to the time in which it occurred. The Minister General, Father Michael Perry, in his Letter to the whole Order, invites all the Franciscans to be faithful to the vision of Francis: "In fact, the Christian gift that we must specifically share with our Muslim brothers and sisters is not simply that of the humble Christian, but the experience of a humble God. Unique in his time, Francis prayed to God saying, "You are humility" ... The search for God of the Christian heart finds rest in the humility of the manger and of the cross, signs of a God who stooped to a servant and humbled himself for our love. Francis invites us to reflect that divine humility for those we meet, taking the first step in service and love. However, fidelity to the vision of Francis, invites us to welcome the believers of other faith and traditions with a sense of reverence, with a mind and a heart open to the presence of God in such a meeting".

On various occasions, Pope Francis remembers the poor man of Assisi as a "man of peace" who urges his brothers to greet "The Lord give you peace"! He too, like Saint Francis, is "eager to bring to all men, with a joyful and ardent spirit, the beautiful" news "of the ineffable love of God the almighty and merciful! A strong and clear sign of this commitment was his trip to the United Arab Emirates last February, to meet the Great Imam Al-Azhar Ahmad Al-Tayeb with whom he signed the Document on Human Brotherhood for Peace

and Common Cohabitation. "A document - says Pope Francis - reasoned with sincerity and seriousness to be a common declaration of good and loyal will to invite all the people who carry in their hearts faith in God and faith in human 'brotherhood' to unite and work together. Therefore, it becomes a guide for the new generations towards the culture of mutual respect, in the understanding of the great divine grace that makes all human beings brothers and sisters".



## **THE FRANCISCAN FAMILY in ISTANBUL on a SPECIAL PILGRIMAGE**

On the occasion of the eighth centenary of the meeting of St. Francis with Sultan al-Kamil, the Franciscan OFM friars of the International Fraternity for Ecumenical and Inter-religious Dialogue in Turkey, organized a pilgrimage with a fraternity of Dervishes - Muslims of Istanbul "Galata Mevlevi". Sr. Miriam Oyarzo, a sister of the fraternity of Büyükada in Turkey, also participated in this pilgrimage. Between the Dervish confraternity and the Franciscan friars of Istanbul there is a friendship begun for different years between Fr. Gwenolé Jeusset and Dedé Nail Kesova, spiritual masters of this group. The pilgrimage took place from 9 to 14 March 2019, and had significant breaks in places, Lyon, Nantes and Paris.

Great organizer of this event was Fr. Gwenolé Jeusset, OFM, who was a member of the fraternity in Turkey, and now lives in France (Nantes).

Father Gwenolé still cares about dialogue and continues to keep in touch with so many people to sensitize each community to ecumenical and interreligious dialogue.

Both in Lyon and in Nantes, the days passed between meetings with local communities, conferences held by Fr. Gwenolé Jeusset. He



spoke everywhere, of how important the meeting of Saint Francis with the Sultan was. To be able to celebrate and commemorate this event today, offered a new way to "meet" each other despite diversity, possibility of danger and situations of conflict.

At the center of our pilgrimage was the interreligious celebration between the Franciscans and the dervishes.

The celebration began with the entry of the members of the two groups in procession, to continue with mutual listening and prayer done together, invoking Peace and fraternity.

The Franciscans prayed to Father St. Francis and invoked God with the prayer of St. Francis," the Praises of God Most High". After invoking to God the Father for the unity of the human race and for world peace, the protection of the Most Holy Mother of God, Mary, was invoked.

Then followed the moment of the "Semâ" or the dance of the Dervishes, which is rich in symbols and has the purpose of helping the mind to be completely turned in Love towards God.

On this occasion in which we remembered a journey and meeting held between two people became history. They in fact showed us how the meetings could open not only roads but also minds and hearts.

A "friendship" between these two fraternities was celebrated in true Franciscan simplicity.

I hope that all the celebrations of this event will bring lasting effects and true fruits, that we can thus "meet" our brothers without prejudices, build bridges and break down the barriers of fear and indifference.

**GET-TOGETHER of the FRANCISCAN FAMILY  
to CELEBRATE the 800 YEARS  
on the MEETING of ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI WITH THE SULTAN**

On March 30, 2019 in Santiago de Chile, the Franciscan High School “Mother Cecilia Lazzeri” opened its doors to welcome more than 200 people, religious, laity, young people of the Franciscan family.

Filled with enthusiasm in an environment of fraternal joy, in simplicity, together they shared a day of prayer, reflection and, of course, hospitality-spontaneous and welcoming- that is characteristic of our charism. The theme of dialogue and mission

helped us to understand how a meeting that happened so long ago is so urgent and timely in these moments of our history.

Holy Spirit has helped us to open our hearts and to make this experience so alive and profound.

We listened to the report by Misael Camus, Professor of Church History at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and former rector of the Catholic University of the North.

He explained the historical, political, social and ecclesial context in which St. Francis decided to

meet the Sultan and underlined the qualities of the saint, explaining that St. Francis is a reference for the Church, to be an “example of interreligious dialogue and understanding of the other” .



For Fr. Isauro Covili, Provincial Minister of the Franciscan Order, the meeting between the ‘Poverello’ of Assisi and the Muslim Sultan, has left great lessons, which must be lived day by day. He said that St. Francis has returned transformed by that meeting. He commented, “God

*lives in the other, speaks to me differently, and this should lead me to look at my life and reflect on what aspect I must change, modify, so that fraternity and this God who is community and Person, be better manifested in my life” .*

He added that this meeting allows us to rediscover our identity and those elements that this meeting of Francis and the Sultan contain; they open us to dialogue, to the dimension of the most universal fraternity, to the encounter with the other, to respect other and for the other.”





The day continued with group work among the different fraternities, in which the participants reflected on the important episode in the life of St. Francis and on the ability to be Christians by embodying the values in history.

During the day, the Assembly was visited by Archbishop Celestino Aós, Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Santiago, who underlined the humility of St. Francis on his journey to the east. He said, “If you think about it, Francis of Assisi was defeated on this trip. He went to convert the Sultan and it did not happen. He went to seek martyrdom among the Muslims, and was not killed, but he has learned from all these, that we can seek ways of understanding, without going to war. We must all



love each other as brothers, especially in moments of bitterness and pain “.

Friar Alberto Nahuelanca, professor of missiology and National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in Chile, presented the challenges arising from the meeting of Francis with the Sultan, and explained the need to “return to his spirituality” and “rebuild human relations.”

Antonia Silva, a member of the pastoral care of the Franciscan Youth explained that one of the main challenges the young people have today is precisely that of being, “tolerant and fraternal with others. We are different people, but something always unites us, our being people “.

In his speech, Father Miguel Ángel in Arizona, Minister Provincial of the Franciscan-Capuchin Order said that he found the meeting of Francis with the Sultan wonderful, considering that in those times the Church met with Muslims only with violence and weapons. St. Francis approached the sultan looking into his eyes, offering love and listening to him.

The meeting concluded with a moment of prayer in the “San Damiano” chapel of the Mother Cecilia Lazzeri School, in which the Franciscan family, united in the desire to live the Gospel

as Saint Francis did, asked its protector to learn from his legacy and live his charism.

The provincial minister Father Isauro Covili thanked the Congregation of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart for hosting the meeting and in particular Sister Marcela Uribe Mancilla, Provincial Superior, and Sr. Ma. Fides Lorenzon for her simplicity and her significant contribution to the Franciscan Family in Chile.



## **Celebration for the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the visit of St. Francis of Assisi to Cyprus**

The year 2019 is very significant for all Franciscans, especially for those living in the Middle East. The reason for this joy and celebration is the eight hundred years-1219-2019 the Pilgrimage of Peace of St. Francis to the Holy Land.

The Latin Church of Cyprus celebrated this anniversary from 8 to 12 May 2019 with a series of events in Larnaca, Nicosia, Limassol and Paphos.

Although no direct sources have been found, it is very likely that St. Francis arrived in Cyprus during his journey to or from Damietta, the island of Cyprus being an important and busy base for ships traveling to the Holy Land and Egypt. In Damietta, there was the famous meeting of St. Francis with

the Sultan of Egypt Al-Malik Al-Kamil in 1219,

On 9 May, the commemorative celebration took place in Nicosia, in the Presidential Palace. The diplomatic corps accredited in the Republic of Cyprus and the Christian and Muslim religious authorities were invited. In the absence of President Sign. Nicos Anastasiades, who was abroad at a European summit, Sign. Demetris Syllouris, interim President and President of the House of Representatives, gave



the welcome speech, saying among other things: “First of all, let me say how pleased I am with this commemorative event at the Presidential Palace. This shows our own close ties with the Latinos of Cyprus, which, as I have noted on other occasions, constitute a very dynamic and special part of our people”.

Referring to the political situation of the times of the Fifth Crusade, the interim President recalled the situation of conflict that the Republic of Cyprus is experiencing with Turkey, recalling that still today it is necessary to reach and support peace, dialogue and mutual understanding, inaugurated by the meeting between Francis and the Sultan.

Other speeches were made by Ms. Antonella Mantovani, representative of the Latin Community in the Chamber of Deputies, Fr. Jerzy Kraj, Patriarchal Vicar of the Latins, Fr. Francesco Patton, Custodian of the Holy Land, and Mons. Leopoldo Girelli, Apostolic Nuncio in Cyprus.

Among the various speeches, there were moments of music and dance by the students of the St. Mary’s School of Limassol and the Holy Land College of Nicosia. Even a group of youth of the Philippines wanted to participate with a dance.



The school in Limassol presented a short journey through songs, recitation and dance of the commemorative event, starting with the song “Francis’ dream” which recalls the vocation of St. Francis. This was followed by a recitation-theater, of the arrest of Francis and his companion Illuminato, by the Saracens, of their meeting with the Sultan, of the friendship that was created between them and of the commitment that they took for the building up of peace. In



fact the last song of the school was “Instrument of peace” accompanied by a dance.

During the ceremony, the Custos of the Holy Land awarded some prizes to personalities and representatives of the institutions that had distinguished themselves for their commitment to dialogue and peace and for the collaboration with the Latin Church of Cyprus. Absent for unexpected family reasons, the mufti of Cyprus, Talip Atalay, asked the Maronite archbishop of Cyprus, Mons. Joseph Soueif, to send his prize in his place; this gesture has been interpreted as a sign of interreligious collaboration and good relations. We, the Franciscan Missionaries of the Sacred Heart also was recognized and appreciated for our collaboration with commitment. Our provincial superior Sr. Angelica Hadjihanni, received the award.

At the beginning of the evening, Fr. Noel Muscat, a lecturer at the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum in Jerusalem, offered a brief historical evocation, which he presented in more details the following day, at the University of Cyprus. He gave an important document on the sources and effects of the meeting between St. Francis and the Sultan, which was given by Fr. Jason Welle of the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies.



Alongside institutional and academic initiatives, the “Terra Sancta Organ Festival” offered four concerts related to the figure and life of St. Francis: the Italian organist Ferruccio Bartoletti improvised on the 1918 silent Italian film, “Fratello Sole”, with the subtitles of the film in Greek and English.

## **MEETING of FORMATORS and ANIMATORS of YOUTH VOCATIONAL and PASTORAL MINISTRY**

From March 10th to 24th, a meeting was held in Assisi for the formators and the sisters who are in the youth -vocational and pastoral ministry of our religious family with the theme:

*“With Evangelical Passion:  
on the journey with the youth,*

*let us renew our Missionary enthusiasm “.*

On March 9, the General House witnessed the arrival of 26 sisters from 14 different mission countries.

It was a wonderful and venturing invitation that the Superior General, Sr Paola and the Council made to bring the sisters together.

On 10 March, we arrived at “Assisi” and in the afternoon, we met with Sr Paola Superior General and Sr Tiziana and Sr Rose the councilors for the opening of this time of formation in the light of the Synod of Youth held in October 2018.



Sr Paola in welcoming us and opening the meeting invited us to “put aside the things to do, to stop, listen, and renew the responsibility of formation, the charismatic and missionary commitment. Renew the joy of being with HIM; witness the gift of vocation and the challenge of walking with the people of God. Let us be guided, enlightened, and renewed by the dialogue of young people with the Church and with the young people who are entrusted to us and whom we meet on the way. To confirm our charismatic identity to transmit and value the belonging and unity of the family of the FMSC sisters. Our identity as missionaries and the internationality that is an opportunity to transmit the gift, the flame that made our Founders move “.

Every day we had the joy of participating in the celebration of the Eucharist, liturgical hours of

morning and evening along with the friars in the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli. The place and the solemnity of the celebrations have helped everyone to live an intense and beautiful experience of the Lord and of the fraternity.

March 11th was kept aside to make an introduction of oneself and the presentation of one’s own realities. Listening to the experience of the other was a great enrichment and wonder: understanding how the charism, in diverse forms expresses its strength in the different corners of the world. We had been given prior to the meeting certain proposals to reflect on which we tried to share in different moments.

To live the commitment of formator, of animator in listening and letting oneself be converted by what the Word of God and the Holy Spirit works in our lives, living a deep communion with Jesus.

To form oneself and let oneself be formed to become a credible witness with one's life. Walk with the young, paying attention to listen to and understand their needs, their difficulties, their wounds, to help them know each other to welcome their reality, being with them, help them experience the love of God in their life.

In the following days, we had several speakers who guided us with their knowledge and experience. Fr. Roberto De Luca ofm, who lives and works at the "Centro Giovanile Francese Terra dei Fioretti" in Loreto, was the first person who motivated us with his presentation. For his precious pastoral experience, he was summoned to participate in the great event of the Synod of young people held in October 2018. He presented the report: "From the document of the Synod of young people the new challenges of the Church"



Fr. Roberto was able to create in us with his enthusiasm the

extraordinary event of the Synod, reporting to us "The Pope wanted to give his eyes to the young people to see and to hear from them, how they see and feel the Church, their expectations, their desires, their needs. The Synod set the Church on a path, listening to the reality, thanks to the many young people who responded on-line to the questionnaires and who allowed the drafting of "Instrumentum laboris". The presence of young people at the synod itself played an important role.

The three and a half weeks of the synod were divided into three parts:

- 1- RECOGNIZE the situation of the world of youth today.
- 2 INTERPRETING: in the light of one's experience with Jesus, how can he/she illuminate the world.
- 3- CHOOSE: concrete choices to be implemented based on one's discernment with Jesus

*What is the Spirit of the Synod?*

a) A CHURCH IN LISTENING AND OUTGOING: synodality as an ordinary event of the concrete life of the Church, this means meeting the young man where he is, on a human and spiritual level, there even if he is wrong. Jesus accompanied the disciples of Emmaus in the same way, on their journey in their disappointment, HE HEARD them. Jesus' concern is to enter into a relationship with humanity.

b) AN EMPATHIC CHURCH that relates to the young people not with moralism or a Church that does not proselytize. The young people see that the Holy Mother Church is imperfect in its members. Our imperfection is caressed by the love, mercy and tenderness of God and it is the same love that gives strength to get back up to our every day. Faced with this love and mercy, the young person opens his heart.

c) A CHURCH IN DISCERNMENT: The Church will be significant for the world when it has the "person at its center": that is, a Church open to all believers and others, which welcomes humanity in its reality, because they are all children of God.

d) A FORMED CHURCH: A mature Church formed on a human, spiritual, affective, relational and pastoral level to accompany the young and the life of man in his becoming.

Fr Alessandro who is in the same community and work together with Fr. Roberto, presented the reflection on “Accompaniment and discernment”, divided into two parts: theoretical and practical. “God said ... God saw that it was good; God created man ... .. and saw that it was very good”.

“God creates, brings order, calls by name and found everything is precious in his eyes.... everything is good! »Father Alessandro began reflections with the chapter one of Genesis.



The one who accompanies the youth is called to accompany the person who often presents himself as an indistinguishable mass. It is his commitment to distinguish and give name, to what he lives; to make order in the disorder, because the life of each is a sacred history, nothing should be thrown away. Little by little, the companion brings into light his person .... discovers the true identity of the person, the name, the mission that God has always given him, and that allows him to find peace in his life and to become a mature person in relationship, grows with confidence and walks towards fulfillment. The laboratory activity helped to discover that: the relationship with the other allows me to know who I am, how I perceive myself, how I face each other, the level of maturity: child-adolescent-adult - on the move towards fulfillment.

On Saturday, March 16, a special gift was offered to us: the celebration of Holy Mass at the Porziuncola presided over by Fr. Cesare Vaiani o.f.m ..



In this little place St. Francis welcomes the mission “how” to go about the world; here he implores the gift of mercy for those who will visit it, here he welcomes St. Clare who decides to offer her life to Jesus, here he welcomes sister death with serenity and peace. Thanks to the Lord for this gift and thanks to Sr Paola and sisters of the Council for having planned it.

Father Cesare highlighted article 59 of our constitution “Every sister by virtue of her profession in this congregation is missionary wherever she is.



This implies on all sides a fundamental option of availability and participation, of animation and service to the work of evangelization and “The earlier Rule” of St. Francis chapters 14 - 17.

Fr. Cesare underlined how St. Francis does not say what to do but “HOW” to go on a mission: the value of silence, humility, submission, fraternity (as a place of growth and witness to the announcement) stand out, and “when the Lord likes it, announce the Gospel.”

The contents of evangelization are: the gift of peace, exhortation and praise,

penance and the theme of integral ecology that springs from the concept of creation as a “common home” to be guarded at all levels.

In the ongoing formation and consequently in the initial one, the overall objective is the “heart of Christ”, center and the motor that unifies life, a value that informs the mission.

For the FMSC Sister, sanctity is realized by entering more and more into the “redemptive heart” which translates into charity, service, willingness to change, poverty, welcoming fraternities, attention to the poor.

Fr. Cesare underlined the importance of the formation of community animators who are called to promote a common project that is always open in the search for the will of God in the reality we live today.

The theme that Fr. Cesare presented to us was very rich and touched on our personal and community reality and the formation commitment to which we are all called as FMSC.



Sr. Elisa Kidané guided us on the theme “How to form ourselves and give formation in interculturality” The lectio divina of the parable of the Good Samaritan of the Gospel of Luke 10, 25-37 set the tone for the theme of the day. Looking at the brother with the attitudes and feelings of the heart of Christ is the high- way to welcome his brother.

It is the evangelical values that have the primacy in our communities, which call us to live together to witness the beauty and richness in diversity. It is a journey that requires going out of myself to meet with the ‘you’ that opens me to new horizons and asks me, to relate to listen and to go out. The young women are called to serve, to announce the gift that the Holy Spirit has given to our Congregation for the Church. We must give them a clear charismatic identity card that is solid enough to make them grow



with responsibility and truth. Interculturality requires each to take a step towards the other, to enter into dialogue to see what are the values we share, to know our own culture and that of the other in the positive and negative, to open up to dialogue and to welcome in a path of approach, of forgiveness, of patience and humility.

Let us shine that our life is inhabited by God. Happiness is synonymous with Holiness and God wants us happy women!

The days of 19-20 - 21 kept us engaged in the study of our formation programs, in the different stages in order to enrich ourselves, renew them, update them, to respond to today’s challenges. The rituals of celebrations on various stages of formation have been evaluated so that in all the Provinces the different stages are celebrated keeping in mind the liturgical norms, the signs and the traditions proper to the Congregation.

In the evening another very strong moment was offered to us at the Porziuncola. At 9.00 pm the Basilica is closed to visitors, but Father Simone has opened the convent door for us to reach the Porziuncola for a time of adoration led by him. The silence and peace of the holy place undisturbed by visitors helped us to live this moment of adoration intensely. Starting from the text of the Annunciation from the Gospel of St. Luke, he guided the reflection: “Looking at Mary with the look of astonishment of St. Francis”. The Annunciation has three dimensions together: of the person - of the believer, - of the consecrated and serva. The first thing that God says through the Angel is “Rejoice”. God wants our joy. “Do not be afraid, do not have fear”; and in Mary’s answer, in her “SI” there is all her freedom. In the pouring out of God’s plan and letting Mary be expropriated, he lets himself be filled by the Holy Spirit, becoming a house, a temple, a palace, a garment for the Author of life. Mary becomes a Servant, because she welcomes Jesus. Whoever welcomes Christ becomes a servant because he becomes like him, the One who serves.

On the 21st, in the afternoon, despite the cold air, we headed to San Damiano to visit the place and celebrate Vespers with the community of friars minor. The prayer in San Damiano is always well prepared and animated, an invitation to all praise. We return by walking, though we were caressed by the cold wind the spectacular sunset invited us to sing «Laudato sii Signore! »



On the 22<sup>nd</sup> with a bit of regret, we left Assisi, and moved towards another dear and historical place to our Congregation “Grotte di Castro” which saw the birth of our Venerable Founder P. Gregorio Fioravanti. Our sisters in the community of Grotte di Castro and Don Tancredi the parish priest were waiting for us. After greeting the sisters, we went to the Sanctuary of the Madonna Del Suffragio where we could spend some time to pray to the Virgin Mary. The parish priest then celebrated Holy Mass for us. Thanks to the Lord for this time of grace that he has granted us to live together. We pray for our Congregation and for the young people that the Lord will call, to live and bear witness to the charism received by Laura Leroux de Bauffremont and P. Gregorio.

In the closing meeting, Sr Paola, Superior General, highlighted the decisive aspects of the whole Conference:

- The climate of fraternity that was created in the group, which allowed us to share the experience of joy and suffering - the positive and negative - with humility and truth.
- The wealth of having lived this time in Franciscan places,
- The presence of speakers who have transmitted a knowledge that comes from the experience of a life lived and given with enthusiasm.

The commitment now remains to share and continue this journey together, in the different countries where we are sent.

God passes through everyday life, into the unthinkable, into sadness and suffering, but He becomes small and «servant» to reach us where we are, where man is, in Galilee, in Nazareth and today he still tells us rejoice, live in joy in faith, in truth with courage. Announce “peace and good” in this common home that is creation.

Announce our identity with life, “charismatic citizenship” and be the companions of each other to live our being FMSC

As formators and leaders of vocational youth ministry, be the present and the future of the Congregation without letting our hope and enthusiasm be stolen.



## **EXTENDED GENERAL COUNCIL**

On May 14, 2019 the sisters of the General Council and the Superiors of all our Provinces gathered for the important event of the extended General Council, which officially began on the 16<sup>th</sup> in the province “St. Mary of the Angels” , with the theme :

*Sent by the Spirit ... towards evangelical authenticity  
... in missionary synodality*

On the journey from Rome to Gemona, the small group stopped in the community of Borgo Cavour, Treviso, where Sr. Stefania Bandiera, Superior of the Province of “S. Maria degli Angeli ”, the superior of the community, Sr Carlamaria Bandiera welcomed all the sisters with great joy.



The journey then continued towards the Sanctuary of the Madonna dei Miracoli in Motta di Livenza (TV) to bring to the Heart of Mary every desire for good for this meeting and to ask for her maternal intercession. This place is dear to us because our Founder, Venerable Father Gregory Fioravanti, lived here for a short time.



Upon our arrival in Gemona, the sisters were welcomed with joy and emotion by the whole community that was waiting for them along the corridors of the convent.



The next day was dedicated in a special way to the history of our religious family, by making a visit to the museum, guided by Sr Fabrizia Zanettin, a visit to the sanctuary of San Antonio, where we live a profound bond with the Franciscan family through presence, support and communion with the friars minor. Here we remembered the beginnings of our Foundation.



Before starting such an important event as the extended General Council, we could not miss a visit to the cemetery where the mortal remains of our Venerable Founder P. Gregory and many of our sisters rest.



We entrusted to them the work that awaited us for the good of all the sisters of the Congregation.

On the 16<sup>th</sup>, as scheduled, there was the official opening of the Extended General Council.

The Eucharistic Celebration was presided over by the Archbishop of Udine, Mons. Andrea Bruno Mazzocato. In his homily, he focused on two fundamental aspects of our being Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart that is of mission and service. He reminded everyone, of the first task of the missionary Church: *“to speak of Jesus, to speak because we know*



*Him, to talk about Him to those who do not know and to those who know Him, to make him grow evangelically by talking about Jesus!”*

He also presented the service as *“a great opportunity for religious communities to be missionaries showing that one can be able to kneel fraternally in front of everyone, first of all within the community, and then with others. If we do so, we are servants of Jesus and therefore servants of all; this is what*

*gives meaning to our lives!”*

Later in the room significantly and finely prepared for the meeting, the Superior General Sr Paola Dotto conveyed her greetings to all the participants. Here are some of her words:

*Thank you, sisters, for being here from various parts of the world, for continuing to journey in communion, to make a renewed search together to live Good for the life consecrated to Christ and in the Church. Thank you!*



*It is exciting to remember that this land has seen and absorbed the joys and labors; it has felt the enthusiasm for the presence of the Spirit that indicated new paths of life to our Founders, Laura Leroux, to the Venerable P. Gregorio Fioravanti ofm and to the first sisters. This land has quietly breathed deep faith and has supported the often strenuous steps of so many sisters in search for support in their insecurity, poverty, war, and earthquake, daringly certain of the goodness of the Father, who “tries but doesn’t give up”. Our story is true, rooted in the cross of Christ but always with the unmistakable signs of the resurrection. “If the grain of wheat fallen into the earth dies ... it bears much fruit” ... And we believe it! ...*

*The objectives of the Extended General Council ... lead us to live intensely the belongingness to the congregation and to support one another with understanding, esteem and affection in small and large situations. The aim of the meeting is to increase fraternal relationships and unity as sisters, who feel part of the same Family and form a renewed mentality, which can generate a congregational culture, strengthened by shared experiences in the desire to live the Will of God always.*

Sr Paola's message introduced some of the most important issues on which the Provincial Superiors began to reflect and share. This moment helped to create open and fraternal relationships that fostered a climate of communion and acceptance, together, as religious, Franciscan and missionary in the Church today.

The sisters, Sr Francesca Fiorin as secretary, Sr. Lilibeth Labian as moderator and Sr. Antonia Piripitsi as translator, facilitated the dialogue of the participants.



In the two weeks scheduled for the Extended General Council meeting, the sisters followed the program that had been organized, alternating days of sharing, reflection and discernment together, listening to the eminent resource persons on various topics, visits to some communities of the province, “Santa Maria degli Angeli ”and making pilgrimages to historically significant places of the Congregation. The climate in the meeting room was peaceful and jovial and helped to create a spontaneous, simple sharing of trust and affection, being aware of being part of a unique and beautiful religious Family.

The evening recreations, lived with the sisters of the community, all gathered in the community room, (the once chapter room) that preserves the wooden decoration of the origins, with all our Superiors General and Founders, were moments of communion, of knowledge, of true Franciscan joy and affective participation in all our reality as a Religious Family.



Among the moments and lived experiences, significant and important were the two days led by the speakers: Monsignor José Carballo, secretary of the CIVCSVA, who gave us his presence together with his secretary P. Francisco Arellano and Father Amedeo Cencini.

Msgr. José Carballo presided over the Eucharistic celebration of the day, before beginning the session with him. Many sisters from the community also joined the celebration, while the sisters of the infirmary were able to follow it through the sound system connected to their apartment that allows them to hear all the celebrations in the Church and all what speaks the community room.

Mons Carballo, with a lot of sensitivity and human and spiritual finesse, turned to them during the celebration, making them feel present, really between us and with us.

In the meeting with the sisters of the Extended

General Council, he offered his reflection focusing on the third part of the document “*New wine in new wineskins*”.

In his presentation, he highlighted some aspects, such as authority, formation, fraternal life in community, and discernment.



He presented us clearly the challenge of fidelity, also indicating the way to take, the right direction to go.

He then left the assembly, a time for the questions and tried to give concrete and clear answers above all from his great experience in the Church and of the Franciscan religious life.

For all of us it was a great gift to be able to draw from his wisdom and competence and also to enjoy his paternal and fraternal attitude towards us. In fact, Bishop Carballo expressed his gratitude and affection for our religious Family with joy.

In addition to Mons Carballo we had the grace to have with us Father Amedeo Cencini who shared his reflections, his challenges and provocations, developing the theme: *Sent by the Spirit to embrace the future with hope*. He dedicated an entire morning to share his reflections while in the afternoon he made himself available to listen carefully our various questions and gave his answers with competence, wisdom and true love for the Church and the consecrated life. His responses created much hope in the hearts of everyone as he himself said quoting the book of Job, “The Lord blesses the future even more than of the past”.



Before leaving the Mother House Father Cencini wanted to greet the sisters in the infirmary who welcomed him with joy and gratitude.



The Lord has reserved in this time many moments of grace, but surely, the days of pilgrimage, to Venice and Padua, have really intensified our communion, and belongingness.

It renewed in us all the charismatic strength, that derives from the same vocation received in this our religious family, which is specially chosen by the Lord in the Church and for the humanity from its origins in the past and of till today.

In Venice, there is a place that is dear to us and is very significant: the church of S. Francesco della Vigna with an adjoining convent where our Founder Fr. Gregory Fioravanti lived for 10 years, from 1849 to 1859, devoting himself to studies and covering different tasks : reader, commissioner of the Third Order, up to being elected Minister Provincial.

It was in this church, that one day in October 1859, Fr. Gregory met our Foundress Laura Leroux de 'Bauffremont, who was looking for ways to shape the dream of founding a Franciscan Institute. Providence had decided that Fr. Gregory was the chosen instrument.



The celebration of Holy Mass, lived in this place was solemn, prepared and very participatory, an appointment with the Lord, but certainly also with our Founders to whom we entrusted our meeting and the future of all the missionary realities of our Family.



The visit to San Francesco del Deserto, an island where only a Fraternity of Friars Minor live, was also significant.

The name of the island and its fame are closely linked to St. Francis of Assisi who stayed here during the return journey from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. It was therefore an opportunity for us to remember the meeting of St. Francis with the Sultan, with all the teachings and challenges that this event offers us for the current world situation.



The sanctuary also holds the tomb of the Venerable Fr. Bernardino of Portogruaro. Here we paused in devout prayer, remembering with affection the bond he had with our venerable Founder Fr. Gregory in the time in which he was engaged in the foundation of our Congregation.



The visit to the Basilica of Saint Anthony of Padua was considered by all a true pilgrimage. A beautiful opportunity to praise and thank the Lord in the joy of participating together in the Eucharistic celebration in this Franciscan place, which holds the body of our special protector, Saint Anthony.



The sisters had time to pray and entrust to this great saint, every desire for good for the communities, the provinces, and for the entire Congregation.

Among the various commitments of the EGC, we found time to visit some communities of the Province, the ones closest to the Mother House. An afternoon was dedicated to the sisters of the nearby Oasis community. With them, we could spend time to share and learn about their missionary reality in the school and in the parish.

In one of the last days, during a morning we went to Udine, to the Convitto “Sacred Heart”, where the mission is of accommodating and accompanying, young university students coming from Italy and other countries. The local superior Sr Augusta Fantin guided us with the other sisters to visit the house starting from the most important place: the chapel.

On our way back to Gemona from this community we wanted to make a stop at the sanctuary of the ‘Madonna Missionaria’ in Tricesimo. Here the sisters from the community of Savorgnano were waiting for us, who took the opportunity to come and greet us, as their community is not far away. Sr Veridiana, the local superior, who knows the sanctuary well, explained to us the history and value of this place of prayer for locals and immigrants.

The church in fact also has a side altar dedicated to the brothers forced to leave their countries to seek hospitality elsewhere. A theme and a very current problem for Italy and other European countries.

We then prayed together to the Mother of God, remembering all our sisters, our missions and all the people who most need her protection and intercession.

In the afternoon we went to Cedarchis in Ampezzo and Cavazzo, really beautiful places in a marvelous landscape that invited the heart to sing: “Praised be my Lord!”.

In these communities, the sisters are a precious point of reference for all areas of pastoral care (liturgy of the Word, catechesis, choir, visits to the elderly and the sick) in the various mountain villages where they make regular visits.

The sisters welcomed us with joy, emotion and gratitude for such a special visit.

They shared a little of their missionary commitment in those places, demonstrating so much love for the Lord and for the people of the place with true apostolic zeal, despite their advanced age.

All the experiences lived and the precious moments shared with the sisters of the Mother House have given everyone new enthusiasm, joy and gratitude to the Lord for the gift of our Vocation as FMSC with the beauty of internationality, of Franciscan spirit, and of the missionary spirit.

All the provincial Superiors and sisters of the General Council expressed with emotion the profound gratitude they felt, to all the sisters of the Mother House who were truly gifts with their attention, their smile, their sense of responsibility in preparing everything because everything could help us to live these days intensely.

The general superior Sr Paola Dotto, just as an expression of gratitude, gave a precious complete of sacred vases, the Chalice with the paten and the Ciborium, a sign of profound communion that finds its source and summit in the Eucharistic celebration.



From the Province of Santa Maria degli Angeli we received a very special surprise. Sr. Stefania Bandiera, provincial superior, on behalf of the Council and all the Sisters of the Province offered to the Superior General and each Provincial Superior a precious wooden sculpture representing “S. Maria degli Angeli”, hand carved in the ‘specialized laboratory’ Perathoner (Ortisei-Bolzano). A statue that reproduces exactly, even if in smaller dimensions, the Statue of ‘Santa Maria degli Angeli’ that is placed in the Church of the Convent.

For all it was a strong emotion accompanied by exclamations of wonder and joy. Some provincials immediately said that they will bring the Statue to the various communities of the Province as a sign of deep union with the Mother House and the origins of our Foundation. They then spontaneously wanted to express their joy and gratitude by singing one by one a song to Mary in their own language. It was indeed very much moving!

In conclusion, with emotion, all together we sang “Si lo giurai”, entrusting to Mary our commitment to fidelity and that of all the sisters scattered around the world.

One of the goals and desires of all the work done in the Extended General Council: to help each sister, each fraternity, each Province, to renew with enthusiasm, with joy, with new missionary zeal the “YES” offered to the Lord. Consequently, every day we continue to present to him in the Church through this our Religious Family and for all humanity.



## Celebrating for S. Paola ... we renew our missionary enthusiasm

On the day when the Church celebrates the Feast of the two great pillars of our faith, Saint Peter and Saint Paul, we the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart celebrated the day of birth and the name day of our Mother General Sr Paola Dotto.

All the sisters of our Congregation felt united and present (physically and spiritually) in praising, thanking the Lord and expressing joy for the precious gift of Sr Paola to our religious Family.

The celebration of the Feast began with the offering of the day during the Morning Prayer, and then continued with the solemn Eucharistic Celebration, the fraternal sharing of lunch and the entertainment prepared by the young Sisters; all this has created a peaceful, joyful and fraternal togetherness.

Certainly being together, motivated by gratitude for the gift of the presence and service of Sr Paola, made the feeling of being a Family that walks together, and at the same time, enjoys being and sharing moments of joy and of celebration.

A Family willed by the Lord, grew and spread throughout the world to live out its missionary spirit with a spirit that invites us to renew the

missionary enthusiasm for the Gospel every day. This theme moved throughout the whole celebration. In the Holy Eucharist concelebrated by Fr. Sandro Guarguaglini, ofm and Fr. Thomas Kurma, Fr. Sandro the main celebrant during the homily, reminded us of the need to have the courage to go, to stay and to witness the Gospel with our lives. There is a need to have that passion, that fidelity and enthusiasm that St. Paul had in announcing and witnessing to the Gospel, even if it leads to misunderstanding, suffering and giving one's life. Fr. Sandro also invited us to imitate St. Peter who is having the courage to go back



when he is wrong. Peter goes back, asks forgiveness and got reconciled and confronted with his brothers.

At the end, the celebrant wished Sr Paola and said, *“To be for all the sisters, a presence, a sure guide, a mother rich in mercy who knows how to listen, encourage and accompany all towards a witness of life lived with joy and fidelity according to the teaching of the Founder p. Gregory”*. He indeed knew how to go towards all the people, as Pope Francis always says: go out, go out to reach out the brothers and sisters.



In conclusion, the Father entrusted Sr Paola to the intercession of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and to the Saints Peter and Paul so that they can intercede for her to accomplish her mission.

The theme chosen for this day of celebration was very evident in the presentation that the young sisters offered in the theater.

The message they wanted to leave to everyone was that, to be missionaries we

need to contemplate Jesus Christ Crucified, to confront the Word of God every day, to intensify the life of prayer, to live in fraternity with the fraternity, always trust in the Divine Providence and to live the Gospel with joy. Above all, always have a smile that reflects the light that lives inside the heart of every missionary and thus shines, so that the world can see and meet Jesus, the true light.

The representation expressed also the missionary nature and internationality of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart through typical dances of our different missions in the world. They revealed different emotions of joy, praising, thanking and adoring the One who gave us the reason to stay together, celebrate and rejoice together for the gift of the person of Sr. Paola our superior General.



## COMUNITIES MEETING



A very special meeting has been held in the “Generalate House, Asisium” “from 1 to 10 July 2019, a long-awaited event, the first meeting of all communities dependent on the superior general.

The sisters of 5 communities, Asisium, Santa Maria degli Angeli Assisi, Viole di Assisi, Grotte di Castro, and Buyukada were present. There were no sisters of the community of “Our Lady of Libera” USA, as it was not possible for them to have the Visa. Their presence was nevertheless felt and we remembered them with affection. Our superior general Sr. Paola Dotto made an opening address of the meeting with her usual affectionate greeting and explained the theme, “Inhabited by the Spirit, let us revive our being fraternity in Mission”. The meeting gave us the opportunity to listen, reflect and share our life, to discover together the challenges that the Lord presents before us at this time, and with joy to seek, to discern the surprises that He has planned for us as a fraternity, of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the sacred Heart.

To Sr Paola’s question, “What do we bring to this meeting? What do we expect from this meeting?“, we have had a lot of time to share and express our joys, expectations, hopes but also concerns. In a fraternal and serene atmosphere, we listened and confronted. It was wonderful and almost amazing to hear the different services, the missions that the sisters involved in with hard work, joy and, above all, with love, in the various realities. A mosaic of the Holy Spirit, with the gifts of each person knows how to make wonderful things. A listening to one after the other, the “pieces” of this wonderful puzzle has manifested all the marvelous works that the Lord continues to do, in the everyday life with our simple but generous availability.



Different persons have presented various themes in these days. Fr. Massimo Fusarelli OFM enriched us with the beautiful presentation on the theme, “To be a mission today as a prophetic fraternity”. He has given us theological and Franciscan elements, starting from the evangelical urgency that we must strengthen in order to be a mission through true prophetic fraternity. The reading of some passages from the “Gaudium et Spes” was enlightening to welcome what the Church asks of us today.



‘Being inhabited’ by the spirit is a great gift. It is an expression of a dynamic life; it requires a continuous search, possible in listening within ourselves and around us. It is to have and maintain the “Spirit of the Lord and his Holy operation” (Rule X, 5). Later the sisters shared in the groups have made an experience, how His the Spirit is alive and work in each one in different ways.

Fr. Alessandro Angelisanti OFM guided us with the reflection on the theme, “Sent to be fraternity in mission”. He presented and explained the topic with the Word of God.

He explained two passages, Gn.1, 1-2.4a the story of creation and Mk 5, 1-20 the story of Gerasèni’s demon.

Fr. Alessandro gave us many hints and indications to understand our personal journey first and also the fraternal dynamics, our doing and our being women in relationship. We were all truly enlightened and touched by his sharing the Word of God, which revealed us the most profound truth of ourselves: to be a very good thing. His reflection, invited us to overcome the inevitable human immaturity and weaknesses and to entrust ourselves profoundly to the one great reality: the love of God, stronger and more secure than any experience or difficulty.



The concepts assumed through reflection were also experimented in the experience of the laboratory that Father Alessandro guided with a Franciscan simplicity.

The General Councilors presented other very important and relevant topics.



Sr Tiziana Tonini offered us a reflection on the theme: The Lord blesses the future ... more than ... past (Jb 42,12). During her presentation, she elicited some of the points offered by Father Amedeo Cencini to the extended General Council. The reflection was focused on, ongoing formation in the consecrated life. He repeatedly called our attention to look at and reflect on the Christian communities of today, and to bear in mind the great changes that the Church and the Faith itself is experiencing. Only by having a clear knowledge of our social and ecclesial context

can our fraternities be open to the change required of the Consecrated Life itself. We are called to new and creative responses; to let ourselves be formed by everyday realities ... This is where our ongoing formation takes place!

Sr. Rose Palamlhattel, who is reference for the missions, presented us with the theme of the “Extraordinary missionary month “October 2019” proclaimed by Pope Francis, a very important event at the ecclesial and congregational level. Sr Rose presented the reason why Pope Francis wanted this month to be celebrated with special attention and the framework in which this event is inserted. She also explained the logo, the colors and the theme: “Baptized and sent: the Church of Christ on a mission in the world “ , inviting every community to animate with creativity to celebrate this month.



Sr. Paola Dotto, Superior General, then presented the concluding points of the extended General Council, held in May in Gemona. Each point was read and explained highlighting the hopes and challenges. Sr Paola urged us to take seriously the letter. It indicates the priorities that the whole Congregation must take. It is a sign of what the Spirit has suggested to the General Council extended, in sharing discernment, and wants to be a guideline for our Religious Family which is united in the same charism and life project, journey together on the Ways of the Lord.

Sr. Augusta Visentin, presented regarding the different problems that concern the whole Church (abuses) and encouraged us to educate ourselves in a healthy discernment, to inform ourselves, in order to have also a clear vision of what is happening in the world and in the Church.

She also presented the message on the urgency of the care of Creation. Sr. Augusta called us to verify our attitude towards the news we receive about the environment, and to know how to read what is happening around us. We are called as fmsc to defend Creation and to sensitize ourselves personally and as a community by making choices in our lifestyle.



We have been invited to compose a “Canticle of the Creatures”, a hymn of praise to God for the countless benefits that we see, live, touch and experience in every reality of our missions. It is a request decided by the extended General Council that all our communities will try to compose their hymn.

Sr Gregoria Suarez , General Treasurer elaborated the economic and administrative Regulation (CIC 638 - 1) of our religious family in 2009. She showed us the structure of the document and in particular the local administration and everything concerning the role of the local superior and of the role of the local treasurer.

Before concluding the meeting, we had the gift of a Pilgrimage to the Holy Reatine Valley: Fontecolombo, Greccio, and it was a very nice experience for all.





The day was lived in a Franciscan atmosphere of prayer / contemplation and rich fraternity.

In Fontecolombo the Holy Eucharist was celebrated and after visiting some of the most significant places where St. Francis stayed, we all had time for prayer and reflection.

In the afternoon, we visited the Shrine of Greccio, a holy place where St. Francis on Christmas night in 1223, wanted to remember the humility of the Incarnation and see with his bodily “eyes”, the poverty experienced by the Child Jesus when he came to live among us.

The pilgrimage helped us to rediscover, breathe and live the Franciscan charism ... in a rich fraternal atmosphere that summed up all our togetherness lived in these days. We thanked God for our spirituality and belonging to the great Franciscan family.



On the final day, July 9, we were offered points to enrich and improve the path of our fraternities: guidelines for the formulation of the community project, verifications and news. It all ended by sharing the “Laudato sii” that each community or group had composed, thus presenting to the Lord our THANK YOU and our LODE for the wonderful days that have been given to us, true GIFTS of GRACE of His LOVE!

## **FIRST RELIGIOUS PROFESSION IN INDIA**

Every day dawns unique and special, but some days are very special to someone.

March 2nd 2019 is such a day for four of our novices *Subasini Majhi, Srivalli Nimmala, Saritha Dung Dung and chanti Boddu*. Clad in white, with lighted lamps they offered their lives as a living sacrifice to the Lord, the sole Master of their life in the presence of many priests, religious and relatives

The introductory address and the Provincial's and the sisters response in promising tender care for these vocations give courage to the novices to firm their steps in the life they have taken.

The solemn Eucharistic celebration was presided over by Most Rev. Joseph Raja Rao Thelagathoti, S.M.M. Bishop of Vijayawada Diocese. In his homily he

enlightened us that 'the religious life is nothing but the capability of loving Christ who loved us first and that love should manifest in loving others'. So our question towards us time and again is "Am I capable of loving my brothers and sisters? He quoted the three 'P's said by Pope Francis, Prayer.... Poverty.....Patience.

Vocation is a divine gift. The first reading says the double mission of Jeremiah, to break and overthrow...and to rebuild, the second reading, the reason to become holy. The Gospel

"if you abide in me you will bear much fruit" not sweet fruit but the fruit of good works which nobody can take away. Live the gratefulness with Love, Commitment and Sacrifice. Love should be branded with sacrifice. The religious vows are counter cultural but imitation of Christ. He ensured the novices that the community will support, form, and mould, empower and strengthen them. Finally he exhorted them, enough to tell daily, 'Jesus, I love you'.



Rev. Sr. Mini Joseph, our Provincial Superior received the vows in the presence of everyone.

The newly professed ones expressed their gratitude to the Lordship, to all the priests, sisters, well - wishers. They thanked mother General and councilors, provincial and councilors and to everyone for their support and guidance to respond boldly to the call of God.

## **25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Fr. Charles Reinbold as Chaplain at Mt. St. Francis**

*“Our main purpose as priests and religious is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”* Fr. Reinbold

April 6, 2019 was a day of joy and thanksgiving to God as the Sisters, Lay Associates, and ladies of Villa St. Francis gathered to celebrate Father’s 25th anniversary as Chaplain for the Peekskill community.

His quiet strength, complete confidence in Jesus’ love and the peace that comes with it shone through during Mass and the simple reception that followed. Place cards with quotes from his homilies,



beautifully crafted by Sr. Laura, decorated the tables. With affection and humor, Sister spoke of his compassion, gratitude for God’s many small blessings, and talent for gardening - a gift that has enriched all who have lived at and visited this convent over the years.

Father shared how God’s care for him and his own openness to His plan has guided him throughout his life, through serving the people of St. Joseph of the Palisades parish in West New York, NJ as Pastor; accompanying the sick as a hospital chaplain for 13 years; and finally coming to Peekskill in 1994 at the request of the Provincial, Sr. Lawrence Marie. “I am amazed at how God has worked...He has always been there for me.”

We thank you, Lord Jesus, for the gift of Father’s life and faithful service!

*Sr. Lisa Grace Carlone*

### ***Words of gratitude by Fr. Reinbold***

My time here at Mt. St. Francis began on April 1, 1994. Sister Lawrence Marie was Provincial Superior at that time. I felt strongly that it was God’s will that I take this assignment and my Bishop’s approval further verified this decision.

My time here with the Sisters has born much fruit for me spiritually and hopefully for the Sisters, too. There have been and are many good Sisters in this community and I have been deeply edified by them.

The day of my celebration began with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass at 11am at which I was privileged to celebrate. Mass was followed by a delicious turkey dinner, enjoyed by our Sisters, Lay Associates, Villa residents, and many friends. It was a joyful and peaceful celebration; one I will never forget. Much care and preparation went into this celebration. Sr. Laura Morgan, our present Provincial Superior, and the Sisters, put much effort into the day.

The celebration concluded with a presentation, a brief talk by me, thanking everyone for being a part of the day, and for the example they are to me. This was followed by an “interesting” and humorous talk by Sr. Laura: Reflections on “Charlie Chaplain”.

My heartfelt thanks to God for all His gifts and blessings, especially the gift of priesthood. And most of all for the greatest gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. May Jesus always be the most important Person in our lives and with our lives centered on Him.

Peace in Jesus!

*Fr. Charles Reinbold*

**SYMPOSIUM of RELIGIOUS in LITHUANIA**

**VILNIUS, 30 April 2019**

Monsignor Linas Vodopjanovas, ofm, Responsible for the consecrated life of the Lithuanian bishops' conference organizes, since he is in charge, the meeting of all the religious.

This year this meeting took place in Vilnius, the country's capital, on April 30th.

The meeting was organized in collaboration with brother Algirdas Malakauskis, ofm, provincial, and president of the conference of religious of Lithuania.

All the religious were invited. The sisters of four religious congregations of Kretinga, Clarisse, sisters



of the charity of Saint Mother Teresa, the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Help and we, accompanied by the Franciscan friars, ofm, left for the capital by bus at 5.30. We were welcomed by the organizers in a Catholic high school where we gathered, more than 250 religious.

The symposium was animated by Monsignor José Rodríguez Carballo, the secretary of the Congregation for institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life. He came from Rome.

We were very happy because we felt at home, surrounded by the Friars Minor! The theme proposed and exhibited by Mons. José Rodríguez Carballo was dense and provocative: "Living the present with Passion and the future in Hope".

He developed this theme by offering a general view of Consecrated Life and insisting on:

- The earth works at the level of the roots to feed on the charismatic sap,
- There is the setting of the sun, but every day, it has its dawn,
- Consecrated life needs an evangelical quality to make it a prophecy that is its future,
- Revitalize the practice of Vows and live them radically,
- Live the spirituality of communion, centered on Christ thus becoming contemplative people and missionary disciples,
- The constant search for the will of God and the priority of continuing formation, "process of assimilation of the feelings of Christ, the Son towards the Father", is a process of transformation through the Spirit,
- Have a spirituality embodied through the practice of the Beatitudes,
- Consecrated Life must be thirsty for fraternity: we are called to build this fraternity, even starting from our frailties and our sins,
- Put initial formation first, which must be integral, personalized, experiential, thanks to good formators, passionate about Christ, lovers of fraternal life, trained in listening and accompaniment,
- To train men and women passionate about Jesus Christ and humanity



At the end of the lectures, at 5.45 pm we moved towards the Church of the Bernardins, a Franciscan parish, where we participated in the Eucharistic celebration, which is presided over by Mons. Carballo, by several bishops and religious. It was a beautiful testimony of Consecrated Life!

The church was full of consecrated people and parishioners who have joined us for the Eucharistic celebration! Monsignor Carballo insisted on the richness of the charisms of consecrated life in the Church and the joy of being a missionary disciple among the people of God.

He encourages the religious to continue without tiring, to witness the joy of consecrated life to the younger generations, to open up to the existential peripheries by caring for the poor and the excluded of our society. Nothing should distract us from the joy of evangelization and the gift of ourselves.

At the end of the celebration, we went to the shrine of Divine Mercy for a moment of prayer and thanksgiving. At 20.30 we returned to Kretinga and we arrived after midnight. The return journey was animated by some friars and sisters.

This day is considered in our personal and community history as a strong time of interior life and consecrated life, provoking in us conversion and the will to let ourselves be more and more passionate about Christ. For all this, we give thanks to the Lord.

*The sisters of the community “Fr. Gregory” Kretinga, Lituania*

## FAREWELL TO THE PRIESTS - LE MANS

On Sunday, 25 May 2019, there was a celebration of the Holy Eucharist, presided over by Monsignor Yves Le Saux in the park of the House of the Priests as thanks giving on the occasion of their departure from St Aldric to the “Maison Bonnière” after 70 years of presence in our neighborhood .

We the community along with, many young people and parishioners attended the Eucharistic celebration.

In his farewell address, Msgr. Yves, whole heartedly expressed his thanks, on behalf of all, the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart. He greatly appreciated our evangelical service, availability and attentive presence over the course of many years, at the service of the diocese, to accompany the elderly and sick priests, implementing the values of the Gospel and create a more fraternal and more human world. “I came not to be served but to serve” (Mt 20:28) he wished the sisters to remain always sentinels of charity.



After the Celebration, there was a moment of friendship in the square by sharing drinks. A much-felt moment of sharing and fraternity between the parishioners and the community of the sisters.

We have tried to witness in this way what has always motivated us in this service: the love of Christ for his ministers and pastors and for every person met in this “Casa Sant ‘Aldric”.

## IN MISSION.. TO PEOPLE

“Today I have to stop at your house...”: It is the slogan chosen for the Franciscan popular mission, lived in Prevalle and Paitone, province of Brescia, from 13 to 24 March.



The experience of the mission is a time of grace, an opportunity to rediscover the beauty of the Gospel and allow ourselves to be met by Jesus as happened with Zacchaeus in Jericho, who wanted to see Jesus from afar, but had him at his home.

On the evening of the mandate and the distribution of the crucifix, the sign of the missionaries, the Bishop of Brescia Pierantonio Tremolada, pointed out, the poverty of the man of today.

He is needed to be helped, to free himself from his many slaveries, to meet Christ and His love, within his life, his labors, his doubts, the many problems that he carries inside.

The Bishop invited those present to be open to the gift of the mission, with confidence, with prayer, with the help of the Holy Spirit, who always makes all things new.

The missionary program described and handed over to the families was intense. The day began with the “*Buongiorno a Gesù*” (Goodmorning to Jesus), a space for children and youngsters in primary school, with visits to families, the elderly and the sick.

We animated catechesis meetings, listening and sharing the Word of God at the homes; three evenings with couples, three for teenagers, and young people...

A great challenge for all, believers and non-believers, young and old, people in search, others who approached us with curiosity, to know what it was about seeing us go through the streets.

This initiative was strongly desired and carefully prepared by the three priests: Fr Santo, Fr Fabrizio, Fr Francesco to offer the population an opportunity to meet Jesus the Savior, able to

regenerate our often wounded and sad humanity.

I think that the mission has favored the integration between the three parishes where there are signs of a long and tiring journey, pastoral collaborations have just begun, the journey together is not so easy... but there is the will to listen and respect for all.

They have been days of precious evangelization, of dialogue, of sharing with many people of their painful stories, but also with others full of faith, of enthusiasm to contribute to the good of the community.





The closing celebration on Sunday 24 was a true celebration of the Resurrection ... greeting those people we felt they were instruments of the Lord, missionaries for Him.

THANK YOU Lord that we will not fail to offer you places and opportunities to announce yourself, to witness with simplicity and truth your presence in the world, in this society of ours which is in search of those values that give meaning to the journey of every day.

*Sr Maddalena and Sr Alice*



Even this mission, although far away, was fabulous!

People participated and replied, I can say 97 /%. All the families have opened their doors to us, offered the chair for me to stay there with them, and then talk about their problems, their hopes, their faith.

The territory was vast: three municipalities with their rural community scattered throughout the Brianza area ... to go from one Church to another, from one oratory to another there was something to run ... but each step was then largely rewarded by the wholehearted welcome of the people and their attention.

Even the evening ‘centers for listening ‘were extensively attended and fully participated: young and middle-aged couples, although there was no lack of elders: all were thirsty for the Word of God and interacted correctly and lively while remaining within the topic.

The churches could not contain the people present to participate in the Holy Masses. The “good morning to Jesus” in the morning by the elementary school children and the middle school boys had reached at the totality of the presences! Even the individual confessions have been many, as well as the community ones. It should also be noted the atmosphere of fraternity that has been created among us missionaries: ready to help each other in the shifts in councils and the encouragement, given to all with great simplicity and joy.

What to say then? Thank you Lord! Thanks to the sisters of the mother house who preceded me and accompanied me with prayer and offering their suffering to the Lord.

I brought the Word of Jesus with my nothingness, but with much enthusiasm. It is welcomed and appreciated very much. Thank you Lord, I am happy!

*Sr. Rita Zorzi*



## “Peregrinatio” relics of SAINT ANTHONY of PADUA

For some time it has been announced the arrival of the relics of St. Anthony in Gemona and for us FMSC sisters, who venerate the “Saint” as our “special protector”, this news was indeed a cause of intense joy and deep gratitude to the Lord, above all for the time of grace we were experiencing: the presence of the extended General Council in the Mother House.



So great was the waiting! The guardian of the Sanctuary of Sant’Antonio, Fra Giovan Battista, agreed with the two friars responsible for this precious ‘pilgrimage’, Father Egidio Canil and Father Renato, to bring the relics to the Mother House, before the various celebrations to be held, as planned, in the Sanctuary.

And so, on Saturday 25 May, at about 5.00 pm, Friar Giovan Battista accompanied the two confreres to the Mother House who immediately went to the Infirmary to visit the elderly and sick sisters.

Here, Father Egidio has exposed and presented the two relics: in one was contained a fragment of the sub-cheded rib of St. Anthony and in the other a little ash from the body of St. Francis, pointing out that, with the presence of the two relics, we wanted to remember the 800 years of the journey to Italy of St. Anthony and his meeting with St. Francis.

Father Egidio then briefly described the spiritual profile of the Saint, followed by a moment of prayer together and finally gave the blessing to all the sisters with the relics of the two Saints, and approached each one for a caress to the same relics. Then he greeted them to join the sisters of the community who, in the meantime, had gone to

church to live this time of grace together.

When the Fathers entered the Church with the relics, accompanied by the Superiors and some sisters, a song of praise and blessing was raised to the Lord: “Great and admirable Lord, Almighty God, merciful Savior ...”

Father Egidio, immediately started a simple liturgy with the recitation of prayers and psalms and, in the homily, praised the figure of the two Saints offering them to our attention, as models to look at and, above all, to imitate.

With a typically Franciscan style of fraternity and simplicity, he then made us partakers of the long “pilgrimage” of the Saint accomplished even overseas and of the spiritual fruits obtained, thanks to his intercession.

Then, he gave the blessing to all the sisters through the intercession of the two Saints and invited them to go before the altar to caress the two relics, supported by him and by the Superior General Sr. Paola.

This meeting, which wanted to convey the message to us: “St Anthony of Padua: the handing over of the Gospel”, was a precious occasion for all of us to renew and revitalize our love for the Gospel; the Gospel that he received in his freshness, lived in joy and embodied in everyday life.

*Sister Anna Maria Volpato*





## INTERFAITH JOURNEYING in Peekskill

The Peekskill Area Pastors Association is an interfaith group of religious leaders in the Peekskill area.



The purpose of the association is two-fold: to provide occasions for fellowship among religious leaders and persons in specialized ministries and to enable the leaders to address interfaith issues that will benefit the congregations and communities of the greater Peekskill area. Three years ago when I became Provincial, I joined the PAPA group.

This is a wonderful group of leaders from the various churches in the Peekskill area who meet once a month.

We take turns hosting our meeting so that we all get the chance to visit the various places of worship in our area.

Our members include a Catholic priest, rabbis, and clergy from Muslim, Quaker, Baptist, Episcopal, Methodist, Pentecostal, and Lutheran churches as well as Chaplains from Hudson Valley Hospital and local nursing homes.



Some of our annual activities include:

- Our annual interfaith THANKSGIVING SERVICE, held at a different house of worship and providing a free Thanksgiving Day community dinner, a 36-year tradition for our brothers and sisters who are hungry. I have had the honor of proclaiming the Gospel (Matthew 25) at Holy Spirit Church and leading the congregation in prayer at the Croton Synagogue.
- Martin Luther King INTER-RELIGIOUS WORSHIP PROGRAM, celebrating the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE... partnering with the First Hebrew Congregation of Peekskill to recall the Holocaust and honor the memory of the millions who perished.
- THE GARDEN OF HOPE...growing and harvesting produce for local food pantries at an organic farm we operate since 2014.
- MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS...a monthly interfaith event for education, awareness, and fostering understanding between our faiths.
- NOON-TIME MEALS...Our member congregations cook and serve daily hot meals at the Salvation Army
- Providing food donations for food pantries in the area and on occasion for the residents of the JAN PEEK SHELTER in Peekskill.

We at Mt. St. Francis have made the commitment to donate boxed cereal each month to Fred's Ecumenical Food Pantry in Peekskill. During this year the Sisters and our Lay Associates have donated over 400 boxes of cereal to help feed the needy. In this group I am been nourished by the dedication and faith of so many good people who work together, worshipping in a variety of ways but united by the love and beauty of one God, called by many names. Together we pray for unity, peace, justice, and an end to the sufferings that people everywhere experience. Our God of many titles calls us together to worship and work together and make our corner of the world a place of respect, care, and hope.

*Sr Laura Morgan*

## **THE REBIRTH of MISSIONARY LIFE in the COMMUNITY of KORMAKITI**

*“We are called to proclaim the Gospel, always, with courage and wherever we are, because the land of mission can be in a physical place as well as in the heart.*

*Christians must awaken and rediscover the joy inherent in evangelization.”*

Pope Francis

Return to normality, to the life of the past, listen again the voices of children in the square, see the Church full of the faithful, hear the sound of the bell every morning, go around the village, visit the elderly, serve and love the people .....

These were the feelings that excited us to hope that soon the Kormakiti community would be completed as, for almost a year, there were arrivals and departures of the sisters who served in this unique Maronite community that survived in the Turkish part of the island of Cyprus.

Even the question of people: “why do you have to leave and leave us alone?”, has been a reminder to which we had to give a concrete answer.

The waiting was long and also taken to heart by our superiors at various levels.

There was no more time to waste.

Meanwhile, the Lord was preparing for us a shower of tenderness in a superabundant way. Finally, the community of Kormakiti was

completed with three sisters: Sr Bernadetta Visentin, Sr. Elsapaola Pudussery and Sr Yiannoulla Petri. Sr Bernadetta Visentin always says: “the Lord does not abandon us but wants our good and He always blesses us”.

We begin our weekly program, encouraging ourselves to move forward because our presence is very precious, especially for the elderly people. We dedicate two days of the week making visits to our elderly and sick of Kormakiti; every 15 days we visit the elders of Karpasha, sometimes we visit the sick in the hospital and in a

shelter in Nicosia.

We listen to their problems and share their joys and sorrows by bringing a word of comfort and courage. Then twice a week we dedicate ourselves to the work center where we occupy the old women of the village with embroidery, cutting and sewing, crochet and other work.

Sr Yiannoulla Petri is responsible for this group and is animated with so much experience having worked in our Lebanese mission for a good



thirty years, and has now returned to Kormakiti, in her native country.

Every 15 days, in the early morning in our country there is so much movement, because the United Nations arrive with the distribution of aid for the prisoners. They care also for us.



Our friends from the United Nations always come to our house for a short visit and we offer them something to drink.

Their company is always welcome.

They always ask us: “do you have any problems, can we help you”?

They are very kind and caring to help us.

After a long period of time, in April, six children came to the village to ask for the lesson of the catechism. A great joy for us to have children in our midst.

We already notice that in the village there is a progress and a vital rebirth. We truly hope for a better future.

### **A surprise for the people of Kormakiti**

On the occasion of a special event organized by the Office of the Representative, the Maronite community duly honored the recluse women who never left the Maronite villages. The event took place in a crowded hall of Kormakiti, Wednesday 15 May.

The event was honored by the high presence of the First Lady of the Republic, Mrs Andri Anastasiades, who was accepted by the representative Mrs Yiannakis Moussa with the children who now reside permanently with their families in Kormakiti.



Thirty-two women were invited by the representative and participated in the event, either by themselves or by proxy, in order to receive honors appropriate to their contribution in the struggle of the Maronite community to save their villages.

Our Congregation, the FMSC, was also honored as a sign of gratitude, because we never left the village and its inhabitants, especially in the difficult post-war moments. The women of the four Maronite villages were

also honored with great emotion, with a special plaque symbolically assigned to the four municipal councils.

In the reception that followed, the First Lady had the opportunity to talk and take pictures with the reclusive women as well as with the young families who always live in Kormakiti.

She then visited our chapel and the chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mother where she lit a candle and kissed all the icons as is the Orthodox custom.



*The community of Kormakiti*

## THE COURAGE OF SHARING

Going through the whole of the Gospel of John and not just some pericopes, listening to narratives never presented in the liturgy, thus gaining access to a new understanding of Christ perceived more globally through the different aspects of his earthly life journey ... arriving at a certain familiarity Jesus and his way of acting, of thinking, of working miracles, of speaking



with authority, of taking a stand, of always being on the road ... here are some fruits caught in the living contact with the Word.

This experience proved to be positive because it is the creator of fraternal, ecumenical, inter-generational ties. It has allowed us to overcome certain fears and to live the boldness of sharing and witness, beyond religious affiliations. The exchange that takes place in small groups at the houses of people who agree to open their homes, allows them to translate into words and develop themes, strengthens the listening of the participants, opens a spiritual dynamic that links Word and life, making each one witness of God's action in the life of the other. In the course of the narrations, the discovery of Jesus allows us to meet Him personally and, through Him, to welcome His invitation to follow Him with others, thus making ourselves free to love and to reach the world that needs a Saviour. The reading of the Gospel with a mutual sharing allows each one to be open to the faith. It is a question of helping and accompanying people to

see how and under what conditions their actions are performed "according to Christ".

This year, a small group of TRAMATA people (the three parishes chaired by the only parish priest of Tavannes, Father Hilaire Mitendo) dared to respond to this invitation to meet twice a month to read, reflect and share the Gospel under the direction of the sisters of our fraternity.

"Since I took part in sharing the Gospel, I have discovered another way of living my faith. Sharing and group experiences give me support to live the Word of God, which has become a spiritual nourishment of every day life" (Francesca).

"Reading the Bible, done in a small group, gives me the opportunity to rediscover the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. We share in simplicity and trust. The interventions - explanations given to us by the Sisters guide us to a deeper and

theological understanding of the texts, according to the Catholic faith. The sisters encourage us to advance in the knowledge and deepening of the Word and help us to discover the profound meaning of the biblical passages" (Armando).

*The sisters of the fraternity "St. John XXIII"  
Tavannes*



## Youth Mission in Montale

This year also. This year our pastoral collaboration gave its response to the Church's concern for new generations and offered all the young people of the three parishes: Serra dei Conti, Montale and Piticchio a joyful announcement of Jesus with a Mission entitled "... *and walked with them*". Strongly desired by the parish priest and realized in collaboration with the Friars Minor of the Province of Marche, some lay people of the Third Order, sr. Lucia, too, of Franciscan spirituality and of course we the FMSC who made ourselves available also to solve logistical problems. The spirituality of the missionaries, their simple, festive and joyful style of Franciscans and above all their interior faith, had a great impact and marked a time of grace for all.

The Mission took place in two time-period: 2-7 December 2018 and 6-9 March 2019 and was aimed at children, adolescents, young people and their families. All the schools were visited, all the students involved in the original activities that really made them feel that Jesus was in our midst and walked with us.



At the time when the students resumed classes, the missionaries visited the factories of Jesi and their families, while in the churches the Blessed Sacrament remained exposed to the worship of the faithful.

The meeting of all the teenagers with the missionaries, which took place in our house, was significant. The topic of fear was discussed and how to overcome it: "I WILL SHOW YOU THE FEAR IN A HANDFUL OF POWDER". Second point: "THE MIRACULOUS FISHING AND THE CALL OF THE APOSTLES. The involvement was open and sincere on both sides with clear joy and simplicity. From our part, as well as having participated in the meeting, we offered

a snack in order to better fraternize and deepen the theme. In the end we left them a message.

We sisters too, together with other families, gave hospitality to a missionary, Father Alessandro, receiving in return a cheerful presence rich in spiritual content.

We only share a few significant moments: Thursday 7 and Friday 8 March at 7.30 am, "SMS" to Jesus, meeting with the children of elementary schools. After a nice explanation, the missionaries gave each child a note on which to write a message for Jesus and the next day everyone was punctual to collect and send messages after an animated and joyful catechesis. The meeting ended with miraculous fishing: two large nets full of small fish made up of coloured balloons that they distributed to everyone. A truly unique catechesis.

For the last day the parish priest Fr. Luciano invited himself to lunch with the group of missionaries. They were very welcome guests, Fr. Luciano, Fr. Enrico, Fr Alessandro and Sr Lucia, a moment also for reflection and renewed stimulus to make oneself available to God and for the Gospel.

On the afternoon of March 9th we participated in the final activity in Serra dei Conti: an exceptional party, full of joy and enthusiasm that created a true capacity to fraternize.

All this, through songs, music and dances that have turned into a unanimous prayer of praise to the Lord and sincere gratitude to all those who, in those days, had become available to make Jesus present to us and showing that He always walks with us.

*The community of Montale*

## **National youth Day in Cebu- Philippines**

*“Behold the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done me according to your word” (Lk 1:38)* was the theme adopted by the Episcopal Conference of the Philippines for the celebration of the National Youth Day 2019, a theme that will guide young people in their discernment during the year of the youth that is celebrated in all the Philippines.

The so-called National Youth Day 2019 (NYD) or National Youth Day took place on the island of Cebu, in the Philippines, from 23 to 28 April 2019.

Thirteen thousand young people registered and participated enthusiastically in this five-day event.

All the participants were hosted in various parishes welcomed by different families.

The Filipinos have been extraordinarily generous to host us and feed us for free for five days. Of course, this is a confirmation, in fact we know well that Filipinos are very hospitable and friendly people.

As the Blessed Virgin Mary was careful to listen to God’s voice through the angel Gabriel, and was able to say her “YES” to the plan of God through her personal encounter with him and discernment, so every young person finds in her life, an example. Today, all over the world, we are surrounded by young people who are looking for meaning in their lives and their identity. They are eager to have a personal encounter with the Lord. Sr. Marilyn and I, Sr Theresa were sent as missionaries not to satisfy the thirst of the young to meet the Lord, but rather for a challenge also for us to walk with them and prepare them to allow the Lord to meet them.

This was the main purpose of this meeting of young people in Cebu. All the activities prepared and carried out were significant and aimed at satisfying the purpose of the gathering: “Helping

young people to listen to the Lord’s voice and to discern his plan for their life and respond generously to God’s call in whatever form of life they are called to commit themselves”.

The Eucharistic celebration was presided over by the Apostolic Nuncio Msgr. Giordano Gabriele and concelebrated by other bishops of the Philippines. We held the solemn procession along the streets of Cebu led by bishops, clergy and religious men and women.



This activity wants to affirm and tell young people “do not be afraid, you are not alone, we are journeying with you”. We were grouped to “listen to the questions of young people” for sharing vocational stories and testimonies of some very significant

people: a married couple, a religious, a diocesan priest, a bishop and a single person.

It is the experience of the “pilgrim’s journey” to make us aware of our pilgrimage to the heavenly Father, then it is also a form of “A service Evolution”, an immersion in the community for a service experience to our needy brothers. We also had a “night under the stars”: we did not sleep to worship the Lord in the Eucharist; praise and worship; dialogue with the bishops and the recitation of the Holy Rosary at dawn.

These meetings ended with the Mass of Thanksgiving and the closing activities at the Cebu Sports Complex. This wonderful experience has revived our youth, paved the way for new friends, new host families and a meeting with many young women, to whom we have allowed them to share their dreams and they have given us the opportunity to do the vocation promotion.

Helping young people to discover their identity has confirmed us, in our turn, in our identity as Missionaries in the heart of the Mission.

## The MISSION with the ELDERLY

The community of St. Elizabeth of Hungary in Cusco is inserted in the parish of Our Lady of Carmen, where pastoral work and evangelization takes place with children, young people, adults and the elderly. Within all the apostolic work that the sisters of the community do in the parish, in the chapels and in the deanery, we want to share one of the activities that takes place every third Saturday of the month; we prepare and offer a breakfast and a lunch for 40-50 elderly people from the parish community, carefully welcoming what Jesus says. *“I was hungry and you gave me food”* (Mt 25:35). Jesus not only took to heart the need for the spiritual food of those who followed him, but he also gave material food and today he tells us that we are called to help our elders. It is not enough to offer moments of biblical prayer or reflection, but concrete gestures are needed that respond to the needs of our brothers and sisters.



Our Constitutions tell us that, by participating in the missionary dimension, we must meet the most needy brothers and sisters and support the faith of believers (Art. 66 §3), this is what we do with our elderly, through the monthly lunch, the Eucharistic Celebration and confession.

Most of them are women, few men, some of whom live alone because their families no longer care after them, others live according to their possibilities by collecting cardboard or recyclable packaging for their daily livelihood. Still others, at home with their illness, cannot work.

However, this meeting once a month is an opportunity for them, because, in addition of having breakfast and lunch, they have time to share, to remember the songs in Quechua when they were young, and, like a fraternity, they share everything they experienced during the past month.

It is a great experience to see them happy and talk to each other.

This activity is made possible thanks to the generosity of four people in the health ministry who collaborate voluntarily with their time, food. We are grateful also to other people who help us anonymously. And finally, thanks to the responsible sister who motivates and accompanies the people for this fraternal time of our elders.



## **MEETING of the LOCAL SUPERIORS**

In the circles of the Bolivian Conference of Religious (CBR), a Workshop for local Superiors was held on 27 and 28 March, to encourage a journey in the three-year period 2018-2019 inspired by the theme of the CLAR: “” Do what He tells you, it is already time “”, starting from the reality and the service of the animation of the communities of religious life.



During the workshop we were invited to listen to Jesus at this time, to be with him and like him, to walk towards a new way of being Church, as disciples, prophets and missionaries, keeping in mind the meaning of the six jars as six points:

1. Live your vocation with a profound sense
2. Immerse yourself in the Trinitarian spirituality
3. Walking towards a new way of being Church
4. Renew the option for the excluded with a contemplative vision of reality.
5. Foster the ethics of encounter and care (Mercy)
6. Opt for integral ecology.

They were two intense days that favored our ongoing formation and provided us with the tools for an adequate and effective animation of the communities entrusted to us.

In these workshops, we have participated Sr. Rosa Blanco from the Sacred Heart Community of Sorata, Sor Maggaly Warthon from the Community San Francisco of Cochabamba and Sister Luz Marina Velásquez from the Community Our Lady of Guadalupe in Santa Cruz.

We thank God and our superiors who have given us this time of formation.





*This is the written letter  
by the participants in the Meeting*

**THERE IS A HOPE FOR YOUR FUTURE**

Yes, dear brothers and sisters, in these two days when we have gathered, the Lord has asked us to recount our personal, community life and our missionary life starting from the story of the wedding at Cana (Jn 2: 1-12 ).

As a symbol we received a jar and were invited to write about what we wanted to fill. Many were the moments in which we were invited to look at the reality of each one, to look at our present and to see what are the lights and shadows that permeate our consecrated life.

It is perceived that these lights and shadows are part of any person willing to discover the new, the beauty of everyday life.

We live in a time of many changes, different choices, a time when everything is available, but as consecrated men and women, people called to live and witness to the love of God, the Lord asks us today to have the audacity and the courage to perceive the wine that is lacking in our consecrated life.

It is necessary to pay attention so as to never lose the new wine at the wedding feast, we know that some wines are in extinction, but we must rediscover the new wine of the essential, in living radically our charism, to experience the joy that comes from a profound experience of God and a life embodied in the realities in which we are present.

We confirm that time (Kairós) is now, that is, the time in which God acts and is present through our witness of life. We cannot let time pass by, we need to join forces and return to a religious life more committed to the project of Jesus which is life in abundance; we must shake ourselves, we cannot remain closed in our world, we must go out and look with the eyes of Mary. A careful look, available and dedicated to the various emerging needs.

We need:

- The new wine of the “fraternity” which will be the reason for a human and respectful presence, so that as consecrated men and women we will be able to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus with joy.
- The new wine of “shared responsibility” that will make each member of a community capable of growing in friendship and belongingness, to achieve a faithful and generous life.
- The new wine of the “prophecy of the Vows”, which will allow us to be witnesses of a life integrated with the building up of the Kingdom of God.
- Keeping the good wine up to the Wedding ...

The certainty of the presence of the Ruah (Spirit) in our life, gives us the serenity to continue to say to ourselves, with full confidence that the new wine can never be missing.

*Cochabamba, March 28, 2019*



## **Exhibition of the Franciscan Charism**

The vocation is not my answer, but the “touch” of God, his call “You have seduced me, Lord, and I allowed myself to be seduced” (Jr 20, 7).

The vocation ministry of the Order of Friars Minor of the Missionary Province of St. Anthony of Padua in Bolivia has invited religious communities, the youth of the Archdiocese of Cochabamba, to participate in the Exhibition of the Franciscan Charism.

This activity took place on 2 June in the Franciscan Center from 8.00 am, with Holy Mass at 5.30pm.

The vocation day was divided into two phases. Initially we split into three groups, then we designated a sector in which there were exhibitions. The speakers told us about the conversion of Francis and why he is called “living Gospel”. They then presented the story of how the Franciscan order spread throughout the world. After this exhibition, we went to another place, where the sisters of the convent of Santa Chiara spoke about their origins, the life of Saint Clare of Assisi and the places where they are now in the world. In another place, we visited the exhibition of two important saints for the Franciscan order: Saint Anthony of Padua and Saint Bonaventure.

This was organized by the Franciscan Youth.



The second moment began after lunch; the young people formed six groups and began to visit the stands of each Franciscan Congregation, including the third secular Order of St. Francis, the YouFra and the Justice and Peace movement.

For us, Franciscan Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, it was a privilege to be able to share our charism and make it known and to try to infuse charismatic seeds into the hearts of those who approached us. We entrust all the youth to Divine providence, as we are only an instrument for reaching the hearts of people. We have been able to see the attention of many young people and the enthusiasm of the various Congregations in expressing their charism.

We thank all the people who took the time to organize and participate in this event. Sr. Marlene of the community of “San Francisco” and Sr. Luz Marina of the community “Virgen de Guadalupe” participated for our Congregation.

## Diocesan Vocational Exhibition in Tijuana

With the motto: “Be brave and discover your vocation”, on Saturday 11 May the “Laura Leroux” community participated in the Diocesan Expo on the Charism, in the places of the Minor Seminary of the Diocese of Tijuana.

The event allowed us to focus attention on knowledge, reflection, promotion and sharing of vocation in its various forms of life. The event was attended mainly by teenagers, young people, couples, and families.

We also had the presence of Archbishop Francisco Moreno Barrón who is the main promoter of vocations in the diocese, who stressed the importance of promoting the vocation within the same family so that they collaborate and promote the vocation of children, regarding their call to consecrated life or other missions within the Church. During the day, the archbishop visited each of the stands interested in the work of the sisters and brothers present, above all, in their charism and in the service, they render to the Church of Baja California.

About 30 religious communities of active and cloister life attended the vocational Expo.

It was given the time during which young people could get in touch with us, learn about our charism and the activities we do. It was a moment to discern together their vocational research.

The meeting also forced us to prepare ourselves with

various aids that we offered to those who visited the stand: calendars, textbooks, triptychs and banners that presented our Congregation.

It was a work of great dedication and preparation; we gave the best of ourselves and the Lord will do his part.



In the meantime, as a community, we will continue to promote the various vocations and pray to the Lord, the harvest Master, so that the young may be careful to listen to their call and be courageous in responding.

## MEETING OF THE JUNIOR SISTERS IN NKILZOK

The session took place in Nkizok in “St. Francis of Assisi” Community, mother house of our Vice-Province, with the theme:

SPIRITUALITY of the incarnated Word for a new evangelization. TOWARDS A CRYSTIFYING CRISTIFICATION “, led by Father Richard Mbizi, CICM of Mvolyé-Yaoundé.

“ For this is the message you have heard from the beginning: we should love one another,. ... here is how The way we came to know love was that he laid down his life for us; so we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. “(1 Jn 3, 11-21).

“The life of a religious is a continuous Novitiate” (Father Gregory).

It is with the same enthusiasm that the Vice-Provincial Superior, Sr. Beatrice Bifouma and her Council wanted us Junior sisters to take a time of recollection to find ourselves heart to heart with the Master of life, JESUS CHRIST, who called us to follow Him to participate and continue the work of the Father’s creation.

During the session, it was a question of deepening our mission for the New Evangelization, which is to revitalize our Christian and missionary life in order to announce the Word of the Incarnate God. To achieve this goal, we will use new methods and also our talents to convince the world today that is based above all on concreteness.

For this reason, our life must be Christocentric, that is, it must imitate and identify itself with the Crucified Christ to lead his people to become like him.

For us missionaries, the New Evangelization demands a “Christified” life for a radical conversion and an authentic witness with our life.

Moreover, this cannot happen except through an intimate and intense relationship with Christ because, before announcing Him, we must first know Him.

We therefore need the audacity to announce Christ in time and space. Let us say with St. Paul, our model in the mission of the Church:

“For me living is Christ” because we announce the Risen Christ, not the historical Christ.

We thank fraternally the Vice-Provincial Superior, Sr. Beatrice Bifouma, and her Council for having offered us this time to return to our origins and to the riches with Christ, for our ongoing formation so that we can fill ourselves with the Lord and serve him as he wishes us to do.



*Junior sisters of the Vice-Province “Holy Martyrs of Uganda”-Africa*

## **WORLD YOUTH DAY CELEBRATION in the ARCHDIOCESE of BAMENDA**

It was marvelous to see Youths from all over the Diocese who came together to celebrate this memorable event with their Archbishop, His grace Cornelius Fontem ESSUA despite the socio-political problems being faced in our region. These celebrations started from the 12th to the 14th of April 2019 at the Joseph Metropolitan Cathedral Big Mankon, Bamenda. The first day of the celebration was marked by the following activities:

An opening ceremony from the host deanery of Bambui, they animated the day with songs, dance and a special reception of the Archbishop, and the Auxiliary Bishop, His Lordship Micheal BIBI who came to open the World Youths day celebration and to welcome and encourage them. The Archdiocesan Youth Chaplain, Rev Father Gatien presented an opening speech in which he also welcomed all the Youths present, wished them a happy stay in the Cathedral and a fruitful celebration. After this, a world day of Youths song was sang by all the Youths, led by the Bambui deanery who were hosting the event.

This was followed by catechesis given to the Youths following their age groups.

This grouping was aimed at facilitating teaching and understanding in category of Youths. The catechesis was based on discernment and vocation and the theme was “I AM THE HANDMAID OF THE LORD”.

Following the theme, Youths were encouraged to follow and imitate the virtues of Mary such as her obedience through which she manifest her determination to do only God’s will, her respect, her politeness which made her to speak always in a way that will not minimize, hurt, insult, mock or condemn any one.

In moments of doubt she stayed silent and reflected prayerfully in her heart, in purity. She avoided every company, conversations, images, actions and thoughts that would stain her purity. In order to imitate Mary, Youths are encouraged to be prayerful.

The religious congregations who were present on this day had the opportunity to present their various Congregations and after this a talk was also presented on vocations.

The second day began with Stations of the Cross at 9am, followed by cultural activities “Youth Festival” where by Youths had the opportunity to present their talents through comedy show, live music, brief sketches, cultural presentations, poetry, fashion design etc. the activities ended with a pontifical Mass celebrated by the Archbishop Mgr Cornelius Fontem Essua on Palm Sunday.



At the end of the Eucharistic celebration, the Missionary Cross was taken from Bambui deanery and handed to Bafut deanery. All the Youths of Bambui deanery danced to the Altar to hand the cross back to the Archbishop who in turn, handed to the youths of the Bafut deanery who also danced with joy to the Altar to receive the Missionary cross from the Archbishop. This cross shall be in their deanery for one year and shall visit all the Parishes of their deanery.

This also means that next year, the Bafut deanery shall host the Youth Day celebrations and in the same way, the missionary cross shall be taken away from them and handed to another deanery as is the tradition. It was a very beautiful celebration and we thank the Almighty God for his unending love and we bless Him forever.

### THE CELEBRATION of the WORLD DAY of VOCATIONS in KRIBI

Sunday, May 13, 2019, we celebrated the world day of vocations in the Parish “Notre Dame de l’Immaculée Conception” de Niète.

We went there: the Congregation of the Conceptionist Fathers, the Sisters Servants of the Visitation and we, Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart.

Our aim was to arouse in the hearts of young people the desire to serve Christ in the consecrated life. They came numerous to listen to the Good News.

After Holy Mass we met the young people to talk to them about consecrated life.

Each Congregation had 50 minutes at its disposal to explain the spirit and charism of the Congregation explaining that other congregations also exist.

The theme of this day was: **CONSECRATED LIFE IS A GIFT OF GOD GIVEN TO THE CHURCH.** We have exposed it as follows: consecrated life is a total and free gift of a person or a group of people for the service of the Gospel.

This gift has some requirements. To access it, you have to go through stages like the aspirant and the novitiate.

The Novitiate is sanctioned through public vows of obedience, poverty and chastity, called “evangelical counsels”.

All these stages are followed by each congregation.

It is after a period ranging from 5 to 9 years that the young person can make the decisive choice of belonging to a Congregation.

Thus was our day!  
We thank God for the gift of vocations in the Church and we ask Him to arouse in the hearts of young people the desire to follow Christ and to give their lives for the service of the Gospel.



## The school: education that changes life

Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit said, “Praise you Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned and made them known to little children”(Lk.10:21). Living the day among the little children, listening their babbling and answering their big questions, enjoying their innocence and simplicity are privileged moments where one experiences God’s presence.

Many are the baby care centers opened around the cities to give a service to the working class parents, who look for a safe place for their kids during the time of their work. It now became a common system to help the families.

We too have opened the Baby care centers or pre-schools, to help the parents who look for secure place and better formation for their children.



We care the children below 4 years during the day and give them a joyful atmosphere favorable for their physical and psychological growth. First time away from the parents really give them much suffering , but discovering the presence of other little friends like them, slowly opens up a new world of fun and joy.

The sisters who are being with them really take the maximum care and try to give a right formation in all levels. The parents are very happy and feel very secure in sending their kids with us.

Our pre-schools in the remote missions like Malom Noatoli and Changlang are to be mentioned especially since it is the result of a process of great transformation in the mentality of the people. When we started the mission, opened hostels for school going girls with needed facilities and support for studies, the people were reluctant to send to the hostels. Mainly because they were great support for the parents as they worked along with them in the fields or took care of the cattle.

It was our effort to create an awareness by going from village to village, motivating the parents to educate the with children. Now they are happy with the change they made in their being with us in the hostels and educated in our schools. It was at our great surprise that they came forward with the request of opening a pre- school for their little kids. We thank the Almighty for making us instruments of this great transformation.

We feel happy that we not only educated the children, but also their parents in a different way. They used to tie their kids at the mother’s back or take along with them and leave them sleep in a cradle tied to the branch of a tree nearby when they work in the field. Now the mothers feel confident as they put them in the pre-school with the sisters where they enjoy their childhood.



## **Snehalayam - Geriatric Care Centre in Machilipatnam**

There is always more joy in giving than receiving.

Snehalaya-Geriatic center is an activity done by the sisters of the Holy cross convent Machilipatnam. Jesus always had great compassion to the sick.

He listened to their cry and extended His healing touch to all who requested him during His journey. Rich and the poor, young and old, pure and impure all had the accessibility to Him.

He instructed his disciples with the command to heal the sick.... He identified himself with them. "I was sick and you visited me" (Mt 25:36).

Taking these consoling words of Jesus to our hearts, we dedicate our services in this mission.

The Snehalayam Geriatric care center accommodates 14 elderly men and women, mostly poor and sickly. Few of them are bedridden, at the point of death.

Others, some have chronic illness, loss of memory and

deafness, some are affected by terminal illness like cancer. Due the old age or of the hard realities of life, some are mentally depressed.

When we sit near and look at them, we hear a silent request which breaks out on their faces, "I need your company for I am lonely; I need your help for I am helpless; I need your

assurance for I fear the worst; I need your encouragement for I am worried and disappointed; I need your nursing and medical care for I am a patient and need your greater presence, prayers and blessings for I am in a death feel".



The sisters try to be close to them console them because most of them are abandoned by their children.

We hold in our hearts while taking care of them, the words of Jesus, "Whatever you do to the least of my brothers and sisters you do unto me" (Mt 25:40).



**JOURNÉES D'ARRAS MARIELUND – SWEDEN**  
**11 to 15 JUNE 2019**

Journees d'Arras is the group of committed people from various dominations, who are concerned and are engaged in inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue in different countries of Europe. The group is comprised of conscientious Christians who under the leadership of their respective Churches are fostering peace and harmony among Christians and Muslims living in Europe. Since 1980 the group meets annually in different cities of Europe to deepen their knowledge of various faith traditions, to share their experiences of inter-religious dialogue, to discuss various challenges regarding inter-action between civilizations and religions and to report about various initiatives and efforts for peace and harmony in their respective countries.

Different Institutes working for inter-religious dialogue in Europe also send their representatives for the above meetings: the WCC (World Council of Churches), PISAI (Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies), PCID (the Vatican's Council for Inter-religious dialogue) and International Franciscan Fraternity- Turkey (represented by Fr. Robert Pascal ofm, Fr. Antoniuos Duma and Sr. Zita Gutang fmsc).

This year Journees d'Arras meeting took place at Marielund - Sweden from 11 – 15 June 2019 and was attended by 25 participants from various parts of Europe and Turkey.

The sublime and aesthetic beauty of the place and the grand hospitality of the host and organizers was heartening. The topic of this year's meeting was 'Christian-Muslim encounter and spiritual exchange?'

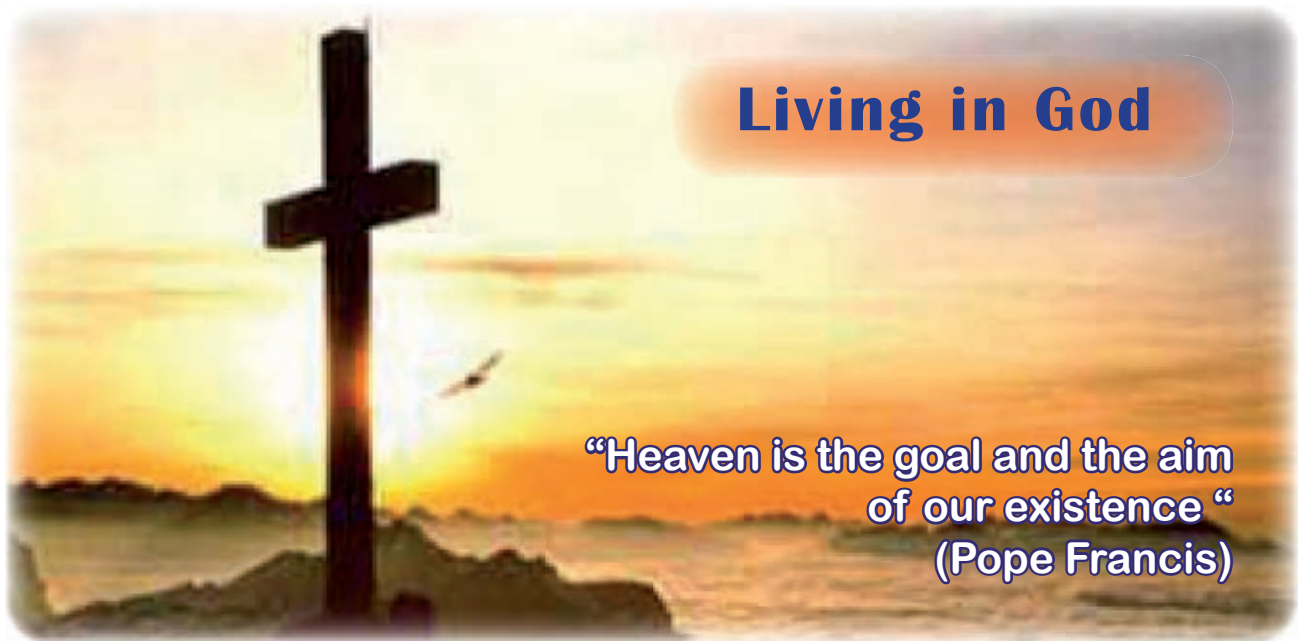
The fraternal bond among the members was conducive for in-depth sharing of experiences. The familiarity and relationship between the members facilitated in concerted efforts for actualizing the vision of creating and strengthening of God's family with each bringing along unique contribution for the common good of the society.

As pilgrims we are nourished by the Lord, His Word is our inspiration and the Holy Spirit unfolds His plans and empowers us as we continue His mission in the present realities of our world. During the meeting, due importance was given and quality time was reserved for worship.

The morning and evening prayers were well prepared.

The selection of Sacred Scriptures for reflections, the inspirational hymns, meditations and prayers prepared our hearts and minds to be enriched by various activities organized to deepen our knowledge and experiences in inter-religious dialogue and encounter.





## Living in God

“Heaven is the goal and the aim  
of our existence “  
(Pope Francis)



### Sister Rosaugusta Felettigh of the Passion

*Born in Pradamano (UD)  
on 8 June 1930*

*Died in Gemona (UD)  
on 14 February 2019*

Teresa Felettigh, last of three sisters and two brothers, was born in Pradamano on 8 June 1930 and returned to the Father's house on 14 February 2019: almost 89 years of which 65 lived as a FMSC sister in our Congregation.

From her parents Agostino and Rosa Gentilini she learned love for prayer, discretion, simplicity: attitudes that have

matured in her the desire to consecrate herself totally to the Lord.

Entering the Convent of Gemona at the age of 21, after an adequate postulancy and novitiate preparation, on 19 May 1953 she made her religious profession, taking the name of Suor Rosaugusta of the Passion.

In the same year, she started her mission as an FMSC.

Sr. Rosaugusta throughout her mission presented herself with the 'key word' that gave meaning and value to her life and her mission: the "MEEKNESS".

In the communities in which she passed (Friuli, Trentino, Veneto) lending herself to the work school or as a wardrobe-keeper, she gave herself with kindness, sweetness and love above all with the poorest, the elderly and the sick who loved her presence made of simple and engaging dialogue. She has also served as local superior three times, always with her style of affability and kindness.

She spent the last 23 years in the retirement home in Paluzza (UD), where she kept the linen and clothing in order so that all the elderly could present themselves with dignity as she wanted.

Every day she recited the Holy Rosary with them, on Sundays and holidays she amused them with the game of bingo. She accompanied everyone spiritually until the passage from this world to heaven, giving them the Eucharistic Jesus as strength and light in the most difficult moments of life. She has exercised this sensitivity not only in the retirement home; Sr. Rosaugusta also lent herself in the parish bringing communion to the elderly, visiting the poorest, to whom, in silence and discreetness, she gave them what they needed to live. In 2011, she was transferred in the infirmary of the mother house, and she lived her last seven years of life characterized by "prayer and daily self-offering to the Lord"

with that silence that expressed her meekness even better. How many times she recited the Psalmic prayer she held in her prayer book: "Lord, place a custody in my mouth, watch over the doors of my lips" (Sl. 140) and conclude: "SILENCE IS MEEKNESS" when you do not respond to offenses, when you do not claim your rights, when you leave the defense of your honor to God, silence is meekness".



**Sister Augusta Pozzobon  
of the Eucharist**

*Born in Vedelago (TV)  
on 19 June 1921  
Died in Gemona (UD)  
on 26 March 2019*

*"You are the fruits of the tree which is the family: you are good fruits when the tree has good roots which are the parents". (Pope Francis). Really good roots had the family of her father, Giuseppe and her mother, Angela who gave birth to 11 children of whom Sr. Augusta was the fourth. Moreover, those roots*

were manifested not only as Christian, but we can profoundly say 'religious' if seven vocations have blossomed: Don Giuseppe diocesan priest, the Salesian Don Pietro, the Jesuit brother Giovanni, Sr. Stanislaa and Sr. Fidalma Carmelites, Sr. Augusta and Sr. Maria fmsc. Antonietta, born June 19, 1921, already at the age of 15 she chose to become a Franciscan Missionary of the Sacred Heart by entering Gemona, the mother house, on June 18, 1936. After her postulancy and novitiate formation, she made her profession on July 18 taking the religious name of Sister Augusta of the Eucharist. In the same year, she began her mission with kindergarten children and pastoral care in various communities in the Veneto (Treviso - Paese - Castagnole - Fontane - Postioma) and Friuli (Camino - Ospedaletto - Savorgnano - Paularo - Rauscedo). For several years, she served as local Superior and in 1963 for three years, she was also an assistant to aspirants to religious life.

A long life lived under the sign of the Eucharist that she had chosen as a point of reference and ideal for her journey as a religious. She wrote with deep conviction:

*"Jesus the Eucharist, I love you and I don't need anything else but to feel that I love you with all my heart... Yes, that's all I think and I ask, just to love you!"*

In 2006, with her 85 years of age, she was transferred from Rauscedo to the mother house, where she lived with so much

joy and peace for several years. She wrote: *"A good day has begun: the Lord through the Superiors, has called me here in the mother house ... Here I feel good ... Here I have so much time to pray and also to take a look at my past in which I see how great your love was for me!"*

More fruitful than ever the last 6 years have been forced into bed, but always vigilant in the constant offering of herself to Jesus. It takes courage to continue to love despite personal sacrifice.

When we went to greet her and asked her: "Now I go for community prayer, what must I say to Jesus in the Eucharist for you!"

With a whisper she replied: "Tell him I love him, that I offer everything and that he may help me to be faithful to him until the end when he likes to call me ... even now I'm ready!"

On March 26, the Lord called her to Him. In the last moments, while the Superiors and some sisters stood around her bed, Sr. Augusta suddenly turned her face and turned her eyes upwards at a fixed point, towards whom? ... She alone knows ... And her soul after a few moments flew to heaven.





**Sister Marylucia Favaro  
of the Immaculate Heart  
of Mary**

*Born in S. Luce (Pisa)  
on 14 December 1929  
Died in Gemona (UD)  
on 29 April 2019*

The story of Sr. Marylucia is part of a particular moment in her family. She was born on December 14, 1929 in S. Luce di Pisa where father Angelo and mother Antonia Minello emigrated to have job. Baptized after eight days she receives the name of Vittoria Amabile and grows in this family while learning the strength and the sweetness of soul that her name means. As a young woman, for a good period we find her at the service of her uncle Don Giovanni Favaro, parish priest of S. Martino di Lupari. In the vocation to consecrated life she is helped by her uncle who directs her to the “Sisters of Gemona”. At the age of 24 she entered the novitiate (10 June 1953) and started her formation year arriving at the novitiate on 20 May 1954 and, a year later, at her religious

profession on 24 May 1955. Sr. Marylucia carried out her mission in various places (Cercivento, Borgo Cavour, Vittorio Veneto, Sedegliano, Artegna) where she worked in the cookservice, but also helping the children in the nursery school and with the children of the parish. Everywhere, even today, she is remembered with much gratitude. However, the most beautiful and fruitful period she spent in Cavasagra. There, in addition to the culinary service, she took care of the garden and the commitment to the parish church with the youth. Everyone could see Sr. Marylucia every day with her bicycle while she was going to bring the Eucharist to the elderly and sick, visiting families, helping people in need. A letter addressed to her by the people of Cavasagra when, due to their age, Sr. Marylucia had to retire in the mother house (in 2013), testifies how much she was loved with her closeness to families. Thus is written:  
*“... We cannot forget you. The love that you have manifested to our parish in various ways still pervades us all and fills us with happiness. The indelible memory remains like that of a flower that never fades. The Church, the school, the streets of the town and our homes always remind us of your presence made of caring, continuous activity, of humble and daily donation ...”*  
 Sr. Marylucia lived a long life, always seeking the

help and support of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of which she was so devoted. During the last period, bedridden, a lament never came from her: she awaited the Lord, the Risen One, who in a few moments called her to a new life in heaven.



**Sister Mariafederica Volpato  
of Jesus Crucified**

*Born in Sala d'Istrana (TV)  
on 10 May 1925  
Died in Gemona (UD)  
on 30 April 2019*

Sr. Mariafederica Volpato (at baptism Teresa Ilaria) was born in Sala d'Istrana (TV) in a good family where her parents, Giuseppe and Emma Pozzebon, were able to grow their children in the Christian faith with a strong and generous spirit. It was in her family that she felt the desire to consecrate herself to the Lord and at 23 years old she decided to enter Gemona among the Franciscan Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. The formation was brief,

just two years and she was ready to make her religious profession on the day of St. Francis, October 4th 1950. Immediately after her Profession, she was sent to Rome-Centocelle where she remained engaged for four years in the study and obtaining a diploma as a professional nurse.

So prepared, she returned to the Province and immediately began her particular mission to the elderly and the sick in different retirement homes (TV-Menegazzi, Gemona-mother house, Paluzza, Buja, Cavaso). She also lived her nursing experience abroad in Le Mans (France) and in Larnaca (Cyprus).

Thinking about this long mission of service, attention and love in the care of the elderly and the sick (for a total of fifty years) we can really hear the words of Pope Francis referred to her:

*“Touching the wounds of Jesus, which are the diseases and loneliness of so many people who suffer... Go, go and visit the brother and sister who is the symbol of the wound of Jesus. Touch the wound of Jesus. From those wounds comes mercy”*.

She chose to be consecrated to Jesus Crucified, so for her to bind and soothe the physical and moral wounds of the elders was like constantly putting her eyes on the wounds of the Lord, in the sign of compassion and mercy.

In 2002, also in need of assistance and care, she was welcomed in the infirmary of the mother house and it was another precious time that required the ability to let oneself to be looked

after and cared by others.

In the last few days, permanently in bed, she felt ‘sister death’ approaching.

To whoever approached her, she directed her finger upwards as if to say: I am ready! ...

and then she joined her hands inviting to pray for her passage that happened serenely on April 30th., accompanied by the two Superior, provincial and local, and some other sisters.



**Sister Gianmarca Fracalanza  
of Jesus**

*Born in Piombino Dese (PD)*

*on 29 October 1923*

*Died in Gemona (UD)*

*on 2 June 2019*

Sr. Gianmarca Fracalanza was born in Piombino Dese (PD) on 29. 10. 1923.

Her parents, Remigio and Italia Scattolon, of a profoundly Christian spirit, took her to Baptism the following day, choosing for her the name of Jolanda - Ermenegilda.

She grew up in the family

up to the age of 20 and then realized her desire to become a nun among the Franciscan Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. She entered Gemona on 1 May 1943 and, after initial formation, crowned the dream of giving herself to the Lord with the entrance into novitiate that took place on 24 May 1944 and the religious Profession on 21 July 1945, which for her was like a second Baptism.

In her personal diary, she put these words on the mouth of Jesus:

*“It is so beautiful the garment I gave you on this lucky day when joy fills both our hearts ... and I gave it to you so that everyone can know that I chose you among many others to be mine and I love you with a special love ...*

*It is the wedding dress! The garment of your second baptism. I gave it to you to make you beautiful in my eyes! ... Look well at this garment ... is it the same as baptism? Do you recognize it?”*

After her consecration in which she took the name of “Sr. Gianmarca”, she was immediately entrusted with a particular mission as a ‘sewing school teacher’ for girls who have long kept the beautiful memory of their teacher.

She spent several years in Camino al Tagliamento (UD), then at Marmore (Terni), Artegna and then Narni (Terni). Everywhere she lived a strong experience with young women as she recounts in her diary:

*“From my students I received much more than I could give ...*

*The school stimulated me day by day towards new and wonderful experiences. Staying with you dear young people, I fully understood what a sister must do in order to be in full service to the Church. Who lives with you refines sensitivity and learns the art of always being young and always great!"*

In 1963 she was transferred to Rome to the Generalate house where she worked for various services for about twenty years. In 1984, already sick, she was welcomed in the infirmary in Alberoni (VE) and then definitively in the Mother House in Gemona. Throughout her life, she drew from the Heart of Jesus Crucified and from Mary, the good and sweet Mother in whom she trusted above all in particular moments of physical suffering; that was the spirit with which she nourished her mission to bring good fruits to the young and to the people whom she served in the parish. She lived the last three years, permanently in bed, with particular serenity, without giving weight to her needs, indeed, often making people who looked after her or went to visit her to smile, with her funny jokes.

On 2 June, the solemnity of the Ascension, "sister dead" with the call of Jesus came for her: Come, your place is ready!



**Sister Maria Pozzobon  
of Jesus, the Eucharist**

*Born in Cavasagra (TV)  
on 7 February 1923  
Died in Peekskill (USA)  
on 14 June 2019*

Sr. Maria Pozzobon, FMSC (Sr. Crocefissa) entered into eternal life on June 14, 2019. She was born in Cavasagra, Italy on February 7, 1923, one of 11 children of Joseph and Angela and entered the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart on October 3, 1945.

On January 8, 1948 Sister came to America, where she worked in the Sisters' Infirmary.

There she was taught to give injections and administer medications.

The Provincial invited Sister Maria to study nursing, but Sister replied that she only had a fourth-grade education and was fearful that she would be 90 years old before she finished school. All who knew Sister saw that she did not need professional training to be a compassionate and successful health care worker.

In 1966 she was assigned to Ladycliff College to take

charge of the health of the college girls. She also worked for many years as an advisor and hostess for the many couples who came to Ladycliff for Cana Conferences and Marriage Encounter weekends. In 1980 Sister returned to Mt. St. Francis and continued her work and gentle presence in the Infirmary until her health led her to be a patient there.

The Pozzobon family gave many of their children to serve God's church. Joseph and Pietro were priests, Giovanni a Jesuit brother, Ida and Graziosa were Carmelite Sisters, and Antonia and Maria were Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart.

We thank God for their vocations, and especially the presence of Sister Maria in the St. Francis Province.

In Sister Maria's file she ended the account of her life with this quote: *"I have been very happy in my Religious life. God follows me wherever I go and has helped me in all my needs. God was with me on the journey."*





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