

# INTERCONNECTIONS

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

December 2014  
No. 42



***SENT  
FOR  
MISSION***

***If we  
don't  
dare  
now,  
then  
when?***

**Favourite physical exercises - getting  
to know the kids in POLAND**

"Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what shall be" (1 Jn 3:2), that is, hope.

## IN THIS ISSUE

### Contents

	Page
EDITORIAL	03
HERE IN ROME	04
<i>"It is not the time to talk to God about unimportant matters...!"</i>	07



### AMERICA

AGENTINA	- <i>Communion and Peace (Posadas-Misiones)</i>	09
PERU	- <i>What is different renews us, it sets us on the road again</i>	10
AGENTINA	- <i>Thank you, Lord for our Secular vocation</i>	11
	- <i>Thank you for the gift of your life</i>	11
PARAGUAY	- <i>Joy is Reborn</i>	12
BRAZIL	- <i>The joy of recycling</i>	14
CANDA	- <i>A window on life</i>	15

### ASIA

SRI LANKA – COLOMBO	- <i>In search of meaning...?</i>	17
JAFFNA	- <i>On the move at Manthuvil</i>	18
INDIA	- <i>Relevance of educational ministry</i>	19
PRIEST ASSOCIATES	- <i>Asian Meeting of the Holy Family Priest Associates live in programme</i>	21

### EUROPE

SPAIN	- <i>A dream which is being realised in our H. Family College of Pinto</i>	25
	- <i>Drawing water from our own well</i>	26
POLAND	- <i>Our first steps in Skierniewice</i>	27
ITALY	- <i>Testimonies of some "friends of the Holy Family"</i>	30
	- <i>A real experience of family</i>	31
	- <i>At the solitude</i>	33
	- <i>Journey to the solitude</i>	33

### AFRICA

R.D. CONGO	- <i>The Silver Jubilee was celebrated in Gungu</i>	35
CHAD	- <i>Pope Francis speaks - the church of Chad</i>	36

**Interconnections is published by the Holy Family of Bordeaux International Communications Service.**

#### Editors

M. Lourdes de la Fuente- [infoserv1@sfbint.org](mailto:infoserv1@sfbint.org)

Maristella Soosaipillai - [infoserv2@sfbint.org](mailto:infoserv2@sfbint.org)

#### Translators

Áine Hayde (Britain & Ireland)

M. Madeleine Fedrigo (Rome)

Mercedes Mendiguchía (Spain)



Website: [www.saintefamillebordeaux](http://www.saintefamillebordeaux)

# EDITORIAL

New communities; testimonies of Lay Associates who encourage us to live as Family; friends of the Holy Family who are attracted to us by values which they see are being lived; lay people who work with us and who are trying to preserve our values; young people who are searching... Sisters and Consecrated Seculars who give thanks for the gift of their vocation ... You will find all this in these pages.

Why? What are they saying to us through these testimonies? We look at Ana Maria's post-capitular circular to respond to these questions: As a Family, we live *"a spirituality which centred on God-Spirit, who permeates the cosmos, erupts as life, blossoms in the consciousness of each person and lives in community"*. Therefore, *"what is lived by a part affects us all"* and moves us on to become involved *"in the situations which both people and the Planet are living."* In order to do this *we need to displace ourselves to a new "place" ... "journey with the women and men of today who long for dignified future for all people and for creation...so we are interdependent...If we become aware of this there will be no room for individualism at any level. We are called to be what we say we are, in the world and the Church within the historical/ political/cultural/religious context of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

## Here in Rome

During the Summer holidays the local community got a bit smaller: Conchita COSGAYA returned to the Province of Spain after several years' service in the Generalate. At the moment, she is in the Provincial House of Spain working with her characteristic energy. Puvana THURAIAMY also returned to Sri Lanka having worked for several years as a secretary. She is now working in the Provincial House of Jaffna.



But the local community did not just say goodbye to people. We welcomed affectionately Kinga BARTOS, from Poland, the new Secretary General and co-ordinator of the secretariat and Selvathy MALACHIAS from the Province of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, who will work as secretary.

---

On 1 October, the General Council and the local community began this new stage of their lives officially. To celebrate this and to show that we want to journey and work together for the Family we had a time of prayer together. The prayer was full of symbolism and was prepared by members of the two communities. During the same celebration, the General Councillors' cross was presented to Geni DOS SANTOS CAMARGO who was still in Brazil when the other members of the General Council received their crosses during the Chapter.

The Introduction to the celebration and some of the more meaningful gestures will enable you to share in this prayer:

*“The two communities are gathered together this evening with the same desire and the same aim: **To live together and collaborate in the mission which has been entrusted to us in the Church and in our world, with the whole Family of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles for the next six years.** We want to begin this new stage united in one heart. We are also together for the presentation of the cross to Geni.*”

Some texts from the Spiritual Guide and from the Constitutions reaffirmed our desire to live the mission entrusted to us together:

*“Founded on faith and charity, our communities bear witness to the presence of God acting in the world. They show that salvation has already come and that communion among all is possible in Jesus Christ.”*

Then Ana Maria presented the cross to Geni with the following words which express its significance:

*I present you with this cross which recalls the fidelity of Jesus to his mission and of so many Sisters who gave their lives in fidelity to the Mission which they received...*

*We wish to remain faithful to our roots, listening to the Spirit who speaks to us today in the cries of humanity and of earth. Trusting in God Alone and in the collaboration of each Sister in the Institute, we commit ourselves to discern the calls and to do all we can to carry out our common mission according to the orientations given to us by the General Chapter.*

When she had received the cross, Geni read out the names of the Sisters who had received this same cross before her.

Then the assembly stretched out their right hand and blessed Geni. The assembly responded *Amen* to each invocation. This blessing was a real expression of what the Institute wishes and expects from the General Community:

- *May God Trinity-Family and Jesus, Mary and Joseph, the lovely image of the Trinity, bless you.*
- *May your leadership be feminine, collegial and shared.*
- *May you be at the service of the mission of communion, discerning the responses which can renew and transform our Mission of communion today.*
- *May a shared vision bring you energy, wisdom and boldness so that with the Team you can face challenges for the good of the Mission.*
- *May you receive the respect, trust and collaboration of all the members of the Institute and the Family.*
- *May you have freedom of spirit so that you can listen to all voices, welcome reality in all its diversity and dialogue with compassion.*
- *May the Holy Spirit be your light in darkness, your strength in weakness and your faithful companion on the journey.*

The celebration ended with the invocation: “May Jesus, Mary and Joseph be with you always.” The day ended with an evening meal where there was an atmosphere of joy, sisterliness and festivity.



We also had a visit from three teachers of the Loreto College in Madrid, one of the first colleges to be founded in Spain. They are writing the history of the college and they wanted to get more information from the General Archives. Meeting them was an enriching and interesting experience. In an e-mail which they sent us they said the following:

*I hope that you like the photos. They are a souvenir of our stay which was not only*

*interesting but very affectionate. It was interesting to visit you like this and to get to know your community better and also our roots as a college. We learned a lot during those days which passed quickly but which were intense and affectionate because of the welcome you gave us. We felt at home certainly – in a very international house.*



---

From 24 to 26 October, the Team for Pastoral Work on Vocations of Europe/Canada met here in Rome. Geni worked with the Team. Over the weekend, they went back over what they had already done and, in the light of this, they prepared a prayer/retreat for the communities of the Institute, relating it to “The Year of Consecrated Life”. You will receive it soon. They also prepared meetings and formation themes, always in the light of the Charism.

---

On 27 October, the two communities met to pray together and to celebrate the 221<sup>st</sup> anniversary of our Founder’s birth. Some of his own words were spoken which made him very present among us. We entrusted to him the whole Family and the great needs of the world.





### Synod on the Family

During the Synod on the Family, we had the joy of welcoming Margaret who was one of the participants in this event. Morning and evening she informed us faithfully of what had gone on at the Synod. You have all been able to experience this event more closely by means of the two “Flashes” which we sent. We thank Margaret for her closeness, availability and simplicity in sharing this valuable information.

---

## “IT IS NOT THE TIME TO TALK TO GOD ABOUT UNIMPORTANT MATTERS...!”

### Ana María Alcalde’s Circular

*“The world is on fire...! No, it is not the time to talk to God about unimportant matters...”*

**I**t was Teresa of Avila who launched that cry in the 16<sup>th</sup> century! The Church and the world of her time were deeply torn apart by division and violence. It was to her Sisters that she addressed this impassioned appeal...

I find an echo of this appeal and urgency in Ana María Alcalde’s letter.

Seeing the misfortunes of her time, Teresa suggests a “wartime” strategy to her Sisters: to live their vocation even more intensely; and she calls them, according to their Carmelite mission, to the persevering work of prayer, *“Work to be the kind of people whose prayers*

*can help the world! That is what we are about; that is the object of our desires...!*

Today, our 21<sup>st</sup> century is consumed by rivalry and endless conflicts; the Church is experiencing deep crises. The General Chapter urges us with a plan of action for our wounded world – to work to be the kind of people whose *Holy Family* life and mission of communion can help the world and the Church.

To help us to begin this work, Ana María’s letter invites us – to abide in God alone and in the heart of the world. *We must drink from the well-spring of our spirituality and be with our people and our planet.*

Ana María renews enthusiasm for our Charism and brings us back to the depth, the dynamism and the relevance of our spirituality and our mission. She urges us to

live our vocation as sisters of humanity and the whole of creation with interiority, authenticity, boldness and responsibility.

- ✓ *Will we be able to change our dissatisfaction and fear “into energy for change” – energy for the present and the future?*
- ✓ *What is our world crying out for today?*
- ✓ *What seeds of life should we sow for today and for tomorrow?*

We can dream, as Ana María asks us to, and reflect on the questions she poses ...

I myself would like to live and sow a spirit of hope and joy because of having God Alone in our lives; because the certainty, in faith, of God’s presence among us is what we want to proclaim as the source of happiness and life.

[I want to have] a spirit of goodness and welcome flowing from generosity, respect and concern for every person and every creature wherever I am; and also wherever there is suffering in the world, through my interest, prayer and concern.

[I desire] to live a spirit of freedom to dare, to suggest, to act “without being afraid of making mistakes” in my efforts to give, defend and protect life; and finally a spirit of decisiveness to act without delay.

At the end of her letter, Ana María challenges us: “God – and we could add ‘the world’ – depends on us and urges us to live our mission of communion which is our *raison d’être*, identity and objective.

- ✓ *But how can we live “passion for mission”?*
- ✓ *From where can we draw our energy to face the challenge of communion and peace?*

We need to keep our gaze fixed on “our common aim” and put on – as St. Paul tells us – *God’s armour for the battle!*

In our journey, in our “exodus” with our sisters and brothers around the world, we must wear *shoes of zeal*, to proclaim wholeheartedly *the gospel of peace* – the true peace of heart, goodness and fraternity for which the world longs.

*M. Madeleine Fedrigo.  
General House*





## COMMUNION AND PEACE

*The Sisters of the Posadas monastery invite us to reflect on peace in the present time in order to see the relevance of our Charism of Communion for the world and for the people that we meet. They also share some of their experiences.*

God says, “Peace is the Communion that I like best.” Therefore “seek peace and pursue it.” The Psalmist shares his experience. God comes very close to those whose only support is God. Our world longs for peace. So many people experience the opposite – those who cause wars and become rich as a result and those who are the victims of war with disastrous consequences.

Yes, we pray for peace. We respond to the requests which come to us from everywhere. And... we can ask ourselves, “Is each one of us really an agent of peace in her daily life? Isn’t this what we mean when we speak of “the Charism of Communion?” A gesture of encouragement, a friendly word, a smile, being attentive to someone who crosses my path, being close to someone who is suffering, “solidarity of heart which is more than skin deep”...

Jesus “went about doing good.” The Good Father encourages us to live in the same way. If we help everyone as a Spiritual Family there will be a little more peace in the world and we will fulfil the Mission of Communion as never before.

We share with you some experiences that we have had over the past few months: On the feast of St. Joseph the Worker, we celebrated life with the appointment of Sr. Clare Fernando as community leader. Clare

agreed to render this service, confident that the Lord goes before her and accompanies her and that she also has the support of her Sisters.

On July 6 we welcomed our sister Pilar Elvira who is Spanish and a member of the Monastery in Spain. Pilar has come for six months with great enthusiasm to help us to improve the language since we are all foreigners. Although our life has a strong dimension of silence and solitude, we are not hermits. We are in contact with people and we want to understand them and be able “to capture” what they are really saying. We do what we can and we are very grateful to Pilar. We are hoping to improve our knowledge of the language and especially how to express ourselves properly.

We are preparing for the Vicariate Chapter which will take place at the Solitude, Martillac from 10 to 25 November. The theme is in keeping with that of the General Chapter. We want to respond to the Mission confided to us as Contemplative Sisters within the Institute. One of the points emphasises “Being a disciple, consecrated and sent on Mission”. This Chapter will also have the “task” of electing the members of the Vicariate Council for the next six years. We ask you to pray for this. “We go forward” seeking peace, asking the Lord to grant us this gift and working towards bringing it about wherever we are.

*The Sisters of the Holy Family Monastery - Posadas-Misiones*

## WHAT IS DIFFERENT RENEWS US, IT SETS US ON THE ROAD AGAIN

*Diana shares her experience of a Residence for young people in Quitilipi: here life is cared for in a society which every day seems intent on destroying it.*

I would like to share with you an experience I am having in the community of Quitilipi in Argentina. The mission is centred on the Holy Family Residence for Girls. This provides a home for them to study in but, more importantly, provides education at all levels and sustains life. Often this means putting broken lives together in the hope that new life will emerge – something that is not always certain.

My mission here is more than just being with the girls. When they need a hug and a word of encouragement; when they can no longer contain their pain and need to cry and need a listening ear, my presence and silence help them to unburden themselves. In these situations, we learn to remain quiet about our own ideas and, in the silence of our hearts accept their lives and in gestures rather than words say what words can never express. In the end, what counts for them is listening to them, walking with them, laughing with them, being interested in how they are getting on and helping them with their work. These are ways of showing them that their lives are important to you. Caring for life in a society which is intent on destroying it every day is a wonderful experience.

This experience has led me to think of times in the life of St. Joseph when he looked after the Child and his Mother in silence and has led me to review what I am doing here. I arrived here on the feast of St. Joseph the Worker. This was providential for me because he is my companion on my journey where the most beautiful thing for me has been my encounter with the tenderness of God and trying to share this tenderness. This is something I live every day, in the realisation that life is a journey with others.

I am very happy and I am grateful to all of you who accompany me by your prayers and enable me to live something different in which God's presence has accompanied me in a very real way through gestures and people who by their acceptance and their words have made me feel at home. Their words were simple but they said a lot and helped me to become part of a different culture and have a different experience of God. This has been my experience in these distant regions which I have come to love so much.

May the Holy Family continue to accompany us on our journey, and nourish us in our desire to build Communion and care for life.

*Diana Ruiz Morales.  
Quitilipi – Chaco – Peru*

# THANK YOU, LORD FOR OUR SECULAR VOCATION

*Susana Apaza, a Consecrated Secular from Peru shares her joy on renewing her YES to the Lord – thanksgiving for her secular vocation to live a simple life like that of the Family in Nazareth.*

**O**n Saturday, 16 August, we gathered in the house of the Sisters of Comas. We were very happy to be able to celebrate God's great love manifested in our vocation. In a simple ceremony, during which we remembered our Sister Regina, each one of us said our YES to the Lord, filled with hope and trusting completely in God Alone. After Mass we had a lovely time together, laughing, telling stories and even exchanging gifts.

Consecrating our lives to God in a discreet way so as to live among our people trying to

proclaim God and God's reign as best we can is the mission to which we have been called, giving the example of living the simple life of the Holy Family of Nazareth. Now we are on the way and, with God our side, nothing can hold us back.

Thank you, Lord for the gift of our secular vocation. On the eve of the feast of the Assumption, we asked Our Lady to draw us ever closer to her beloved Son. May we be able to say with our Good Father, GLORY TO GOD ALONE IN JESUS CHRIST THROUGH MARY AND ST. JOSEPH!

*Susana Apaza  
Condevilla-Peru*



## THANK YOU FOR THE GIFT OF YOUR LIFE

*Latin America recognises with gratitude the witness of Holy Family Consecrated Life received from María Isabel Subijana, Regina Goossens and María del Carmen Villardell.*

**S**ome weeks ago we received the news that several Sisters had left us. One after the other, these beloved Sisters who had lived their mission with us entered a new phase of fullness of life in God. Each

one had left a mark in the history of the Holy Family in Latin America and on all our lives. **Isabel Subijana**, (as we called her here), visited and accompanied all the communities and Holy Family groups over a period of

several years when she was General Councillor. . More than once, her very presence consoled the Sisters and communities of Brazil in times of trial and difficulty. Later on, she came to live with us and dedicated many years of her life to Latin America.

**Regina**, with her sensitivity and friendliness spent what were perhaps the best years of her life as a missionary in Peru and had quite an impact on the whole of Latin America either for her service as Delegate or as a member of the Formation Team.

**Maria Carmen**, General Councillor, with her elegance, clarity and objectivity knew our communities and led us through the process of the big and small changes that took place in recent years – for example, formation in the Latin American network.

Three pearls whom we had the grace and privilege of living with, in one way or another. Each one, in her own way, represented for Latin America three signposts which showed us the way to go towards the future of our Charism of communion in these lands.

*Geni Do SANTOS – General Councillor*

## PARAGUAY

### JOY IS REBORN

*Sr. Amelia shares the joy she experiences in carrying out her pastoral work. She receives her strength from God and from the people with whom she shares her faith. She says that these people are sacraments of life for her. At present she is accompanying a group of adults who are preparing for the sacraments and she also provides a biblical formation for groups of adults.*



**I**t is wonderful to read the Apostolic Exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel* and to feel in harmony with its message. How well the simple people understand it, or rather how well the Pope understands them. We thank God for the power of God's Spirit which renews and recreates the Church by leading it to walk more closely in the footsteps of Jesus.

In the pastoral work which I did with the country people, the indigenous people or the working people of Nemby (who are mostly migrants from the country where the big livestock farmers and cattle breeders are taking over the land and the small farmers and their children are forced to leave in order to look for a better standard of living) I bear witness to the fact that the joy of the Gospel is always new, full of happiness and unique.

The apostolic missionary vocation is transformative. I now feel more evangelised than evangelising. What would have become of me if I had not been in contact with these sisters and brothers? I don't know. Of course, it is God who is my strength but these people have been the sacrament which God has used. It was certainly not their poverty that helped me – that was something I had to struggle with and something that caused me to suffer – but their simplicity in sharing, in their solidarity with one another, in their living of the Gospel, things that they did almost as a matter of fact and in very difficult circumstances.

When I myself had more opportunities for formation, I had, and still have, the joy of being able to share the Gospel with so many of these simple sisters and brothers who are thirsting for God.

I accompany groups of adults who are preparing for the sacraments – some for baptism, first confession and communion but most of them for confirmation and biblical formation. Every year we have a nine-month course and every year and every day I feel that the message of Jesus that I am transmitting is truly something new, that it is

life-giving and joyful. Just as the faces of those who receive it are different and new, “every authentic evangelising action is always new”.

It is a great joy to see how receiving the message of Jesus very often frees the people, and myself too, from the old image of God as an all-powerful judge who punishes our sins, replacing it with an image of God as Mother/Father of Jesus and our Mother/Father too. If JESUS has taught us anything about God, it is that God is LOVE, mercy, goodness, tenderness, forgiveness. God is always a Father with arms and doors open to welcome us.

Seeing others grow in this knowledge and love of God, in this joy of recognising their dignity as good people, is the great joy and happiness which God gives us when we really want to transmit our experience of GOD to our sisters and brothers who are searching for God, those with whom God identifies and who first knows and loves them.

It is a joy that will not pass and that nobody can take from us. It is the only thing that will last and give true peace. My desire is that everyone may enjoy it.

*Sr. Amelia Fernández García*  
*Community of Nemby*





## **THE JOY OF RECYCLING**

*João Marinho, a Lay Associate shares his commitment to care for nature, his experience of working with material retrieved from the rubbish dump and how he loves to recycle.*

In August 2005, when I was offered work as a kitchen assistant and driver in Posadas de la Esperanza (a hostel for the homeless where the Holy Family Sisters help out), I learned how to use the recyclable material that they had there.

The work consisted of selling the material gathered by the people who used the services of the hostel. The unemployed men collected the material, brought it to the hostel and separated it into plastic, paper, metal and glass. This material was sold and the money was divided among the men according to the amount of work each one had put into the project.

The person who organised the work had a health problem and was obliged to leave. It was then that I was asked to become part of the working group.

That was when everything began for me. I had several opportunities to attend formation

courses and meetings. So I began to develop my awareness of the need to care for nature and to recycle material that had been thrown out. I discovered that there is a lot of life in rubbish dumps. I have now spent almost ten years in this “struggle” and I feel that love for this work has really taken me over.

At the present time the planet is making us pay for the consequences of our attitudes in the past and we have to conscientise ourselves in the interest of the future of our Earth. The commitment of the *Holy Family* to this is based on love and the defence of life.

At the moment, using recyclable material is profitable and this has been a real discovery for me. I do my work very happily in my little garage. One of my greatest joys is that my wife and neighbours come to help me. I cannot stop. It is a kind of “healthy illness” which will get worse ... so that **THE PLANET CAN GET BETTER.**

With love to the whole Family

*João Marinho de Oliveira  
Lay Associate, Brazil*

## A WINDOW ON LIFE

*Evangelising Young People is  
our Mission*



**J**esus said: “Do not say, *In four months’ time it will be harvest-time*”; and, in fact, in Galilee the time between sowing and harvesting is four months. This saying gives the understanding that there is still time. But Jesus assures us that it is a mistake. **“Look, Jesus said, the fields are ripe for the harvest” (Jn 4:30).**

As you already know, Aldégonde and I share the same mission – an active presence of evangelization among young people. There is no shortage of work. We have to discern in order to stay the course with the young people while keeping alive the desire for a new fruitfulness for the Holy Family in Quebec. How can that be done? God alone knows. But we are aware of some calls, of new possibilities. The young people (18-35 years of age) from the Mission of Our Lady of Africa have just made a second retreat on the four sites of deep love. There were 30 boys and girls who wanted to explore the depths of their lives in the presence of the Lord.

This is the testimony of one of the girls:  
*“In the beginning when I heard about the retreat I was not interested in going. But in*

*the end I said to myself, “Why not?” It will certainly do me good to get out of town. And, to be honest, I have not regretted my decision to go even for a second.*

*It was one of the best things I have done in my life – I spent a very enjoyable week-end with other young people from my community whom I did not know but whom I was able to get to know over the three days. What I liked best about this experience is that it enabled me to feel closer to God, to know how to sort out my relationships and to discover a side of my personality that I did not know. I also liked the atmosphere of the retreat. There was a lot of singing, dancing and prayer.*

*What I realised during these three days is that God is our friend and that God will never abandon us. God stretches out God’s hand to us and it is up to us to take it and to trust God because all God wants for us is our happiness. Finally, my hope is that all young Christians may have such a unique experience.”*

*Raissa MBWISA*

*It is celebration time at the Quesnel Street community:*

For the past fifteen years, we have been working with young people in our area. We have invested a lot of time and love in Bible Camps for adolescents, We have formed several leaders – male and female. Then these young people continued their studies and today most of them are working.



Then I had a surprise! On my feastday, one of the former leaders, Natalie, had the good idea of gathering all the young people from the Bible camps for a kind of reunion. Aldégonde was in on the act. It was a great success. Several brought their photo albums from the Bible camps. Others brought their videos.

It gave me tremendous happiness to hear them going down memory lane. Those who had children wanted them to have the same experience. This was consoling from all points of view. Sometimes we have had the

impression that we were preaching in the desert. We heard some beautiful testimonies that evening.

Aldégonde had the brilliant idea of inviting some young people from the African Mission that I had got to know on the first retreat. So we had a mixture of the young people from Petite-Bourgogne and the young people from the African Mission (Latins, Haitians, Africans, Quebeckers) – and we also had our three Sisters from Sri Lanka. The bouquet was perfect. There was a scent of fraternity in diversity in the air.



Aldégonde and I have a great desire which we confide to your prayers. If God wills, we would like to gather all this beautiful world into a holy family. We count on your prayers that we may be docile to the breath of the Spirit. We trust in the Spirit.

So, Sisters, that gives you an idea of our mission – a mission which is also yours since we are here in your name, in the name of the Holy Family on mission.

Very affectionately,

*Srs. Paulette and Aldégonde*





## IN SEARCH OF MEANING...?

*(This article is taken from 'In Touch With You' bulletin of the Colombo.)*

**W**e do hear people ask: “is there any meaning in life?” Or say: “there is no meaning in life.” Are these the ones who commit suicide? Are these the ones who drag on in life as robots? Are these the ones who suffer from loneliness, and eventually give into depression? Are these the ones who have lost enthusiasm in life? Are these the ones who feel bored (lose interest in anything they do) in life? Are these the ones who feel apathy (lack of the initiative to do something) in life? Are these the ones who get addicted to something or other? Could some of these women and men give into aggression and violence-violence to themselves (including suicide) and violence to others (rape, abuse and homicide)? Do we also find them in religious life and priestly life (of all religious)? Is this “the mass neurotic triad” (depression, aggression and addiction) Viktor Frankl spoke of? Is this becoming widespread in our country?

The human person is unique in the whole of creation in the sense he/she has the capacity to transcend (self-transcendence), and he/she ‘wants’ (the desire is deep within) to transcend. When I love someone selflessly it is transcending. When I live for a cause, or for an ideal, for a greater purpose in life, there is a transcending element present. Self-transcendence is the essence of existence.

Every one of us need to have a vision in life and to live to achieve that vision. I may not achieve my vision in my lifetime (vision is

larger than life) but as long as I live for it or live to achieve it, not only I will find meaning in life but also become a visionary. Didn't the psalmist say “People without a vision die?”

When political managers and religious managers (not leaders!) oppress their own people, not allow them to ask questions, not allow them to think on their own, not allow them to search and when people who submit to this oppression, they become ‘masses’. In a ‘mass’, or a ‘crowd’ people have been robbed of their uniqueness. Even an educated person when she/he sells his/her soul for power, comforts, position, she/he has lost her/his uniqueness and lost his/her personality. They may not search for meaning in their lives anymore. They may feel empty within (an ‘existential vacuum’ as Frankl phrased it).

Not only the instinctual drives and repressed materials are in the unconscious but there is also a spiritual unconscious. The desire or the thirst for ultimate meaning in life or for the self-transcending, (reaching out) is there in every human person (in most cases is in the unconscious). One needs to get in touch with this desire or the thirst or ‘the urgings of the heart’ and the search will begin consciously. This search for meaning cannot be given from the outside but each individual needs to search for her/his own meaning. This search for meaning in life is a spiritual search. Ideally, religion needs to help the individual in her/his search. If religion does not do so, that religion needs to be challenged.

*‘A Seeker’*

*Colombo Province – Sri Lanka*

## ON THE MOVE AT MANTHUVIL

**M**anthuvil is a beautiful village in Mullaitivu District, Puthukudiruppu Division, which was ravaged by the Indian army in 1987 and completely destroyed by the Government forces in 1990 and stood stripped on 2009.05.19. After having survived in the Internally Displaced camps under the name of re-settlement the people of this village started from the scratch to 'LIVE'. These were the last group of people who were sent from the IDP camps. They are broken physically, emotionally, psychologically religiously, culturally and economically. Losses.....untold, pains..... Unbearable.....scars .....unforgettable but FAITH of the adults unbelievable. School going children are pushed from pillar to post and the outcome is they lag behind the average students. Coping to bring forth life has neglected the education of the children which was once their focus of life.

People at Manthuvil owned a property and have lived with all the basic human rights and lived with dignity and honour before the war. When they were resettled in their own places, they had to live under a tarpaulin sheet with 4 tin sheets; now they have built their own house with the labour of all the inmates young and old in the house. The housing was planned by different organizations like Caritas, UN Habitat, Indian housing project etc. but not according to the desire of their original plan.

According to the statistics of 2014, there are 576 families, 886 men, 953 women, 36 persons with special needs, 47 women headed families at Manthuvil.

Seeing the signs of the times, discerning how and where God's love must be expressed I felt the urgent need of the Holy Family Presence at Manthuvil with the 1<sup>st</sup> appointment of Sr. Rosy Siluvaithas to Mul/Arasarathinam Vidyalayam, Manthuvil. I would say that the Provincial administration dared to take this step to move into the unknown, where Holy Family presence is very much needed. This is the right moment and this might need to go on for another five years and these people will stand up with dignity and we can be on the move – in Exodus.

There are 200 children in this school with 14 teachers on the staff. This has grades up to one to nine. After having visited the school and spoken to the Principal of the school, the teachers and the students, we felt a great need to visit the families. Since Sr. Rosy was appointed as the Grade 7 Class teacher, along with the Junior Sisters who are preparing themselves for the final vows I chose the families of Grade 7 as our target group. With some junior Sisters, we decided to have a live-in experience at Manthuvil. We stayed with a mother who had undergone untold hardships in protecting her sons and only daughter and living alone now. She welcomed us in her home. The Grade 7 Students walked with us taking us to their homes in pairs. We sat down to listen to their traumatic experiences, their exodus experiences. Painful losses and disconnectedness which moved our hearts with compassion.

As *Holy Family* Sisters our Aim is to extend and strengthen the faith of the people where ever we are. Here at Manthuvil when we sat down to talk to the Grade 7 students in particular since Rosy is the class teacher of

Grade Seven, we found that their religious knowledge is very poor; they are left without a shepherd. They do not have basic knowledge of catechism. Manthuvil is a substation of Puthukudirippu Parish which is 3 kilometers away from the Parish, where they have catechism classes and Eucharistic Celebration etc. Many children do not attend catechism classes or Sunday mass. So there is an urgent need to concentrate on religious knowledge among the students who are 85% Catholics in the School.

With the different aids provided by different organizations the people of Manthuvil have started to do some root work by cleaning the rubbles, planting trees, rearing animals and using their skills in masonry and carpentry to earn their living. It is hard work and in completing their houses many of them are in debt. Some even find it very hard to earn their three meals and to meet the school and medical expenses of the school going children. We deeply appreciate the UNICEF

food project for the schoolchildren which assures at least one meal for the students during week days.

Seeing the crying needs of this place we met the Principal of the School and he appreciated our presence in the school and he requested us to do some animation for the students and teachers. Foreseeing the need for a holistic growth of the students and teachers and situating ourselves on post war situation we planned to go through a process to **“Nurture a benevolent society through motivation”**. Thus our Second step was to organize a day’s programme on the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2014 for the Teachers and students of this school.

Realizing deeply that the present moment is all we have and make the NOW the primary focus of our life, we discern to take forward our dream for these families especially the women and the children of this place and to care for the earth which is wounded by war.

*Jaffna Province - Shanthi Simon*

**INDIA**

## **RELEVANCE OF EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY**

**T**he Catholic Church has undertaken the Education Ministry as an important means for the development of human person. In the past, our educational institution contributed significantly in imparting knowledge, information, values and culture to the younger minds. Today education is much commercialized and we find many corporate schools coming up in different parts of our country offering high quality education. Many of them focus on the middle class or upper middle class since they only can afford the

monetary demands of such schools. The poor and the weaker sections are left behind in terms of quality and English-medium education. As the widening gap between the poor and the rich are on the sharp rise day by day, the opportunity for quality education is an issue that will affect large sections of the population. Even the schools run by religious are caught up in the financial gains and privileges attached to it rather than serving the weaker sections of the society. Our preferential option for the poor and

commitment to serve the humanity at large compel us to open our eyes and see the reality around us.

As I was visiting the villages, I happened to visit ten government aided schools in the vicinity. These are primary and upper primary schools. These schools bring together some boys and girls of different age groups for coaching. We can often find only one teacher in such schools who with great difficulty manage to engage the children for a while. The poorly maintained infra-structure and lower standards of education do not bring any good results as far as education is concerned. Even after the age of ten, many find it

difficult to write simple English words or make a simple mathematical calculation.

As fast changes take place in the field of education and technology, where do these poor children stand in the future? It was a constant question within me. This urged me to compel the village children who are studying in the government school to come for evening tuition. Now our sisters in my community are happy to spend time with these children. Yes, education is meant for all but it is compulsory for children. We all admire the children, let us love them, encourage them, motivate them and give our best for them in the field of education.

*Sr.Sahaya Mary.S  
Mulagalampudu Community*

*Evangelical gentleness is the most delightful expression of Christian charity. This lovely virtue should be the distinctive characteristic of the Sisters of the Holy Family.*

*Our Lord Jesus Christ recommends humility and gentleness to his apostles as being bound to ensure the success of their mission; and indeed, if by humility they are to be instruments of power in in some way, since God cannot refuse anything to the humble, by gentleness they will reign on earth, because it is by practising this lovely virtue that they attract the hearts of his creatures and win them over for Jesus Christ.*

***LEARN OF ME BECAUSE I AM GENTLE AND HUMBLE OF HEART***

*Selected Texts – NO. 245 G.R. 1851*

# ASIAN MEETING OF THE HOLY FAMILY PRIEST ASSOCIATES LIVE IN PROGRAMME

*JESIUT RETREAT HOUSE, Lewella, Kandy. 26th-29th August 2014*

**O**n the 26th all the participants assembled in the hall at 6.00 p.m. for the opening prayer which was conducted by Sr. Arul. The representatives of each vocation were invited to place a candle around the Paschal Candle.

Fr. Benet Shantha addressed the gathering with a warm welcome to all and in a special way to the Priest Associates from India who took great effort to be present at the meeting. The members introduced themselves to one another and made themselves feel at home as one family.



Fr. Jacob Nicholas in his introductory talk explained the purpose of the Live in Session.

- 1. To know each other with a sense of belonging to one family. To experience communion within ourselves and with other vocations.*
- 2. To renew ourselves and recommit ourselves to the vocation we have received.*
- 3. To update ourselves in a changing world and to respond to the signs of the times with a new spirit.*
- 4. To deepen the charism and spirituality which we have chosen to follow according to the spirit of PBN.*
- 5. To go beyond the 4th article and to make it more relevant to our way of life.*
- 6. To share our experiences in order to support each other and to enrich ourselves mutually with other vocations.*

Both the Provincials were asked to give a short message within a short notice and their words were encouraging.

Sr. Euphrasia said: “It is a privilege moment to be together as one family of five vocations. We need the support of each other. It is a moment to experience the presence of each other and discover God. The priests have a big responsibility to live the spirit of the Holy Family, seeking nothing but God Alone and to be in deep communion with the whole of creation”.



Sr.Christa said that it is the first time she had the chance of attending the priests meeting. She expressed her deep joy and happiness to be present for such an event. She stressed the importance of cherishing the gift of communion and the need to bear witness to it.

On the 27th the morning prayer was conducted by Sr.Jesmin Fernando. In the evening adoration was organized by Sr.Arul and Matilda Gnanaprasam.

### Summary of the talks:

#### 1. **4TH ARTICLE AND OUR RESPONSE TO IT IN THE SPIRIT OF PBN**

by Fr.Jacob Nicholas.

The article was divided into six reflections.

- i) Our unity is complete when we remain united with Christ, with the Bishop and our fellow priests.
- ii) The diocesan priestly spirituality is strengthened and deepened by the Holy Family spirituality.
- iii) Eucharist, Word of God and Prayer are our daily spiritual nourishment.
- iv) The spirit of God alone is our strength in all our weaknesses.
- v) Detachment is essential to become more available to the service of God's kingdom.
- vi) Our responsibility towards promotion of justice and preservation of nature.

#### 2. **A NEW WORLD VISION AND THE NEW COSMIC REALITY** – Sr. Euphrasia

Our charism is a gift to all. We are called to be missionaries and evangelizers in the context in which we are. We are in communion with the whole of creation. Eucharist is a true symbol of our unity, we need to listen and discern our Holy Family Mission in today's world. Jesus, Mary and Joseph were attentive to the sacredness of everything in creation. We need to move out of our comfort zones in order to be in communion with all. She quoted Pope Francis: If we stay close to the flesh of Christ we begin to understand something new, what is this poverty of the Lord.

#### 3. **LISTEN TO THE CALLS AND RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF OUR TIMES** –

Fr. Eugene

Holy Family priest associates must be ready for prompt reflection and commitments to empower the marginalized. We need to be attentive to the signs of the times and fight against unjust structures. We cannot be spectators when we see pollution and destruction of nature around us. We have a responsibility of bearing witness to the gospel values. We have an obligation to know the realities around us and be challenged to work for social, economical and political developments. We ought to collaborate with those who work sincerely for creating a better world.

#### 4. THE CHALLENGES OF PRIESTHOOD TODAY AND IDENTITY CRISIS -

Fr. Jebaratnam

We are set apart for three important functions: i) To be holy like Jesus. ii) To be innocent like Joseph. iii) To be undefiled like Mary. We become Holy through faithfulness to prayer. The five methods of prayer according to St. Theresa. Vocal, Mental, contemplative, quiet prayer and prayer of union. The priest associates need to be faithful to the Divine Office which contains all the five methods mentioned above. It is through prayer that we can live for God Alone. It is a promise that we gave when we were ordained deacons.

#### Renewal of the Commitment

On the 28th at 11.30 a.m. during the concelebrated Mass the priests renewed their commitments. The silver Jubilee of Frs. Maria Soosai Vincent and Peter Manoharan was the focus of the Eucharistic celebration. At the end of the Mass the silver Jubilarians were enveloped with shawls. The birthday of Fr. Peppi Sosai doubled the celebration of the day.



#### Priorities and Plans

In the afternoon at 3.30 there was the general assembly to finalize the priorities and plans. The priorities are:

1. To promote eco-friendly programme and to plant and maintain at least one tree in our premises or in the neighbourhood within a short period.
2. To promote vocations to priest associates “Each one catch one”.
3. Daily one hour of adoration (can be done at different times)
4. Faithfulness to the Divine office.

#### Proposals:

- 1) To prepare a talk on the writings of PBN.
- 2) A talk to be arranged on the Pope’s encyclicals on priestly life and ministry.

#### Plan:

- 1) To have the Live in session in the last week of August 2015 at St. Anne Shrine, Talawila.
- 2) To organize an Asian meeting in India in 2016.

*Glory to God alone*

## **Participants:**

***Priests from Sri Lanka:*** Frs. Jacob Nicolas, Benet Shantha, Sarath Nimal, S. Ignatius, Jude Peries, Gregory Jeyantha, Vincent Jeyaraj, Michael Savundaranaygam, P.J. Jebaratnam, J.A.Arulthasan, Peter Manoharan, S.J.Peppi Sosai, S.Rasanayagam, Tanter Fernando, Peter Upali, Jude Dias, G.Ambrose.

***Priests from India:*** Frs. V.Victor, G.Maria Soosai Vincent, Benedict Anaelin, Servatius, N.Martin, Sebastian, B.Eugene.

***Apostolic Sisters:*** Rev. Srs. Euphrasia Rodrigo, Christa Mariathas, (Provincials) Amaleswary Paripooranam, Matilda Gnanapragasam, Mildred Wijetunge, Margaret Rose, Arul Mathesupillai, Jesmin Fernando.

***Contemplatives:*** Rev. Srs. Lorenza Ponnawila, Rishmala Michael.

***Consecrated Seculars :*** Sriyanthi Perera, Rita Beatrice Lalitha.

***Lay Associates :*** C.Gnanapragasam, P.Christopher, Saunderie Pieterz, Frangani Weeraralia.

**SRI LANKAN  
FAMILY JOURNEY**  
*Bulletin of the Priest Associates in Sri Lanka*







## A DREAM WHICH IS BEING REALISED IN OUR HOLY FAMILY COLLEGE OF PINTO

**P**ierre Bienvenu shows us how to focus our pedagogy and offer an education where gospel values are fundamental to the person's growth. The pedagogy which he offers is all-round and personalised, taking into account the needs and the virtues of each person.

Starting out from the family spirit, "*to be and to create family*", the Charism is incarnated in the values which promote the person's growth. Education in values helps us to discover them personally and share them with others. From Pierre Bienvenu's work, we learn that each one has his/her own story. It is a story to which we must respond personally, being attentive, listening, helping but, above all, loving. Each person is a world for which we need to provide suitable conditions so that (s)he can grow throughout life as far as possible.

We have received a free gift – the vocation to educate. We cannot keep this gift hidden in a handbag. We have to give it freely because we have received it freely. We have to continue to give it until it germinates and gives life like the grain of wheat which falls into the ground, dies and bears fruit.

Educating does not mean just giving knowledge but it means accompanying the person in order to develop the seed that God has put in her/his heart. Pierre Bienvenu would say to us, "*If you want to educate, you must listen with your heart*". This means always being ready to learn, to improve, to

grow and to mature. It means living for others and not for oneself. "*If you want to do good, forget yourself*", said Pierre Bienvenu. .

There is no doubt but that we need to know ourselves in order to give the best of ourselves to others. It is the same with our Charism. It is only when we know it deeply that we can love it and, finally, live it. In this very important process we, as teachers, have to be aware of what living the Charism of Pierre Bienvenu implies:

In the first place, what we do must be **consistent** with what we say. Example is the best counsellor and the best subject for education. There is no point in saying something that we do not do. For the Holy Family educator, being and doing go hand in hand. We cannot be one thing and do another. For us to speak about family means being and creating family.

In second place, **responsibility** for the great heritage we have received. The Holy Family educator needs to take on the responsibility of owning the spirit which thousands of people have passed on in fidelity to the Founder and continue the task of communicating it to many others.

In third place, **commitment** to the Charism which leads to personal fulfilment. To be committed to something or someone means going further than doing things just because they are good. Commitment leads us to go further and not just do what is right. Above

all, this means being consistent and free in our actions, not doing things out of a sense of obligation. The educator must be committed to owning the dream of Pierre Bienvenu and seeking the means of bringing it to life each day. This is the way the dream will live on.

Finally, **creativity** in order to make the richness of Pierre Bienvenu's Charism relevant for today. We are convinced that the Charism continues to respond to the needs of our society. So we have to take those needs into account in order to bring the Charism to them in a creative, new and up-to-date way. Creativity means that we have to listen creatively to the people we have in front of us. *"Love is the precursor of good"* says

Pierre Bienvenu. Love, given and received, is the foundation of education. This is the dream of our college in Pinto and it was the dream of Pierre Bienvenu. The pedagogy of love is the pedagogy of Holy Family Centres – a pedagogy that we want to promote through affection, closeness and friendship, educating the eyes of the heart in order to make our pupils fountains of life.

Pierre Bienvenu has shown Holy Family educators a new way which changes people's hearts, fills them with happiness and leads them to fullness of life. This is a path that we want to follow in the Holy Family College of Pinto and fulfil Pierre Bienvenu's dream.

*'Keep in touch' – Bulletin of Spain, NO 7*

## DRAWING WATER FROM OUR OWN WELL

**I**n our various Family assemblies and meetings, we hear calls and we want to help one another to find responses. We are few in number in this society but we have great power. What are we trying to say? That in order to live we need to consume goods and with the products which we buy we can either help to change the world or contribute towards the situation of global injustice that we are now experiencing.

Perhaps the experience of **Vandana Shiva, an Indian woman scientist and researcher** will help us to deepen our understanding of what we are reflecting on.

*She is 62 years of age and from her youth, she has been working and living with agriculturists in her country, to undo neo-liberal policies and try to restore the value of*



*native seeds and a family and ecological agricultural system. Recognised worldwide for her contribution to Human Life on the Planet, she received the alternative Nobel Prize in 1993 and the Sydney Peace Prize in 2010.*

*“On my sixth birthday, my mother asked me what I would like as a present. ‘A nylon dress’ I replied, because all the girls wore them. They were in fashion.*

*‘If that is what you really want’ said my mother, ‘I will buy it for you, but remember if you wear a nylon dress a rich industrialist will be able to buy another Mercedes. But if you use a khadi, (handmade clothes promoted by Gandhi) a woman could feed her children tonight.’*

*For me, what you eat and what you wear decides if someone has food or if someone else can buy his next yacht, island or chalet. If we do not have a deep ecological sense of life we will not be aware of how far-reaching our choices are.”*

We too can make a contribution towards changing this unjust world in which we live

by our choices in what we buy each day: food, clothing, medicines, reading material ...

These changes in our options are a way of living **COMUNION** with the Cosmos, with Mother Earth, with all Humanity.

**For example, every day we have coffee or chocolate for breakfast -**

Let us ask ourselves; “where was this produced - always in the southern countries of our planet? Who cultivated them- Agricultural women and men and very often children who can barely survive? Why? Because those who commercialise these products, those who buy them and transport them to the North are the ones who decide the prices and they always decide them extracting the maximum profit without paying just salaries which would enable the families who produce the goods to live with dignity.

*‘Family in Mission’ – Bulletin of Spain, NO 3*

## POLAND

### OUR FIRST STEPS IN SKIERNIEWICE

**S**tarting new things triggers a whole range of different emotions and feelings: from fear, concern and uneasiness to joy, hope and enthusiasm. I think that these emotions were accompanying each of us; Sr. Ewa, Sr. Miriam and me (Sr. Wiola) on our way to Skierniewice. We felt strengthened with the powerful blessing of the Lord after our yearly retreat in Słupno, during which we were officially sent by our Provincial Sister and blessed by the father delivering the retreat.

Our new kindergarten is situated in Skierniewice, among birch trees. Behind, there are our apartments that somehow must



be furnished. These first moments are unforgettable; we enjoy all the things we have, the first toys for the kindergarten, the first pieces of cutlery, our dishes and our first common breakfast on the ironing board... We experienced at that time the great benevolence of our Sisters from different communities who shared with us whatever they had.

The building is very big, with an infinite number of windows and rooms that must be thoroughly cleaned and time is running so fast. The 1<sup>st</sup> of September, our starting date, is approaching. We entrust everything to the Immaculate Heart of Mary to whom our parish church is dedicated. During one of the evenings I said to the Lord: "Lord Jesus, I see no way out here, there are only two possibilities; either you stop the time and give us two additional weeks or you send us some good people willing to help". The answer arrived without delay; soon we were happy to welcome a team of 4 friends from Łódź and also, our Postulant Beata joined our Community. There were many such situations in which God gave us concrete answers. We can only kneel down and...give thanks and glory.



There were and will continue to be many obstacles, difficult situations, documents that need to be obtained (Sr. Ewa could say more about these things) but each of us experiences extraordinary grace from God and great kindness from people. In order to start on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September, we needed boundless

confidence in God, endless hours of work each day (e.g. cleaning, scrubbing, assembling of furniture until 2 o'clock in the morning) kindness and help of others, Sr. Barbara's mobilization, who alone, until late hours, decorated the kindergarten rooms etc.



From the very first days of our stay here we enjoyed visits of different people. We are full of joy that our Sisters did not forget us and are so willing to pay us visits; it is so family-like. We were also surprised by an unexpected visit from Bishop Andrzej, who was in that region at the time and decided to visit the new diocesan institution. It was a kind gesture of our Shepherd.

A very important ceremony was to take place at the beginning: consecration of the kindergarten, which involved further preparation, for example, planting of shrubs. Thanks to the work of our priests: the parish priest and his helpers – Fr. Jakub and Fr. Michal (sent to the university from October), a beautiful garden was created around the whole venue during two nights only.

These times were not easy; we were getting to know the kids, the kids were starting to adapt to a new place and new people, tears were pouring down. However, the children were behaving well during the ceremony even though they suffered a bit from jitters. The Bishop used beautiful words to describe our work in this new environment:

*“It is difficult to imagine the development of humankind and human person without the truth enclosed in the family. That is why we are happy that here, in Skierniewice, the Sisters want to teach what it is like to be a family and explain how these truths are close to the heart of the Church. They will build on the fundament of Jesus, Mary and St. Joseph.”*

In the nearest future we will be starting our monthly formation and catechism meetings for parents and children.

We feel that there are many tasks and challenges awaiting us, this is why we are asking for your prayers.

*The Province of Poland*



## TESTIMONIES OF SOME “FRIENDS OF THE HOLY FAMILY”

**Y**ou have met Jesus, Sisters of the Holy Family,  
 You directed us towards his word – especially you,  
 Sr. Maria Giuseppina, with your humility, love and  
 your gentle blush when you spoke about your Spouse.  
 Day after day he was with you and that infinite love  
 which Sr. Maria Giuseppina gave us, increased our  
 desire to be with Jesus.  
 Affectionately. Thank you. Schiavino



It all began 5 years ago when the First Communion catechesis began for our children and when the Holy Family Sisters arrived. For two years, every week we had a “salon” (as Don Paolo Gaudino suggested to us) nourishing ourselves on the word of the Lord until our children’s lesson was over. Then we began having meetings in families supported by the Sisters. The numbers increased daily as more families came and were evangelised by the recitation of the Rosary, meditative reading of the Gospel and spontaneous testimonies. Sr. Maria Giuseppina was a gentle person, always ready to ask, “How is the family?” Thank you for having met us. Maria Compagnone

Sr. Maria Giuseppina was a peaceful person who was always smiling. She was always ready to give us refreshments for our stomachs (offering us her delicious tea and biscuits) and for our spirit by means of a family celebration when we offered our heartfelt good wishes on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her Service of the Lord.

Affectionately. Consiglia

### The Holy Family Charism

Is the mystery of God/Emmanuel,

Of the humility of Mary

Expressed in the words:

“Behold the handmaid of the Lord”,

charged with gathering people of every condition into a common spirituality.

Sr. Maria Giuseppina loved sought and desired GOD ALONE

and in him found light, support and the strength to cling to her vocation.

Faithful to her mission, she will continue to do good on earth.

The group of “Friends of the Holy Family” of the church of “San Massimo Bishop” of Orta di Atella offer you our most affectionate good wishes for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of your consecration in the Religious Life.

Affectionately, “Friends of the Holy Family of Bordeaux”  
 28 September 2014

## SHARING

# A REAL EXPERIENCE OF FAMILY

*Sr. Micheline Kenda, the Congolese General Councillor, spent a month in the Holy Family Community of Campobasso perfecting her Italian.*

*Before leaving, she said:*

### THANK YOU

**A** Congolese proverb says, “When you share your joy, your own joy increases.”

I am very happy to have spent this time with you in Campobasso – I should say rather in “Molise” because I visited other places too.

I had the good fortune of seeing your life and your joy – a life with many sides to it, joy, sorrow, faith, hope, commitment to the needy, solidarity, celebrations etc.

Visiting the different places in the province, I met people in various circumstances at different times and this gave me the opportunity of entering into the culture of the Italian people and thanking God for it.

A thousand thanks to each and every one of you for your friendship, your fraternity, your simplicity. I came to a Holy Family community and found myself in a community of life, a community of faith, a human family a “Holy Family” – not only with my Sisters but with each one of you as a member of the community of life which shares its faith to provide daily strength; a big community where each person of this region has her/his place; a Community in solidarity with the peoples of the world.

I had many opportunities of joining in your prayer or conversations where I heard about your concern to see our world grow in love, justice and peace. Thank you so much for all that.



Thank God for nature, for these magnificent mountains, valleys, rocks and the vegetation which form the wonderful eco-zone of this area. Thank you for all the opportunities that I had to enjoy it while here.

My stay has been a time of grace, a gift from God because every interpersonal meeting or every meeting with a place or a situation is a chance to receive something more. Those I met have left something of themselves in me.

I am no longer the same person. I am enriched by your values, by what you are.

As I said at the beginning, my joy of “being with others” has grown as a result of your

sharing your life with me and with all those you carried in your prayer.

Thank you for everything. Let us remain united in prayer. I love you all.

Micheline

*Enzo Mancini, a Lay Associate of the Holy Family, expressing the feelings of the Sisters, the Lay Associates and the Friends of the Holy Family, replied:*

*My very dear Micheline,*

*I think I have interpreted well the feelings of all of us who have welcomed you here to Campobasso when I say “Thank you for being here among us and thank you for your way of being ‘Holy Family’”.*

*We hardly knew you when we all felt a great surge of friendship towards you – that feeling of empathy which brings human warmth to mutual respect and which radiates among us and in all places and situations that basic harmony which should characterise the members of the Holy Family.*

*We should all commit ourselves to having these attitudes which are so deep in the heart of every human being remembering that a smile, an outstretched hand, a kind word, can overcome the barriers and negative feelings which make relationships of every kind very difficult.*

*May God always give you the peace and serenity to “Go Forward”*

---

## **An Angel has left us**

Before going, you gave us Love.

Love as a spiritual exercise.

Love as a school of dignity even in the most difficult times.

Love to make us realise that every moment of life is the greatest gift that the Lord could give us.

Love that enables us to look on our neighbour as a sister or brother.

Love which generates freedom of thought and feeling.

Goodbye Mari Carmen in the glory of God.

*Enzo, Lay Associate of Italy*



## A LA SOLITUDE

*You are not poor  
because under the great age-old tree,  
kissed by the sun,  
precious fruits are born  
of the earth and the vineyard.*

*At The Solitude you are not sad  
because the twittering of the birds  
and the songs of the crickets and the cicadas  
gently embrace your soul.*

*At The Solitude you are not alone  
because the strong hand  
of the Holy Father (Pierre Bienvenu Noailles)  
leads you sensitively  
through woods, fields and flowers  
silent rivers and bridges  
towards the little house of  
the Holy Family  
where, in a beautiful small monstrance,  
the smiling Lord welcomes in silence  
your joys, sorrows and prayers  
and presents them  
to the God of the World.*

Antonio NICOTERA Martillac (5 August, 2014 )

## JOURNEY TO THE SOLITUDE

The car had already travelled hundreds of kilometres on the motorway from Italy to France and now it was on a secondary road going through the French countryside bordered by lovely small houses and kilometres and kilometres of vineyards. An impressive signpost pointed the way to the “Domaine de La Solitude”, the end of our journey. Further on, an old stone entrance led

us towards a row of trees and young vines. We were tired but happy to have arrived at The Solitude.

During the journey, Sr. Maria Antonietta, (Aunt Donatina to us) had described the place which now appeared as a modern construction beside an old stone building marked by an apse with a cross which disappeared into the

clear sky. Everything was enveloped in a hushed and sacred silence broken only by the musical songs of the crickets and birds.

When we arrived at the main door, I noticed an old bronze bell which the pilgrims used to use to ask for shelter in the Good Father's house. Then, as if by magic, the Sisters of the Holy Family of Bordeaux came to the door like a swarm of worker bees. They welcomed the Sister and ourselves, their guests, with open arms. The melodious greeting in French was like the background music to our arrival after such a long journey. Our first thought was to thank the Lord and Pierre Bienvenu Noailles for bringing us to our destination safe and sound and we went to the chapel where a charming, heavenly choir, mingling with the perfume of the incense and the candles, enfolded us magically in a family atmosphere. Three Sisters from Africa sang to the accompaniment of instruments typical of their country and stirred an emotion in us which is difficult to describe. All the tiredness of the long trek from Campobasso to Bordeaux disappeared.

We were given rooms which used to be the Sisters' cells. Then in a real family atmosphere we enjoyed supper *à la française*. Afterwards we went out to contemplate the landscape where rows of vines disappeared into infinity. Outside, peace welcomed the night which arrived hesitantly on tiptoe while in the neighbouring property the joyful voices of teenagers were lost in the approaching darkness. That night a sacred silence laid us in the arms of Morpheus until a clanging bell awoke us in the morning.

Sr. Maria Antonietta brought us to the chapel, to the tomb of the Good Father, Founder of everything around us. She explained his philosophy of life, his personality and his religious spirit. Then we went into the wood where the perfume of grass, flowers and moss mingled with the scent of mushrooms. Passing little streams and wooden bridges, we reached the tiny chapel of the Holy Family which appeared before us like a fairy-tale house with its sloping roof and slim belfry. The old door creaked when opening to welcome us. Dozens upon dozens of *ex votos* covered the walls and a small monstrance which was on the altar caught my attention. Sr. Maria Antonietta told us about the Miraculous Benediction and showed us a small miniature on the door of the tabernacle that an artist had painted using the accounts given by those who had witnessed the miracle. My wife Adela fell silent and Franco and Rossana, overwhelmed by the place we were in, withdrew in silence and prayer. We visited the place where the Founder had lived and we breathed in the magical air that he wanted to leave to those who would come after him. We saw the things which belonged to him, his personal effects and books, while an old piano provided background music for the information given by a Sister who knew the Founder well.

The days we spent in that place, as though we were in a Holy Family, enriched us spiritually and inspired me to describe my feelings and emotions which, like grains of sand, slipped from my hands when they were joined in a prayer of farewell before the Founder's tomb.

*Martillac*  
*Antonio Nicotera - August 2014*  
*Nephew of Maria Antonietta de Carlo.*  
*Friend of the Holy Family.*



### THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO



## THE SILVER JUBILEE WAS CELEBRATED IN GUNGU

*« My hands are lifted up to your Lord, to offer you the world. »*

**A**fter the experience of an eight-day retreat on the theme: « **live my consecration deeply as a response to the cry of the world crises** », I present my prayer on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my consecration to the Lord in the religious profession.

I lift up my hands to you Lord as a sign of my incessant prayer that ascends to you to give you the world; a world that radiates your beauty for it was reconciled to you in Christ and saved with His death and resurrection, a world revealing your goodness, your love. But it is also a world bent under multiple crises that cry out for the help of a Good Samaritan.

Our God is not indifferent. He is full of compassion and takes action; He wants to bring together co-operators to give an answer to this suffering world.

As for me, through His grace He called me, despite my weakness, my fragility and my limits. I make myself available to Him and

say my humble yes every day because I believe in His loving, supporting presence and His almightiness. I believe in the evangelical miracle of five loaves of bread and two fish that wait only for my humble participation and responsibility.

Yes, my hands full of God's providence for His people are also helpless and must not rely but on the internal energy donated by God. These hands desire "to dare to do things as big as the world" as used to say Saint Eugène de Mazenod, "to go forward" which was the desire of Venerable Pierre Bienvenu Noailles and to reply to the call of our General Chapter urging us to dare now. These hands want to reply to the call of the Lord for His mission that is so big and has so few collaborators.

*Thus my hands will be always lifted up just as the hands of Moses that interceded for the sons of Israel and the hands of Jesus on the cross embracing the whole world to give it His forgiveness and save it. My hands are open for an offering pleasant to God, for the happiness of my brothers and sisters. Amen*

*Sister Pascaline BUR  
HFB Delegation of the DR of the Congo*

## CHAD

# POPE FRANCIS SPEAKS THE CHURCH OF CHAD

Pope Francis is recognizing that the society of Chad is grateful for the contributions the Church makes there to social services and care for the poor, but he is reminding the country's bishops that if the faithful don't have solid formation in the faith, they cannot withstand the trials and difficulties of daily life.

The implementation of catechetical methods for inculturation, the defense of the family and the role of women, and the need for dialogue with other religions in a country where Catholics are a minority were the main themes of a discourse Pope Francis handed to the bishops of Chad this morning, at the end of their ad Limina visit.

The Holy Father writes that the Catholic communities in this country “are growing, not only numerically, but also in terms of quality and the strength of their efforts”, and expressed his satisfaction for the work carried out in the spheres of education, health and development.

“The civil authorities are very grateful to the Catholic Church for her contribution to society as a whole in Chad. I encourage you to persevere along this path, as there is a strong bond between evangelisation and human development, a bond that must be expressed and developed in all the work of evangelisation. Service to the poor and the most disadvantaged constitutes a true testimony of Christ, Who made Himself poor in order to be close to us and to save us. Both the religious congregations and lay associations who work with them play an important role in this respect, and they are to be thanked for this”.

“However”, he observes, “it is certain that this commitment to social service does not constitute the entirety of evangelizing activity; the deepening and strengthening of faith in the hearts of the faithful, that translates into an authentic spiritual and sacramental life, are essential to enable them to withstand the many trials of contemporary life, and to ensure that the behaviour of the faithful is more coherent with the requirements of the Gospel. ... This is especially necessary in a country where certain cultural traditions bear considerable weight, where less morally demanding religious possibilities are present everywhere, and where secularism begins to make headway”.

Therefore, “it is necessary for the faithful to receive a solid doctrinal and spiritual formation. And the first locus of formation is certainly catechesis. I invite you, with a renewed missionary spirit, to implement the catechetical methods used in your dioceses. First, the good aspects of their traditions must be considered and accorded their due value – because Christ did not come to destroy cultures, but rather to lead them to fulfilment – while that which is not Christian must be clearly denounced. At the same time, it is essential to ensure the accuracy and integrity of doctrinal content”.

The Pope goes on to refer to families, who are “the vital cell of society and the Church, and who are currently very vulnerable. ... And within the family, it is important that the role and the dignity of the woman are recognised, to bear eloquent witness to the Gospel. Therefore, in this respect, “behaviour within

the Church must be a model for the whole of society”.

After reiterating the need for the permanent formation of the clergy and the closeness of bishops and priests, Pope Francis observes that the Church in Chad, “despite her vitality and development, is a minority in a population in which there is a Muslim majority and which is still partly bound to its traditional religions”, and encouraged the prelates to ensure “that the Church, which is respected and listened to, occupies the space justly accorded to her in society in Chad, in which a significant element has converted, even though this remains a minority”. He continues, “in this context, I must urge you to foster interreligious dialogue, which was fortunately initiated by the late Archbishop of N'Djamena, Mathias M'Garteri Mayadi, who

did much to promote the co-existence of different religious communities. I believe that it is necessary to continue with this type of initiative to prevent the violence to which Christians have fallen victim in neighbouring countries”.

The Holy Father concluded by reiterating the importance of maintaining the good relations established with the civil authorities, and highlighted the recent signing of a Framework Agreement between the Holy See and the Republic of Chad that, once ratified, will greatly help the mission of the Church.

Chad was plagued by civil war for three decades, before a certain level of peace was established in 1990. The central African nation is 53% Muslim and 20% Catholic, with another 14% Protestant.

*Delegation of Cameroon and Chad*

*We wish you*

*a Happy Christmas*

*and*

*A Prosperous*

*New Year 2015*





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

“Beloved, we are God’s children now; it does not yet appear what shall be” (1 Jn 3:2), that is, hope.