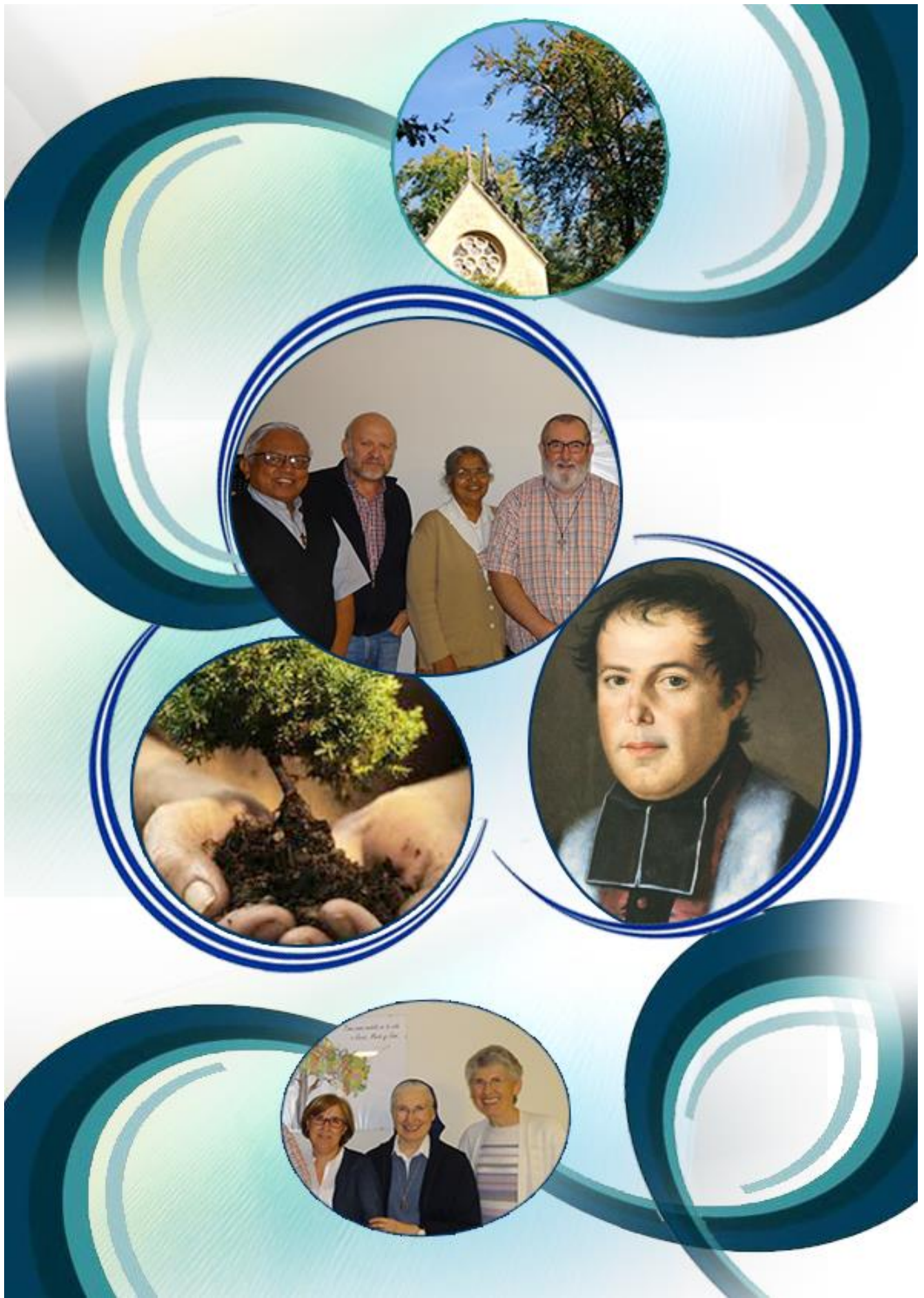


# INTERCONNECTIONS

Suore della Santa Famiglia di Bordeaux, Via dei Casali Santovetti 58, 00165 Roma, Italia

November 2016  
No: 47



## CONTENTS



### Europe

Editorial	03
Here in Rome	04
An 'Ecological Conversion' week	05
Refugees are welcome here!	06
Being a Bridge for Disabled People	08
The Spectacle in Bordeaux!	09
Enthusiastic Young People	10



### Africa

36 <sup>th</sup> Entry to the novitiate	12
---	----



### America

My Experience of World Youth...	13
One year at "Bethel"	15
My four months in Brazil	17
Mission of the Archdiocese	18
Victims of injustice	19



### Asia

"Blooming buds"	20
Can You Notice the Unnoticed?	23
Live-in- Session	24
War is over...	26

**Editors :** Maristella Annie Anthonipillai  
Christine Fene Fene  
Graciela Barrios

**Translators :** Aine Hayde (Britain & Ireland)  
Marie Carmen Leach (Spain)  
Monika Kopacz (Rome)

**Website :** [www.saintefamillebordeaux](http://www.saintefamillebordeaux)  
**Facebook:** [Sainte-Famille Bordeaux](#)



## Editorial



No doubt October 27 was a great day of celebration for all of us when we recalled and rejoiced over the many blessings we received through the person of our dear Founder and especially for the GIFT he is to us and to the Church and our world. Birthdays are occasions of great thanksgiving and praise. United as Family, when we wish "Happy Birthday" to our Good Father what could we imagine his response to be?

"My dear sons and daughters remember, this is the Year of Mercy- Be merciful just as your heavenly Father is merciful. This is certainly the birthday gift most pleasing to me."

Pierre Bienvenu Noailles continually lived these aspects of love, mercy and goodness in reality. We know that the name "Good Father" originated from the orphans who experienced his love and goodness so intensely, that spontaneously they started calling him "Good Father." He too loved this title so

very much that in all his letters to the members of his Spiritual Family, he used to conclude them with **"your Good Father"**

Again, in the Memoirs of his contemporaries, we read: **"Yes, our good Father was good, very good. If he was good to us, he was especially so to the poor, to the disinherited of this world, to sinners. Despite his numerous occupations, he always found time to listen to those who came to**

**disclose their moral miseries, claiming the lights of his experience and the support of his merciful goodness. For these he counted neither the hours nor the minutes."** How many hearts had been comforted by him! How many hands he had held; how many tears he had wiped! As Pope Francis said, "I will never be tired of saying that the mercy of God is not some beautiful idea but rather concrete action". Our Good Father lived it concretely and won the hearts of those around him.

To be a Christian is to follow Jesus who is our way to God who is all LOVE. To be Holy Family, is to be penetrated with the spirit and zeal of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles who gifted us with the gift of Communion, lived in relationships of compassion and love. This November issue inspires us to experience more deeply the merciful love of the Father as we reflect further on the sharings contributed by our members in different parts of the Family.

## Here in Rome



**Jerosin Kattar, Pedro Ávila, Winifreda Wasalathantrige, Jean Louis Despeaux, Pilar Serrano, Maria Dolores Sanzberro and Anne-Marie Sibille.**

We the members of the international bicentenary team met in Rome from 4-5 October 2016 to work together for the preparation of the bicentenary celebration. Even though we met for the first time as a team we felt we were already a team since we had been in interaction with one another we were named.

We had got to know each other, shared opinion and even some work though the electronic media. The presence

of Pedro and Fr. Jean Louis from the permanent Committee of the Council of the Family made a difference. They were with us throughout the meeting helping us and guiding us. Thanks to them for their participation. During three full days of intense work we were able to do the initial preparatory work. Much has to be done as we go on during these three years of preparation and the participation of all is invited. The material will be shared in due time and till then let us prepare our hearts to welcome this time of grace as a Family.

## An 'Ecological Conversion' week



I would like to share with you an experience of an "Ecological Conversion" week organised by José Eizaguirre at the end of which we all committed ourselves to spread the word among our communities and friends.

The Justice and Solidarity Section of CONFER (The Conference of Religious of Latin America) organised and publicised the event so that communities could have this experience and get to know how to express in our everyday life the ecological conversion to which Pope Francis refers in *Laudato sí*.

Seven Religious and three Lay people took part. From day one, we practised CARE in everything – the use of water, energy, cleaning materials, food, prayer, our relationships etc. We all shared the cooking – which was vegetarian and tasty – as well as the cleaning of the house on the outskirts of Valladolid. The house belongs to the Jesuits and is surrounded by 240 organic allotments which are cultivated by retired townspeople.

This experience was based on two principles. Everything changes from within each one, not from knowing things but from a love for life and from the inner experience of knowing that we are affected by the divisions caused by inequality and the serious destruction of the Planet and Humanity. And at the same time, the awareness that each one of us is a link in the chain of life because all of us and everything are connected and inter-related.

At daybreak the whole group of fifteen people went to a meadow where we were caressed by the sun of the fresh Castilian mornings and had an hour of holistic prayer during which we gave bodily expression to our inner feelings.

Slowly but surely we examined the things we use, beginning at their source. It was like following a thread from the time the object was thought of until it arrived in our hands. We discovered what happens to a cotton blouse, shampoo, a frankfurter and a mobile phone.

We did not have any talks. The work was done by sharing in groups following a very dynamic methodology. We discovered how much injustice and violence are involved in the production of the everyday goods we use. Nature,

animals and the people engaged in producing the goods are all affected. It was obvious how many countries are kept poor in order to maintain the standard of living of others – our own country included. Everything we do has negative or positive repercussions on nature and the human family.



We also saw how, in *Laudato sí*, the Pope does not give solutions but rather guidelines for reflection and action that will help us to be converted ecologically. He speaks of a healthy lifestyle, solidarity, spirituality, consumerism, food, transport, communications, economics, politics, civic responsibility etc. He omits nothing.

We examined, in general and in detail, how we Religious resist these changes. I realised what a deep motivation in this area we find in our documents and in Ana Maria's letters which urge us to change and to live differently. Although not everybody was able to say that, we found a very valuable diversity among our Religious Families and, at the same time, a meeting of all our Charisms. The Lay People admitted that they were unaware that Religious Life was so well informed and up-to-date.

We began the second part of the week with a morning of prayer and fasting during which we listened to the

experiences of various members of organisations who are responding to these challenges of our times. From the Abbot of the Poblet monastery, who spoke about water and energy, to women (some of them grandmothers) and men committed to ethical banking, the renewal of rural life, ecology, social justice, working-class areas and healthy

eating – all different ways of CARING FOR LIFE – they all showed how we can leave to future generations a Planet on which we can all live happily and with dignity.

**Ana Cortés.**  
**The Community of Florida de Liébana (Spain)**

**Refugees are welcome here!**

This was the focus of a March held in London on Saturday, 17 September, to highlight the plight of refugees in advance of the two crucial summits of world leaders on 19 and 20 September.

The charity coalition, Solidarity with Refugees, that includes JRS, Cafod, Caritas, Christian Aid, Oxfam, Amnesty International, Refugee Council and others, worked together to organise the March in central London for 16 September. It was aimed at showing the government of the UK and indeed those of the world that we care about refugees. We have all seen images of the tragedies unfolding in Syria, the Mediterranean Sea, Greece, the “jungle” in Calais and many more. Added to this there is concern for the injustices and

inefficiencies of Britain’s own asylum system.

Preceding the March, “WELCOMING THE STRANGER,” an ecumenical service of hope for refugees was organised by Cafod, Caritas, Christian Aid, JRS and others. The theme of the service was “CHANGE THE STORY.”

As Pope Francis says: *“we ourselves need to see, and then to enable others to see, that migrants and refugees are brothers and sisters to be welcomed, respected and loved”*

We were reminded that the media stories we read about refugees too often promote fear and resentment and prevent those seeking safety from finding a welcome. The invitation

addressed to the participants was to share positive stories from our direct contact with refugees, stories inspired by our deep listening to refugees telling their own story; not only listening but allowing their stories to touch our lives and through us the lives of others. We were further invited to ponder the question: *“What if we listen to God’s story that changes our story from stranger to sibling?”* *What if, open to hearing and trusting in*



*God, we change the story of the world so as to create a future in which our common humanity is recognised and refugees are treated with dignity and respect?"*

A replica of the Lampedusa Cross was solemnly carried to the altar. We recalled that the original crosses were made by a Sicilian carpenter Francesco Tuccio, from the wood of the first boat that sank off the island resulting in the death of 349 refugees. Those crosses were offered to survivors as a symbol of their rescue and a sign of hope. In this service the cross was offered as a symbol of hope for a new story.

A refugee woman, Victoire, told her very moving, personal story which was followed by the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 30-36) ending with the question: *"Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"* We were given time to reflect on, *"What does that question mean to us today?"*, and in the context it no doubt touched our hearts in a new way and brought this challenging question of Jesus very close to us and directly into our reality. Finally, the Cafod team asked us to write a short message of hope on cards provided. These will be used at a special event organised for the end of the Year of Mercy and shared with refugees.

Leaving the Church, we proceeded to join the March merging with the crowd already on the move and becoming immersed in a sea of banners from a great variety of organisations. The *Holy Family* were represented by members from Provincial House, Clapham and Gabriel's Road. There were also many individuals with their own banners, including children, and elderly people

walking with the help of an aid. The March took about two and half hours so it was remarkable to see how the young and the frail joyfully took part. Indeed, the large number of young adults present was also a sign of hope for change.

The banners carried messages of



welcome, love, peace, respect and solidarity. Many called for the recognition of equality for all peoples, respecting the fact that we all belong to "ONE HUMANITY". We could experience that sense of being one, being connected as we walked in the crowd. It was good to be there. For a brief time, we were no longer strangers to one another united by our common conviction that we must stand up for the welcome of refugees.

The March took us past Downing Street (where the Prime minister lives), a large number remained chanting, *"Refugees are welcome here"* while others proceeded to Parliament Square, a short distance away, to listen to various speakers calling the UK government to respond quickly, generously and positively to the plight of refugees.

Perhaps the experience may be best summed up in the prayer used during the ecumenical service;

*God who changes our story from stranger to sibling, help us to change the story.*

From frustration to freedom, for those stuck in refugee camps.

From panic to peace, for those separated from families.

From trafficking to safe passage, for those on perilous journeys.

From despair to hope, for hearts weary with grief.

From worry to hospitality, for minds uncertain of change.

From crisis to opportunity, for countries providing a home.

From foreigner to family, as we were welcomed by you.

may we never miss meeting your gaze, in the eyes of our sibling, the stranger. Amen

**The Holy Family marchers Aberdare, Clapham, St. Gabriel's Road**

## Being a Bridge for Disabled People

I would like to share my experience of being a tutor in ESTAT (Social Aid through Work). I worked there for 18 years. Six years ago, my work was interrupted when I responded to the mission of being a councillor in the Network.

My formation as a workshop tutor enabled me to help disabled adults who were in difficulty or emotionally fragile to take their place in society. My task was to look after these people on a daily basis and to give them the training they needed so that they could be integrated into society and the world of work.



I discovered very quickly **the over-riding importance of establishing a relationship of trust.** It took time to set up this relationship. It meant being quite close to each one and having the patience to get to know them so as to have a climate of trust and respect. Often this begins with **a look or a smile.**

It meant creating an atmosphere of listening and dialogue and being available for them both during activities and at informal times. Morning was a time for greeting everyone and shaking hands and for exchanging a few words over a cup of tea or coffee. I took time to notice how they were, how they looked, their reactions etc. because some of them could have had a bad night or had something happen that affected their behaviour. Then it would be a case of listening to them and calming them down. Experience taught me **patience and the importance of being with them.**



The tutor must also teach them to cope so that they can become independent and relate to others as far as possible. For the disabled adult, getting a job marks the transition from childhood to adulthood. It is the main challenge of our work.

**It is essential to know how to create a good atmosphere, to have a sense of humour and a lot of respect.** It is important to adapt one's way of communicating to suit the other person. I have seen how in the case of some people, humour is the way to make contact and to strengthen the relationship.

A bond has to be established with the parents also. On-going contact and meetings with them are essential in order

to build their child's **"personal project"** which will help her/him to grow towards autonomy and responsibility.

In our mission it is essential to get to know everyone; it is the only way they can succeed. It means listening, being in dialogue, explaining, advising and guiding them day after day in order to help them to avoid failures that would discourage them and turn them in on themselves.

"I never look after crowds, only individuals". These words of Mother Teresa have been a guiding light for me.

**Maristella Arokiam, an Apostolic Sister, France**

## The Spectacle in Bordeaux!

There are dreams that need time to come true and, what is interesting or even odd, is that things rarely happen the way we imagined them. It was the same with this project... As it happens with any creation, we doubted, groped, evolved ... The work grew and started to escape and surpass us ... But we believed in it.

The realization exceeded all our expectations and we had a wonderful time.

We couldn't have thought of a more favourable moment than this Year of Mercy to evoke three great figures of our Bordeaux Church, who at the same time - just after the revolutionary turmoil - in the same neighbourhood, the parish of St. Eulalie, pursued the same goal - "re-Christianising" the

contemporary society where many people and institutions had lost their bearings, just as it happens today.

We are talking about Marie-Thérèse de Lamourous, foundress of the Sisters of Mercy; Father Guillaume-Joseph Chaminade, founder of the Marianists; and of course Father Pierre-Bienvenu Noailles, our founder.

All three of them were fascinated by the infinite love of God. As they gradually became detached from themselves, they totally centred their existence on God, and directed all their energies towards others in the service of the Kingdom.

These three people knew each other and all three of them continued to live through the 3 religious families they founded; families that

still radiate throughout the world.



Persuaded that their message could still resonate today, it seemed interesting to us to read, understand and present their life story and to see how, in their time, they were witnesses of the Mercy.

We wanted these life stories to touch believers and non-believers but also young people. The extraordinary thing was to see young people from different schools work together; for the Holy Family, we had students from Saintonge, Holy Family High School (formerly known as Lorette).

This sound and light show combined the talents of actors, singers and dancers in a dynamic spectacle to take us back to the events that took place two centuries ago. We were lucky to enjoy a grand setting: the cathedral and an extraordinary and attentive audience of over a thousand people!

More than a hundred young people and adults participated. Many small hands worked behind the scenes to give beauty to this show; in particular the creative workshop of Martillac and members of our various communities including the contemplatives who made the costumes for the dancers.

A great collaboration and harmony between the three congregations continued throughout the months of preparation...

But nothing would have been possible without the art and competence of our

stage director Nicole Denépoux who plunged into this endeavour with all her faith in the life of the 3 founders, searching, questioning, and vibrating with what she discovered.



A Mass of thanksgiving preceded the performance in the Church of St. Eulalia. You can find the homily of Father Monget, pastor of St. Eulalie, on the site of the Contemplatives:

<http://viecontemplative.saintefamille.fr/>

A success that encourages us to continue.....!

### **The Community of La Solitude**

## **Enthusiastic Young People**



The holidays in Poland were completely taken over by the World Youth Day. The long preparations finally came to an end and the event we had waited for with such impatience began.

Before going to Krakow to meet Pope Francis, young people from all around the world were introduced to the hospitality and beauty of the host country.



The community of Łódź and the parish of St. Jude Thaddeus were able to take part in this great Christian event thanks to two groups of pilgrims from Canada, one of which was an Afro-Canadian group accompanied by our Sisters Aldegonde and Maria. The pilgrims spent a week with their host families and the day they left, the many tears shed by both parties bore witness to the special bonds that had been created between them. As happens with young people, a network of friendship had been set up thanks to social media. Proof of that is the number of “I love you”s on Facebook exchanges between Canada and Poland. I am convinced that these relationships are not just virtual.

The first group of pilgrims had a two-hour delay and arrived at nightfall. While the young people were being allocated to the various host-families, some shyness and uncertainty could be seen on their faces. Then everyone had a meal.

The next meeting between the young people and the families took place on the evening of the second day in our house in Łódź. First of all, we all had Mass and then got to know one another better at a special barbecue with singing and dancing. As usual, the young people were full of life and energy which inspired all those present – even the people who were no longer young. In the meantime, another group of

Canadians arrived. They were tired but full of enthusiasm. The celebrations could have gone on for a long time but night was falling and everyone had to go home, especially since the following day they were going to the shrine of St. Anthony where there is a Franciscan monastery and the Door of Mercy.

The pilgrimage was another important time to forge bonds between the young Polish and Canadian people. At the shrine we listened to an interesting history of the place and attended Mass. The young people prepared a very beautiful musical programme in Polish and French. They managed to communicate very well with one another. After the pilgrimage, we enjoyed typical Polish pea soup which had been prepared in our community kitchen.

The following days were filled with activities prepared by the *Chemin Neuf* community. The week in the diocese of Łódź ended with a Mass and a concert for several thousand pilgrims. We all thanked the Lord for the gift of faith to the sound of music and dancing.



The community of Łódź say a heartfelt “Thank you” to our Sisters and the young Canadian people for the grace-filled time spent together.

**Sr. Agnieszka, Poland**

## 36<sup>th</sup> ENTRY TO THE NOVITIATE OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF BORDEAUX IN THE DRC



August 14 – the feast of the Assumption was a great and memorable day of joy for us when six of us – four from the Delegation of DRC and two from Cameroun-Chad (one Cameroonian and one Chadian) had the grace to enter the novitiate and three young women - Gwladys, Martine and Nadège pronounced their first vows. The liturgy was simple, vibrant, and full of joy.

Prior to our entry we had a very enriching retreat animated by Sister Rosetta ASSEK on the theme ***“Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground”*** Ex 3,1-6.

The animator instructed us on the interior and exterior silence which is essential to live this phase of life, to be open to hear the voice of God in the intimacy of our heart to discern and discover what the Lord wants for us.

The reception of the crosses and the Constitutions was a moment of realizing our belonging to the Holy Family and the responsibility of sharing its life, living the spirit of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles.

We were impressed by the warm welcome of the Delegate, the formation community, our older sisters and the second year novices.

In short, this is an opportunity for us to thank the Lord for the wonderful things he does and thank all those who showed their love and gave us such a warm welcome.

### Novices of the DRC

Speaking of her experience of the first days, *Rita DJIRAIKNAN* shares how they were helped to come to know one another, their background, culture enabling better mutual understanding, respect and build deep and sisterly relationships.

She says that “this learning helped me a lot and allowed to relive some events to which I was not paying much attention and to become aware of certain realities of my family, my country and my culture. I would say this is a new understanding of what my whole story is made of. It was a moment of living great maturity in deep listening and respecting the story of others. In fact, the rule of this sharing was silent listening, without any comments or judgements, done in an attitude of mutual respect, trust, simplicity and openness. It was a great experience for



me as I discovered the others the way they really are. This experience helped me to change my way of looking at others to better understand them and to further develop the capacity of listening at all levels.

Glory be to God who fills us with his grace, his light and his Spirit. May his grace accompany us in the search for his will.

## My Experience of World Youth Day, 2016



I would like to share with you my very deep experience of the World Youth Day. As I have already written in Interconnections, the preparation for this, with a wonderful dynamic group, took about two years.

The pilgrimage from Montreal to Krakow *via* Rome began on 12 July. We arrived in Rome on 13 July and stayed in a hotel, a 15 minute walk from St. Peter's.

### ***I had several deep experiences during the pilgrimage, especially:***

✚ The visit to Assisi on 14 July where we walked in the footsteps of St. Francis. We appreciated this historic place very much which has been the site of important reflections on peace in our world.

✚ We visited Vatican City with the help of our guide Monseigneur KABONGO. The most beautiful dream that I fulfilled was the visit to St. Peter's tomb where I spent some time praying with the young people. The visit with the young people to our Generalate on my birthday also left an impression on me. After a meal with the

Sisters, we celebrated the Eucharist with some beautiful hymns of thanksgiving. Then we visited the heart of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles. That was a very emotional moment for me. Some of the young people spoke of their feelings of consolation and peace during this visit.

✚ On 18 July we went to our host diocese, Lodz, *via* Krakow. It was quite a long journey but when we arrived in Lodz, the warm welcome we received from our Polish Sisters made us forget our tiredness. They had a special barbecue for us and had organised accommodation for some of the group. The host families were there to welcome the young people. During the following days, the delegation from the diocese of Montreal took part in the Youth



Festival organised by the Chemin Neuf Community.

We had some very lively and enriching days with talks, Eucharistic celebrations, meals, adoration and evening get-togethers. Each day began at 9 a.m. and ended at 10.30 p.m.

The week helped me to review my Christian, and, above all, my consecrated life. The good quality talks and the well-prepared celebrations helped me to celebrate God's mercy in my life.

✚ After Lodz we went to Krakow to meet the Pope and all the young people gathered there. It was wonderful to see all the lovely young people who had the courage to come to Krakow to experience something new. These young people were determined to go beyond differences to create bonds of unity and fellowship. It was great to see them all around Krakow singing and dancing in the name of Jesus. The three most important moments for me were: welcoming the Pope, the

Way of the Cross with the Pope and the Prayer Vigil the evening before the big Mass with the Pope of Sunday morning. Neither distance, heat nor rain could dampen the young peoples' enthusiasm.

The Holy Father made contact with the young people in a simple but very deep and meaningful way through his homilies. He encouraged them not to allow their youth to be stolen from them by pursuing aims which did nothing to build up society but rather to be responsible young people ready to defend the values of life and dedicate themselves to building up a more just and community-minded world. The Holy Father invited us all to be missionaries of mercy and to make Jesus and his message of love known.

What can I say about this lovely experience? How can I express all the feelings of thanksgiving that well up in me? A big thank you to the Sisters of the Canadian Unit, especially to Violette and Paulette who gave me so much support. Special thanks to Maria for her help in this pastoral project with the young people. Our thanks to the Generalate which welcomed us and to the Sisters of the Polish Unit who were so hospitable towards us. Our thanks to the Good Father's daughters who supported us by their prayers and advice.

Long live God and God's mercy!

**Aldégonde MBALANDA  
CANADA**

## One year at "Bethel", Masson, Canada

FIRE.....EXODUS.....

LOOKING OUTWARD...

GLOBAL.....



We three, Malini, Iresha and Doreen dared to move out our comfort zones and commit ourselves "to live in a state of exodus" and to feel powerlessness in order to share what we received: "the gift of Communion" in the land of Canada. With this inner "Fire", we landed at "Bethel", Masson, Gatineau on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2015 after a period of adaptation and language learning with our Sisters of Canada Province. As we have completed one year of journey at "Bethel", we would like to share our experiences with grateful hearts.

In the beginning we three journeyed together, unlearning and learning many things and adapting ourselves to the new culture, new language, new thinking, new environment, new climate, in short to a new way of living. As to be expected, knowing one another and the surroundings was a gradual process. With all our ups and downs, we tried to understand the uniqueness of each one and build communion among

ourselves and in the surroundings. This process of adaptation has become an "Exodus" experience for us. It has not been easy. It is a continuous inner journey even today.

Standing before the Lord individually and as a community, and asking His "Daily Bread", that is, His guidance and light,

gave us great strength and courage to look outward and to overcome our daily challenges and go forward in His path with the renewed "Fire". However, as Malini went to Rome to take up the service at the Generalate, the other two of us had to continue our journey. We took this as a challenge and faced it with courage and hope, guided and strengthened by the grace of God. At this juncture, we remember Sr. Violette, with grateful hearts for her monthly visits and frequent phone calls gave us a great strength and courage and helped us solve many of our problems. Another milestone in our one-year journey is the visit of Sr. Ana Maria, and Sr. Michelin. Their visit was a source of encouragement and a time of grace. We owe them a debt of gratitude. And also we are grateful for all the sisters of Canada Province for their prayers, fraternal support and appreciations helped us a lot in our adaptation.

With an attitude of humility and gratitude and with an open heart to the Will of God, we observed, listened and learnt from those whom we had the privilege of meeting in the past. Yes, as a flower opens petal by petal, the Lord opens our hearts and minds progressively to respond to the needs of the people around us. 'Bethel', which belongs to the Gatineau Diocese, is a house of prayer. Therefore our primary ministry is to welcome people who are in search of silence and prayer. Hence at the request of a few people we introduced an hour of Eucharistic adoration last October to be had on Thursdays. Initially we had only three devotees. But now our chapel is full every Thursday. We also welcome people at Bethel for the Eucharistic celebration every Monday. Moreover, people come for individual retreats, group retreats and seminars. From May, 2016 we have opened our doors for these events and already they are well in progress. We have planned to have two retreats later this year on the theme of the current holy year: 'Mercy'. One of the retreats will be animated by Sr. Violette.

In the meantime, we help in the French Parishes, served by Maries Priests and English Parishes ministered by a Nigerian Priest. We help in the animation of music for Sunday liturgy in the Parishes. We also visit the elderly and the sick people around us and distribute communion as they request. It is so sad to see the youth and the children going far away from God and losing moral values. Therefore we try our level best to reach out the children, searching different ways and means and involving in various activities in order to bring them back to God.

## An extraordinary experience with the pilgrims

From May 26<sup>th</sup> to June 19<sup>th</sup> 2016, Bethel was flooded with pilgrims. They walk 240Km within 12 days, starting from Ottawa St. Joseph Cathedral to Montreal St. Joseph Oratory. 'Bethel' was one of their resting places. They walk in groups of 6 pilgrims daily. Thus, within 25 days, 136 pilgrims from all over Canada passed through 'Bethel', experiencing the peace and tranquillity of the surroundings. We were filled with joy as we gave ourselves totally to their service. They were overwhelmed by our welcoming spirit, joyful presence, tireless service and our availability. We made a difference by our way of living and reaching out, so much so that they came out with many comments and questions such as:

"You are extraordinary....."

"We like to come again and spend some time in silence and prayer."

"You are different from the other congregations. We'll never forget the name, Holy Family of Bordeaux"



Many of them came out with the stories of their lives and the purpose of their pilgrimage. For some of them it is a hobby, for some it is a physical exercise; for many it is a journey of inner search; for some it is a spiritual journey towards the Divine; and for some it is a prayer of



intercession. A group of young people among them asked us to share our vocation stories and they marveled at our choice.

As we observed them, we could not help admiring some groups. They are very united, helping and caring for one another on their journey and extremely joyful in spite of their weariness and difficulties in walking hours and hours in the hot sun. We too were being touched and evangelized by their sharing. They came together as a group of pilgrims not knowing one another. But as they walked along, they built up communion among themselves.

For many of them, it is a repeated experience. Some of them shared that after the previous pilgrimage there is a positive change in their life. When a young lady shared her life, she said that they have two differently-abled children and they adopted two more similarly challenged children from other countries. She and her husband seem to

be so happy to bring up these children. She told us “We should make the world a better place for these children”

We are so happy and privileged to offer our service to these pilgrims and collaborate with the ministry of the Diocese. It is a deep and profound experience for us too. Yes we are all pilgrims in this world. We have a beginning and a destiny. As we continue the journey of Exodus with our co-pilgrims, we the Sisters of the Holy Family must keep the Fire of Compassion burning in our hearts in order to reach out to the marginalized and the needy.

We two together  
**Iresha and Doreen**  
**“Bethel”, Masson**  
**Province of Canada**

### MY FOUR MONTHS IN BRAZIL

*Gisele came to Brazil from the DR Congo. She tells us about her life in the first 4 months. Hers is an experience full of gratitude and joy. She participated in a course of Brazilian language, history and culture in Brasilia, with missionaries coming from other countries. She is very happy to have had contacts with different cultures and values, and with families of Brazil.*

I would like to express my deep gratitude to God, the Father of Heaven, for his presence in my daily life and in my mission in Brazil.

It is true that we need to speak the same language as it is a key to communication, an important factor which helps us to establish relationships.



When I arrived in Brazil, I was very eager to interact with my Sisters and other people. However, the biggest obstacle to this was the fact that I could

not speak Portuguese. After having spent two weeks with my Sisters without being able to talk to them, I had to travel to Brasilia to participate in a three-month language course at CENFI, a Missionary Cultural Centre. CENFI is a centre that gives formation to foreign missionaries who need to learn the Portuguese language at the beginning of their missionary life in Brazil.

I was in a group of 21 missionaries from 14 different countries. The centre is situated in an appropriate place to learn the language, to get to know the Brazilian culture: food, music, religion, politics, and to make the experience of being part of a family.

This insertion time helped me to discover family life in the Brazilian context, although I realise it is not enough to live one week with a Brazilian family to discover the reality of a country because Brasilia is only a small part of it but still, it is the best way to

have an idea of how a family lives in Brazil.

At the beginning, communication was very difficult. Everyone spoke their mother tongue with the few ones speaking the same language. After a few weeks we started to speak Portuguese, using basic sentences, and to read.

My experience was rich and beautiful because apart from getting to know Brazilian culture, I also discovered the values of other cultures of other missionaries sharing my experience and I met a lot of people.

I would therefore like to thank my Congregation for this opportunity and for all the attentions during my insertion time. I want to become part of the Brazilian culture in order to fully live my mission as a disciple of Christ.

### **Gisele, Missionary in Brazil**

## **Mission of the Archdiocese of Resistencia**

The mission of the Archdiocese of Resistencia, on the occasion of the Jubilee of Mercy, started with the slogan "*Merciful like the Father, let us bring joy*".

To organise this mission, we have been called by the Pastoral Council, since last year, to elaborate and write documents enabling new mission experiments, namely, to leave the purely sacramental framework, to promote contents of reflection and formation, to provide a spiritual path, both personal and communitarian, offered to all those who feel the desire to meet their brothers.



We were encouraged by the words of Pope Francis: "*...We need to look at our cities with a contemplative gaze, a gaze of faith which sees God dwelling in their homes, in their streets and squares... He dwells among them, fostering solidarity, fraternity, and the desire for goodness, truth and justice. This presence must not be contrived but found, uncovered. God does not hide himself from those who seek him with a sincere heart...*" (EG.71)

It was decided to give preference to an evangelical model of going out on mission, creating a climate of communion and trust - making visits - to share the joy of Mercy.

This has been done with an attitude of deep listening to discover together and give thanks for the presence of God's love in each life.

We have the desire to live certain attitudes as missionaries of Mercy:

- *Humility, tenderness and joy*
- *Open heart to welcome those who think differently*
- *Learning and unlearning*
- *A contemplative look to discover the goodness and the tenderness of God who is already present in the heart of all the families*
- *Return to Jesus in the Word and in his person, to see him in his gestures, relationships and words.*
- *Offering of the life of God in encounters, moments of deep listening and dialogue, in free and generous relationships.*
- *Deep compassion for the realities and the needs of people.*



Yes, our Church is on its way to the peripheries, and we wish to accompany it! The Spirit urges us, because the mercy of God has been poured out into our hearts, and we want to share it; Mercy opens the heart to the hope of being loved forever.

## **Community of Resistencia Argentina**

### **Victims of injustice**

Let us recall the facts:

On June 15, 2012 seventeen people (eleven peasants and six policemen) were killed in a deportation operation against landless peasant families who had occupied an area known as Marina Kue in the district of Curuguaty in Paraguay. This fact is known as the "Curuguaty Massacre."

On June 18, 2012 the prosecutors charged 63 peasants with several criminal offences and later accused 12 of them for attempted homicide, invasion of property of others and criminal association. After four long years, on Monday 18 July 2016, the 12 peasant prisoners were condemned for the aforementioned offences.

Many people accompanied the families of the peasants, settled in tents in front of the Palace of Justice. As a Church, we also accompanied this people suffering so many injustices. The people who were on the forecourt of the Palace of Justice, listening to the reading of the Curuguaty case verdict, did not fail to show their indignation at each line with loud cries and posters showing their rejection and powerlessness. In addition, there were representatives of several local organizations, citizens who support the amnesty, as well as a large security contingent deployed around the Tribunal building.



After the reading of the verdict, several relatives, friends and lawyers occupied the courtroom for almost 48 hours. There were different organizations that held marches and demonstrations against the judiciary power. Some people were chained; there was Adalberto Castro himself, who was recently released. According to the court's judgment, the convicts, at all times, intended to occupy the building, to remain there and to resist violently the intervention of the police.

The observers stressed the need for a review of the judicial process, referring to the need for a serious investigation and to the lack of due process in the strictly legal sense. They also indicated that the situation of coercion which undermines the technical defence of the accused affects the credibility of the process and the authenticity of its results.

A lawyer described as magnificent the massive support of the public showing the determination to clarify the case, free all the peasants and seek the real culprits. *"A conviction of the innocent closes the path of justice and opens the door of impunity,"* he concluded.

As Sisters of the Holy Family and Associates, we are also with the peasants, supporting the struggle for their rights.

### **Sisters of Paraguay**



If we don't dare now, then when? These words echo in my heart to do something good for the Society. As our Corporate Commitment says "In this global world we encounter people who are obliged to be "on the move" in human conditions: migrants, refugees, and displaced persons and those who are marginalized, trafficked, deprived of their dignity, in search of meaning in their lives ...".

This reality commits me to move forward to listen to the cry of the poor who are in need of our support and guidance. I am very happy to be with the people, learn from the people and work for them. The above words of our Corporate Commitment made me to think seriously and commit generously.

I am happy to share about the successful and joyful story of the little buds who struggled in life. Our Ramanakkapeta community is the center for the destitute, orphans, child laborers, widows, youngsters and depressed people who seeks for guidance and support. It is a rural village which is away from the city where there are no educational Institutions and not much opportunity for the growth of the children, women and the young people. The rural poor, ignorant and illiterate as they are, find it extremely difficult to sustain through regular source of income. Since they completely depend on working as manual laborers in the fields during crop cultivation season which is only for 3 - 5 months, the poor are idle without work and income in the

rest of the year. In this situation they become inter - state migrants.

I am very happy to share about the story of the Little Buds who seeks for new life. They are our loving children Durga and Devamma own siblings. Durga is 10 years old and Devamma is 8 years old. They are from the Scheduled Tribe who lives in the forest. There are nearly 10 - 15 families residing in the same place.

Parents go for coolie work and Children are kept as bonded laborers in the houses of the Land Lords. Parents get money in advance from the Landlords for the health reason or to run the family. When they are not able to pay back they are forced to take their children as bonded Laborers.

There are many children go with the Buffalos for grazing. Durga and Devamma are among them. When I see the children, the "young buds" going with the buffaloes my heart pains and longs to do something for them. We did an analytical study on the children who are kept as bonded laborers. There are 65 children in and around Ramanakkapeta village.

These children and parents were motivated to come out of the clutches of the Landlords. Many times we failed because of the lack of Governmental support. But we followed Durga and Devamma over the past five years. They came twice to our center but parents and the Landlords have taken them back

by force. Twice we rescued them and sent them to Vijayawada but they came back. We were strong and determined to organize a Rally and Awareness Programme and named it "Child Laborers' week". There were Invitees from Police Department, Child Safety Net, Child Welfare Chief Coordinator, Child Line, and Salesian Fathers who are involved with the Street Children, and the local Panchayat Leaders etc...

Both of them were in different houses. They were accommodated in a Buffalos shed even to spend the night to sleep. The place was very dirty and needless to say the conditions of that shed where even Mosquitoes breed. They are given only two meals a day. They get up at 5 am and clean the Buffalos shed, wash the utensils, wash the clothes of the family members and the household works. At 9.a.m they go with the buffalos

for grazing. They go in hunger and come back home at 7p.m. Again they follow routine work .When the whole family finishes their meal they are fed with whatever is left over. They were paid only Rs.3000 per year. No holidays for them. They meet their parents on the way when they take the buffalos to the field. Really it is beyond human suffering. When they see our boarding children they express that they would join the school. But the parents and the Landlords never permit them.



Awareness programme on Child Rights brought some changes in the minds of the Landlords. We had 350 children from 10 villages, the Volunteers and Evening tuition teachers participated in the Rally. There was an audio about the rights of the children and any one breaks with order even a case can be filed. It was the warning for them not to keep the children for work. After the Rally we had a meeting on the main road where many people could witness this. It was a wonderful programme where there were eminent speakers enlightened the people on the Rights of the children. I also talked about the rights of the Children and motivated the parents to approach us for any help. The following day Durga and Devamma were found early in the morning near the gate. They were with old and torn clothes, hands and legs were full of dirt, crying that the Landlords have beaten them thoroughly. This time they were very strong that they wanted to study and go to a faraway place so that they will not be brought back home. We accepted their request and talked to the Child Safety Net and the Child Rescue Operation people to help them to have a safer place.

We took them to the CWC (Child Welfare Chief Committee) .They followed the procedure to join them in "Chiguru" which means "Blooming buds" "Vijayawada, Andhraparedesh.It is the center run by the Salesians .It is semi-Governmental programme.

On August 15<sup>th</sup> the Independence Day they were honored by the District

Collector. They shared their life stories in Public. It was very painful to listen. They are grateful to the Holy Family Sisters who relieved them from the clutches of the landlords. We visit them



and find them happy and making effort to study well. I am very happy to be a part of their growth. Now they are studying well and happy about their new home and new life.

There are many more Durgas and Devamatha waiting on us to hold their hands and lead them towards liberation. Our Sisters and Volunteers are involved in this ministry of rescuing the children to give life and hope. We are in need of God's grace to allow these buds to bloom.

**Sr.Jeya Mary**  
**Ramanakkapeta community**

## Can You Notice the Unnoticed?



In the country composed of more than 1,700 islands, the existence of three committed priest associates and three priests in formation is extremely unnoticeable. In a country wherein numerous religious congregations exist, the presence of less than a dozen of Apostolic Sisters belonging to the HFB is insignificant and so, unnoticeable.

Is the seed of the Holy Family of Bordeaux truly growing in these given contexts?

### **Come then and journey with me!**

In a situation when some priests raise questions as to what the meaning of all this is about or doubt the intention of the one who is presenting the priest group or even have selfish motives like seeing it as an opportunity to travel

around - introducing the HF Priest Associate group seems so strange and extremely difficult. I recall that the Founder too went through the same experience when introducing the concept of a gift within the gift itself.

But, those questions are valid manifestations of those who are seeking greater truth. To journey into the unknown, you must have something to grasp on, as you begin.

These were real blocks encountered in my journey of

sharing the spirit and charism of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles. There have been a lot of struggles in bringing these gifts to my fellow brothers in ministry. Focus, patience and humility are the weapons that one can hold on to in confronting all these indifferences, negativity and self-interest. Amidst all difficulties, three brothers from different dioceses have the courage to continue the journey for the past three years. Despite distance we meet twice a year which is very insufficient for some solid work!

Another experience is walking with the laity (photo 2 - professionals). Their lives, status and field of expertise differ from one to another. They struggle to find time to come together for formation.



I struggled to introduce our Founder and the HF to a group of professionals. The majority of them persevered in their longing to belong and it is a consolation that many of them are committed and can be trusted for anything. From their circle, has come another group easy to walk with. Presently there is another group growing with of 15 couples - the biggest group at present - with special devotion to St. Joseph as a "father figure". At regular, weekly gathering there are about 35 to 45 persons; not counting the

children and youth. They are a great strength in many pastoral activities. Yet due to practical difficulties, none among them have yet made their commitment.

The seed that was planted is alive still! With the effort and love of the first two groups, a fourth group has come to be in Sorsogon city. They too join our common search for God Alone. So far, this group is

eager to continue the search for that priceless gift of belonging. These five different groups have their own story of beginning, which was so unnoticeable, but indeed worthy to be noticed.

Do you have your own story and struggle about this? You are to be noticed, then!

**Benedicto Furo  
Priest Associates  
Philippines**

**Live-in- Session- Priest Associates**

I'm happy to share the outcome of our "Live in Session" held in August from 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> 2016. I would say that this year's session was a unique one. We had a good choice of our venue where we were able to do our maximum work and also the good climate has helped us a lot. Our aim is to deepen the spirit of PBN in our hearts and revive our spirit to live our Charism more meaningfully. It is necessary that we update ourselves of the current teaching of the Church. We were able to feel the oneness of the Family by the presence and participation of the other vocations and

in a special way the presence of both Provincials Sr. Jesmin Fernando and Sr. Christa Mariathas. A warm welcome to Srs. Rose Jayasinghe and Arul Mathesupillai, the coordinating Sisters for the priests in South and North. It was a privilege to have had Mrs. Regina Ramalingam- the Asian coordinator of the Lay Associates and also the National leader Mr. Devanayagam. We made fruitful use of our time.

We were very much touched by the input talks and the messages which provoked our thinking and to go deep into our hearts. Sr. Christa Mariathas,



during her talks drew the attention of all of us to reflect the personal life of our Founder. His total dedication and submission to the spirit of God alone which he saw integrated in the life of Jesus Mary and Joseph. The same inspiration was brought out in the General Chapter 2014 as "CONTEMPLATION". We were called to enter into this deep contemplation with discipline of our hearts. This discipline makes us to stand in the presence of God with all we have and all we are. The divine love of God reveals to us that faithfulness is more important than success, the love of God is more important than praise of people, Community more important than individualism, compassion more important than competition. God is revealing His active presence in our personal histories and in the universe, calls us to live in Christ-consciousness and compassion. It helped us to pause for a while and ask ourselves, whether we are aware of the fact that we in the loss of a collective vision and the loss of capacity to describe our experiences. Most of the time we are distracted by what is going on around us and within us. We are called to name our hopes- not as individuals but as a collective body. We can dream and envision. It's a time for all of us to challenge ourselves, questioning our commitment whether we are where life is threatened, not respected and not cherished. Where there is God there is Love. Our choice is to live COMMUNION' to live in harmony with all life. We are focused towards our VISION that is JESUS' VISION - ONENESS, RELATEDNESS and WHOLENESS. Jesus affirms our hope that it is possible. Our Founder PBN - a

man just like any of us, convinced us to live with our humanness. It is a special call that invites us to live our LIFE TO THE FULL.

Sr. Jesmin Fernando in her sharing connects our life with the "Compassion of St. Francis"- the book she read recently by Illia Delio. Francis of Assisi- having compassion in one's heart so as to respond - we can only see the action but not the disposition of heart. How daring he was to embrace the leper. There he was able to accept and embrace the 'leperness' in him which means, he was able to accept what he had rejected in himself. So he was free to embrace what was outside when he saw and accepted the naked reality of who he was. He began to respond to the



reality, allowed the compassion deep within to be expressed in action. It is a call to get in touch with one's real nature- Our original nature is our original blessing'. So we are called as a Family to witness to the compassion of God consciously, and join hands with the others to build a better society. Even though we have different life style according to our different vocations, we have the same aim and the same spirit. We are called to dream together for a better world where Communion is possible.

Mrs. Regina Ramalingam- the Asian leader of the Lay Associates challenged us with questions concerning our Family call and also opened our minds and hearts for all the challenges from the Council of the Family 2015.



Our joy was doubled because of the presence of the silver Jubilarians Frs. Jude Peries , Sarath Nimal and John Mavulis. Added to our joy was the commitment of Fr. Morais from Batticaloa. We remember with gratitude our deceased members late Fr. J. P.E. Selvarajah and late Fr. Philip

Antony who were active members of our Priest Associates and were very exemplary priests. We also prayed for the recovery of Fr. Shelton Wijetunghe. We enjoyed our stay and we felt that we are one family and the spirit of our Founder was permeating the hearts of all. Every live- in- session we had so far, has been a stepping stone towards our formation and an experience, imbibing the spirit of the Holy Family.



**Jacob Nicholas - Priest Associates Sri Lanka**

## War is over... What is Next???



Edwin Markham wisely said “Why build these cities glorious, if man unbuilt goes, in vain we build the world, unless the builder also grows”. At the same time the shared experience of the Southern Scholars “We studied together in Jaffna University, Jaffna was like our second home and there was no difference among us” and being on the staff of the Human Rights Office, Kandy, a network of the Asian Human Rights



Commission in Hong Kong, led the way towards resettled villages of Kilinochchi in the North after the war in 2012.

Thanks to Sr. Christabel - psychological counselor in the Jaffna Province for the help given in selecting the working areas in the resettled villages of Valaipadu, Mulankavil and Kumulamunai in Kilinochchi District.

Our first encounter with the villagers was a difficult task for the fact that on one hand feelings of apprehension and suspicion as to whether we would be accepted and on the other, the language difficulty. We approached the village with a group of survivors both Sinhala and Tamil speaking. They lived with the villagers, in their homes and going from house to house listened to their untold stories. At the same time sharing their own traumatic stories of victimhood of the disappearances of their husbands and their sons as well. In the process of listening, sharing and living together in their homes slowly and slowly trust and confidence started growing between the two ethnic groups. We were happy that our first attempt was seemingly successful.

The most vulnerable groups of the war are widows (women headed families) and children. In listening to their stories we realized the urgent need of the hour is the assistance to the healing process of their traumatic memories.

Placing the victims on safe grounds, and in an environment of relaxation and at

ease the widows and the youth had the opportunity to go through a very difficult process of healing and as the same time they were able to listen to the experiences of the Sinhala victim groups. They were also taken on an exposure tour to a tea Estate where they visited the Kandian Tamil families and made friends with them.



After the Healing process, the funeral-like setting within a prayerful atmosphere gave the widows an opportunity to say “good bye” to their loved ones. It was a heart-breaking moment to break the emotional attachments and letting go of their loved ones. The letting go of the emotional attachments was carried away with the fire and the smoke that went up to heaven.

Then we slowly introduced and trained the families in “Organic Farming”. Within the process the women headed families are learning not only farming, but to work in groups, to love and nurture the Mother Earth, and thereby continued the healing process of their traumatic memories.



(Women headed families) Groups of Sinhalese families in the South and War Widow Groups in the North are being formed. There are and there will be challenges and difficulties to face. But trusting on the words of our Founder “My daughters, there is nothing to check your course, Go Forward...”, the focus is at least in a small way to start to contribute in Building Relationships (a process “Reconciliation”) within different sectors of society.

After the “Resettlement Period “the signs of the time reveal that there is a growing urge in the South and in the North in “Building Relationships” between the two ethnic groups. In tune with this hope there are Widow

**Sr. Mabel Rodrigo**  
**Wennappuwa - Retreat House,**  
**Colombo Province**  
**Sri Lanka**



**Holy Family of Bordeaux**  
**Communications / Information Service**  
**Rome**  
**[www.saintefamillebordeaux.org](http://www.saintefamillebordeaux.org)**