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CELEBRATING THE BICENTENARY OF THE MIRACULOUS BENEDICTION



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"The celebration of the Eucharist is at the centre of our life the memory of the Benediction which (Jesus) gave to our newly founded family in 1822 is for us a special call to thanksgiving"



As we look back and reflect on the evolving story of our life, we recognize the Spirit of God ever active among us. By our listening and responding, our willingness to change, we continually move closer to our Founder's dream.

(Choosing Life)

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EDITORIAL

God planted a seed in the heart
of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles
In the turmoil of the French Revolution
To begin a spiritual family
with three persons.
This tiny seed grew day by day,
beautifully and naturally.
However, confusion arose along the way.
But God kept his promises.
He affirmed the promises
In the Miraculous Benediction
"I AM WHO HE IS"
The tree then grew steadily.
And is now in its 203rd year
That is our PBN Family tree.



Each one of us is part of this Family tree. We all want our family to be known and remembered by future generations, and our history and heritage preserved. So we take specific actions to collect things, organize and preserve records, and engage in other activities that represent our Family heritage, because our generation is the bridge between past generations and those to come in the future.

3rd February 1822 was an extraordinary day in the history of our Holy Family. **It is a miracle day; it is the day of God's promise; it is a day of gratitude.** This day draws our attention to remembering the blessings of the Miraculous Benediction, when our Lord blessed the Association and assured us that ***"I AM WHO AM, AND THERE IS NO OTHER."***

This year, February 2023, marked the closing of the Bicentennial of our Miraculous Benediction. **What a delight; what a treasured memory we have in our Family.** We are always invited to remember our Founder and our Early Mothers, who overcame adversity and hardship to preserve our Family tree during a difficult time. Today, this Family has spread all over the world with five vocations striving to live and follow the footsteps of the Holy Family.

So on our journey, we are not alone; the God who blessed those who went before us during the Miraculous Benediction continues to walk with us in all our endeavours. We are called to be ever-grateful to God for the countless blessings that our Family has received, and grateful to all who strive to live our Charism and Spirituality in their daily lives.

The word of our Founder **"Go Forward there is nothing now to check your course"** helps us to face the reality we live in today's context, and keep our **"Family Tree"** alive and active, so that we may pass the Charism on to future generations with zeal and gratitude. May **"Jesus of the Miracle"** accompany us always.



THE TRANSFORMING PRESENCE OF THE BENEDICTION IN MY LIFE

As we came to the *end of this Jubilee year of the 1822*

Benediction, I asked myself what is there about it that remains in my heart and nourishes my faith. I stopped to think about this experience to see the traces it has engraved in me, and making me live more deeply the Eucharistic attitudes of gratuitousness and gratitude.

The Blessing of 3rd February is an event that does not belong to the past, but is always alive, generating Life. The Presence of the One who IS is inscribed in our life and mission from the beginning until now. I also see its relevance in my own life - the continual growth of my way of looking at it and understanding it.

In the early years of my life in the Holy Family, I looked on this event as happening in the past - on 3 February 1822 in a small chapel in the Rue Mazarin in Bordeaux. And it is true - Christ appeared to the first members of the Holy Family at a specific time, at a specific place on the map of Bordeaux. I remember sometimes saying to myself in my heart: *"It's a pity we couldn't keep that place..."*. And I also remember the feelings I had when I knelt for the first time in front of the Monstrance of the Miracle... moments that leave traces and remain for life! And such moments are necessary, because being hu-

man, we need signs, what we can see, hear, touch...

As the years went by, however, my experience of this event became more and more profound, purified and directed towards the essential - the essential that goes beyond all notions of time and place, because the Presence of the One who IS embraces all eternity, goes beyond all limits of time and space. The Lord blessed us all for the Mission that was taking shape in that first Community in the Rue Mazarin. And as St. Paul tells us: *"God's gifts and calls are irrevocable"* (Rom. 11:29), this Blessing remains forever engraved on our Family and our Mission, but it also has infinitely wider significance.

I am more and more aware that this Blessing was not given to us to keep its memory like a precious jewel in a safe, that from time to time, especially on the 3rd of February every year, we take it out to admire, to sigh at the happy moments... Instead, it is a CALL and a SENDING OUT to bring the Presence of Christ to the world, a world that is dying of thirst and hunger for this unique Presence while not even being aware of the source of its misfortunes (conflicts, wars, injustices, hatred and rejection of what is weak and humble... the aspirations of power and pos-



session that destroy and are the sources of the tears of so many poor people).

This Presence is given to us, and it is now up to us to make it shine where we are sent - all members of the Holy Family of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles. Two hundred years of the Presence of the Light which, on 3 February 1822, made the little chapel and the great hearts that filled it shine, are a stage in a journey that continues and opens up towards the future.

The future is still unknown. It is a mystery, but our Good Father always repeats to us these strong words: **"Go forward!"** The last General Chapter of the Religious Institute encouraged us to take bold steps, and we can be sure that in this journey we are not alone: **"I AM THE ONE WHO IS"**.

Sr. M. Kinga Bartoś,

Generalate Local Community, Rome



“EVER-BLEST”

During the first days of February of this year 2023, we have celebrated the closing of the **200th anniversary of the Miraculous Blessing, which took place on the 3rd of February 1822**, in the Chapel of the Sisters of Loreto in rue Mazarin, Bordeaux, where the first Sisters had occupied a small and humble house with a simple Chapel. This undoubtedly marked a turning point in the development of the Association of the Holy Family, which at that time was beset with great difficulties as it began its journey.

The Blessing is a gesture of God towards humankind, a gesture of goodness and love, a call and a manifestation of God's presence. From ancient times in the Bible we can see how God, at the beginning of salvation history, blessed humankind. In the book of Genesis we discover how God blesses the work of creation “Male and female he created them, and God blessed them”...” (Gen 5,2). The blessing is also a promise of fruitfulness: “Now the Lord said to Abram, Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse,

and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Gen, 12).

The blessed person grows greater as a result of God's favour, who by giving his blessing, manifests himself as the God who makes his own those whom he blesses,



but this “possession” is to be shared, to radiate and to be extended to others.

Therefore, the Miraculous Blessing of the newly-born Association was a stimulus for the continuation of the work that, together with the first Sisters, the Good Father had set in motion, a confirmation that the project of an Association open to all vocations came from God, and an impetus for the first women

Luis Jesús GARCIA LOMAS

Lay Associate, Spain

who joined the project, so that they would feel blessed, supported and impelled to continue with the dream of the Founder.

But today we must continue to feel blessed as members of the Family of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles, a Family that has spread throughout the world. We are a group of women and men who follow the Charism of the Association and each one through his/her Apostolic, Contemplative, Secular, Lay or Priestly Vocation, lives a commitment to continue working in order “to be and to create family” in the daily reality of our world today, “with our eyes always fixed on the house of Nazareth, where every day we seek only the will of God in all things, being a sign in the world of **“unity in diversity**, renewing the testimony of the first Christian communities”, and responding in the everyday to the concrete needs that emerge in our constantly changing reality.

Today Jesus, like the Good Father, still urges us to continue with our task, feeling blessed and allowing our hearts to be moved by the call to **“Go forward, nothing can check your course”**. We must work, as a united and diverse Family, to build the Kingdom in the realities in which each one of us is immersed, which continue to challenge us every day and to which we must seek the necessary response.

THE JOY OF GIVING ONESELF

I am very happy to share with you my experience of a life totally given to my Lord.

We had a few days of meditations, led by Sister Aldegonde MBALANDA, on the theme “Giving Meaning to One's Consecration”.

Through this theme, I understood that consecration is a gift of God for the Church and for the People of God. I am a gift from God to his Church.

As that gift, I must imitate Christ, be his witness, live in such a way that by my presence people experience joy.

Consecrated life is the contemplation of the life of Christ. A life given entirely out of love. In my turn, I must be a reflection of God's love: seeking God alone, to bring a ray of hope to the world. But to achieve this, I draw strength from prayer.

February 3, 2023, remains a memorial day for me. To say yes again to God's love and to commit myself by Vows, is a grace.

Yes, all is grace. And I will praise my God forever.

I am very happy to be a member of the Holy Family, especially to be welcomed in joy and prayer by our sisters in Montreal.



Sister Paulette welcomed me like a mother welcomes her child. She gave me a good and beautiful gift, the statue of the Holy Family of Nazareth. My joy is immense. Glory to God.

May the Holy Family of Nazareth: Jesus, Mary and Joseph assist us on our journey to follow Christ.

Catherine Kamuang
Secular member, Canada



ADORATION IN MEMORY OF THE MIRACULOUS BLESSING

1822-2022... 200 years...

In the Family of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles yesterday and today, February 3 is a day of commemoration.

We know that all over the world, all those who identify themselves with this Family celebrate in faith this unprecedented event when, in the early years of the foundation, our Lord Jesus Christ, in human guise, appeared to certain members gathered in adoration.

This gracious gesture on the part of our Lord was what was needed for the Founder himself and his first daughters to find comfort and the confidence necessary to move forward. This nascent work was indeed a divine work. The Master of History put the divine seal on the spiritual adventure of this young priest from Bordeaux who had just been ordained. The real Presence would henceforth accompany this spiritual family in its mission

to make our Lord Jesus Christ known and loved.

200 years later, what does it mean for me to adore the Lord Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar?

To adore God for me is to give thanks; it is to recognise God's ever-abiding presence in the heart of the world, the mystery of the infinitely Great who becomes one of us, so we can meet Him in the infinitely small.

Thus, I lived this adoration



that closed the Bicentenary of the Miraculous Blessing in an attitude of joy, peace and gratitude to God for the blessing granted to this work at its very beginning – a work of which I am one of the beneficiaries. This contemplation allowed me to make the event ever-present, and alive.

In the DR Congo, the day coincided with the visit of the **Holy Father, Pope Francis**, who came for the first time to set foot on Congolese soil, 38 years after the visit of his predecessor, Pope John Paul II.

The visit brought a message of peace, comfort and reconciliation to an afflicted and forgotten people, bowed down and abandoned to their sad fate. Through the presence of the Pope, God himself came to visit us, to bless us again, to exhort us to hope and to encourage us to continue to build, through our work, a country more beautiful than before, in peace (as we proclaim in the Congolese national anthem).

As in the time of our Founder and our first mothers, we are not spared difficulties and

suffering of many kinds.

May this presence of the Holy Father give us a new impetus so that we can always go forward and accompany our people in their search for more peace, justice and communion, breaking down all barriers of hatred, division and violence in all its forms.

Glory be to God for this time of grace. Thanks to our Founder Pierre Bienvenu Noailles and thanks to all the members of his Spiritual Family.

Sr. Patiente GANGUNGU
R.D. Congo/Burkina Faso

THE RENEWING STORY

In the early stage of its formation, our Holy Family Association was blessed by God. Like some heavenly dew, the precious effects of the Benediction have touched all the works down the ages. Such touching proof of the Lord's preferential love merited the eternal gratitude of the Association, hence we celebrate this memorial each year.

It was a joyful moment for me when I came to know about the Miraculous Benediction in our

Family history. It felt like a renewing story. I could say our First Foundresses felt renewed in their faith, and their hope for the future was regained when they heard and saw Jesus himself appearing to them leaving them with words of encouragement; *"I am he who is and there is no other, Honour and the respect of creatures are only smoke, and I am he who is, their relationship is only mud and I am he who is. Wealth and pleasure are only mud*

and I am he who is and there is no other". In their vulnerability and discouragement of the of negative attitude they received from their families as well as the community around them, Jesus in the blessed Sacrament became their consolation. He took advantage of their vulnerable state to show them that no matter how heavy the challenges and obstacle they meet, the only thing that matters is Him. He remains the same yesterday, today and forever.

The joy I experience in front of the blessed Sacrament can be compared to the joy that our first foundresses felt when they saw and heard the words Jesus spoke to them. Contemplating the Lord Jesus in the blessed Sacrament is more renewing and all is at peace, the connectedness of all he created is felt in a deeper way. From Him we receive an inward force that compels us to do the work of Evan-



gelization with both zeal and enthusiasm. Through different encounters with Jesus in the blessed Sacrament, I became aware that when He reveals himself to me, he does not leave me the same. There is an automatic connection, that special moment that is left for change and conversion. Jesus knows the right time to act.

The totality of the Lord's self-giving in the blessed Sacrament was an encouragement to our first Mothers and Fr. Noailles, to continue serving God against all odds. The remembrance of this special day is to feel anew, to be energized by the same Jesus who appeared in the small chapel of the Holy Family to carry out our ministries because Jesus has never stopped being who he was and what he was send to do even when he came across Challenges of rejection, mockery and death. He remained the same loving and compassionate God among humankind and all creation.

**Sr. Caroline Maoeng
Lesotho**



MIRACLES CAN HAPPEN AT ANY TIME



On this 201st anniversary of our miraculous blessing, I would like to share the blessings that I received from Jesus.

In 2015, when I was in Sri Lanka, in the community of Mullaitivu, at the age of 45 I got sick. I tried to bear up for nearly four months. I became more and more feeble and was losing

my energy slowly. At the end, I went to the nearby hospital. The doctor thoroughly examined me and informed me that I had a 5.5 cm cyst in my womb. He said I needed to be operated on immediately in order to save my life. He registered a date for the operation. I got frightened and informed our Unit leader Christa Mariathas. She asked me to come

immediately to Jaffna to be tested again by a specialist. Before leaving the community, I prayed to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. With tears, I expressed my intention. I touched the tabernacle with both hands and asked Jesus to heal me. The following day, I went to the hospital with much hope in my heart.

I went through another checkup, and when the results came in, the doctor said I did not need an operation, because the size of the

cyst had reduced to 2.2 cm. This size of the cyst will not cause any big problems. I did not need any medication. I jumped with joy and believed that Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament had healed me fully. Mk 6:53-56. "All who touched it were made well." "People recognized Jesus at once." The whole of this Gospel text expresses that Jesus' healing power draws all people wherever he goes. Personally, I recognized that He had truly touched me and healed me.

"I will thank you, O LORD, among the nations. I will praise you among the people. (Ps 108:3)

Sr. Mary Jacqueline Aseerwatham
Rwanda / Uganda.

THE MIRACULOUS BLESSING

Unit: Cameroon - Chad



Remembering the Miraculous Blessing every 3rd of February, constantly reminds us of God's great love for us. This time of worship was for me an opportunity to come close to God in his love and kindness towards our Family. I was especially moved to know that this hand of Jesus is always there blessing us, as he watches over us and protects us.

Viviane, Pre-Novice

The Adoration of February 3rd was a significant moment for me, during this brief moment, I felt an extraordinary joy that proves to me the presence of the Lord among us, living and always blessing our Religious Family.

Yomte Bernadette, Pre-Novice

Remembering the blessing of February 3rd of our big Family, we lived it in a meaningful way in our parish with the Associates, as well as the other Christians. During this moment of Adoration, what touched me most was the silence of everyone who entered to pray.

The contemplation of the Blessed Sacrament in faith produced in me joy and interior strength, which urges me to attach myself more to Christ present, living and acting for eternity. May this hope carry us forward in our Holy Family mission.

Sr. Victorine

After spending this time of Adoration on 3 February 2023, in memory of the Miraculous Blessing, I understood a little more clearly the meaning of Adoration in our big Family and its importance, and this gave me the desire to be more present in Adoration.

Augustine, Pre-Novice

Since February 1, I have been living in joy. I am blessed, we are blessed by God. Since I have known this event, something has happened to me. It confirms me in my faith. Jesus is alive. Christ yesterday and today is the same. He is the same for eternity, Heb 13:8 tells us.

“How can we not believe that the Glory of God fills the universe. How can we not believe in the Eucharist that is celebrated every hour of the day. He is Alpha and Omega”. We have a thousand reasons to believe in this living God, present and acting in Jesus who is Emmanuel. The Holy Family of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles is blessed by God. We are blessings to this changing world. Glory to God for all eternity.

Sr. Agnes Ongwisa

THE JOY OF COUNTING THE BLESSINGS...



The Miraculous Benediction without doubt is a continuous Blessing in my life as a committed Lay Associate. First of

all, the spiritual Blessings that I personally experience are numerous, real and experiential.

The Miraculous Benediction was the attraction that led me to embrace the Vocation in the Holy Family as a Lay Associate. The Lord's visible and tangible Blessing confirmed my vocation as I believed that the Lord has in mind that I would bring glory to Him in and through my vocation in the Holy Family. My deep-seated inner search to become pleasing to God has been fulfilled in my

acceptance of the Blessing of the Lord to come and taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

I experienced the Eucharistic blessing flowing through my Formation Years, as I studied, reflected and pondered on the **'Statutes' – "the Way of Life"** which was a continued invitation to a Lay Associate, setting firm conviction of the Miraculous Benediction as the touchstone of the approval of the Association of the Holy Family. With the firm and experiential pathways opened up to making the Eucharist as the center



the cost. It has made me to keep myself totally available to do God's Will and to be of service in the Holy Family, in the Church, in the Parish, in the Society, in the place where I live and in the neighbourhood.

The Eucharistic Celebrations are real for me to live the Paschal Mystery, in offering myself as a sacrifice to the Lord, letting the Breaking of the Bread happen every time that I am called to discern the will of God for me, and the sharing becomes real when I am in action without expecting anything in return.

For us Filipinos – Popular Piety is viewed as the foundation for our Faith. We live and sustain our faith in and through novenas, processions, devotions to the saints, celebrating feasts and being faithful to all Traditional forms of religious practices. The event of the Miraculous Benediction and the importance it has in the Life of our Venerable Founder, and

the impact it has on our Charism of Communion and Being Family and the strong Call to live our spirituality of God Alone – I am so enriched spiritually that makes me feel that I am soaked with the abundant Blessings of the Eucharistic Miracle – not as a past event but alive and flows continuously, making its way through the witnessing life and dedicated services rendered by all PBN Family Members, to live more fully and consciously our “Purpose” for the 3rd Century.

I can attest to the Blessings that I have received personally and my family, and the PBN Family in the Philippines, as the impact of the Eucharistic Miracle of 1822, which we commemorate on the 3rd of each month, spending time in Eucharistic Adoration and by bearing witness to our mission Communion, having as our One aim to give glory to God Alone!

Blessings to all of us, PBN Family!

Teresita Esteves

Lay Associate - Philippines

of my life, I was drawn towards the Eucharistic Lord in Silence, Adoration, Contemplation and spending time just to be in the Presence of the Lord. Every time I sit at the feet of the Lord – it is a joyful feeling that the Eucharistic Lord and I are truly connected. We just look at each other and no words required. The moments of silence become more powerful than words and the stillness becomes more creative in connecting to the Lord.

The Eucharist has become my solar energy that moves me into actions without counting



“I AM WHO AM, AND THERE IS NO OTHER”

THE COUNTLESS BLESSINGS OF GOD (BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING)



The historical event on 3 February 1822 is a great blessing for the members of the Holy Family. This day is celebrated with grateful hearts in a spirit of thanksgiving for the great favour shown to our Founder at the very beginning of our story. In the face of obstacles, rejection, and opposition, our Founder's unshakable trust in Divine Providence laid the foundation for a wondrous future. All praise and glory were always attributed to God Alone.

Living in the 3rd millennium, we look back at the many blessings we have all enjoyed for the past 200 years.

The memory of the Miraculous Benediction has helped our Institute wade through many obstacles. The reflections in the Chapter helped us see the past, present, and future. In the face of failures, we remember the words of St. Paul, *"My grace is enough for you."* Strengthened by Divine power, we, the mem-

bers, are encouraged to go on our forward journey, spreading the charism of our Founder.

Here in Pakistan, we celebrated the great event of recalling the Miraculous Benediction in different communities. It was a joyful event as the members of the five Vocations of our Family gathered together in different cities where our ministries are established. In many of the parishes, this event was celebrated with the parishioners. The Miraculous Benediction, when explained at the prayer service, gave many people faith in the Eucharistic Lord. They were very much touched by the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. It was also an event to strengthen the faith of the people in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

The youth were also given the opportunity to share this experience of the Eucharist. Since most of our ministry is focused on children in

school, we arranged different programs for children to give them a sense of the Eucharist, and many children had the opportunity to participate in Eucharistic Adoration.

There was enthusiastic participation from the youth too. Together with the sisters, the Associates organized programs in villages where many people had the opportunity to participate in Eucharistic Adoration for the first time. This also helped us to share our charism of communion with others. The presence of the Eucharistic Lord had a profound effect on the people.

The Priest Associates, though small in number, were enthusiastic in their participation. They decided to have Eucharistic Adoration in their respective parishes every month.

Today, the people are suffering from various forms of hardships. They are really crushed by many burdens, such as poverty, sickness, and disunity in families. We are happy that Eucharistic Adoration in various missions is helping the people to unburden themselves before the Lord, and to develop a stronger devotion to the Eucharistic Presence.

I feel that this commemora-



tion of the Miracle has been a source of strength and hope for many. The enthusiastic participation of the members of the five vocations is really a great source of joy. Through this celebration, devotion to

the Eucharist has been enkindled. People have great faith that Jesus in the Eucharist will help them overcome their many problems.

We pray that God may make use of the members of the

Holy Family to spread love, unity, and peace through their service. As the Eucharist becomes a blessing, may our dedicated service also become a blessing to many.

Sr. Stella Sadiq
Pakistan



IMPOSSIBLE BECOMES POSSIBLE ...

I would like to share with you my personal experience of Jesus' merciful love through my special teaching ministry for the differently abled children.

Prem Illam Institute where I teach received a new young girl on October 28th 2022 from another Child Care Centre. This girl is not mentally retarded, but she is affected with severe mental illness. She is 23 years old. No one knows her real name, age, or home address but whenever we question her she says Nithya. So we began to call her

Nithya. Twice our Directress Miss Indhra and one teacher took Nithya to a Psychiatrist in Chingleput for an IQ test and scanning but she refused to cooperate and she came back to our Prem Illam. Miss Indhra asked me to keep her in my class. Though I already have 15 girls and Nithya is a different case with different behaviour problems I accepted her happily. At the beginning I had difficulty to manage her, I remembered our previous General Chapter theme *"If you don't dare now, then when"*, so whole heartedly I dedicated

myself to uplift Nithya.

Nithya had several behaviour problems like – self talking, self-laughing, roaming, but always face the wall if she wanted to respond to us. She could not face anyone. At times I shared about this girl with my Sisters in the community. They supported me with their prayers and time to time inquired about her.

A few days later the Word of God inspired me to show mercy towards this special girl. *"Blessed are the merciful for they will receive mercy"* (Mt:



5:7). I challenged myself with this Beatitude. If Jesus was in my place what would he do to Nithya? I took some courageous steps to help her to get back her lost memory. Several days passed by and I placed myself into her feelings and spent a lot of time with her. I showed simple concern, kindness and appreciation of whatever she did.

I had to change my teaching methods according to her level. With social interaction skills I continued asking oral questions like reading, writing, drawing and counting the numbers. On December 14th a few words came from her mouth. Very clearly the name of her school came to her memory. From the name of the school. I was sure Nithya's origin must be Chennai. Miss Indhra gave me permission to trace her whereabouts. I had contacted Mrs Lilly, one of our Holy Family

Lay Associates in Palavaram whether she knew anyone in St. Sebastian school. My communication with her put me in the right path. The school office staff in St. Sebastian school by name Mr.Sathish Antony traced the girl's home address. Through this man Sathish Antony I came to know her mother and brother. Her father had deserted the family. The mother often gets mental upset and her only younger brother is supporting her with a little income. Miss Indhra and myself phoned her brother to come and meet us. He came immediately and we came to know the real Name of Nithya. Her real name is Veera Maha Lakshmi. She had studied in two schools in St. Sebastian and Bethany School in Mugapair west. She was born on Nov 4th, 1999. She studied up to 10th in the above school. Nithya's brother was extremely

happy to see his sister alive. He narrated the family history in detail. He said, we have lodged a complaint at the police station and put information in the school office but so far nothing was found. We thank God, for you have found my sister. The brother requested us to keep his sister in our home because his mentally disturbed mother won't be able to take care of her.

Miss Indhra our directress and our Holy Family Sisters appreciated me for all my hard work and patience in the tracing out of Nithya's future. I feel that I have not done anything but Jesus had done through me. Jesus does miracles when we even don't expect. I really thank Mrs Lilly our Lay Associate and Mr. Sathish Antony who helped and supported me. **"What is impossible becomes possible in the eyes of God"**.

Sr.Sahaya Suvakkin

India



ROCK FERRY CELEBRATES A SECOND CENTENARIAN

On the 11th of January 2023, Sr. Teresa Quinn from Ardboe, Co Tyrone, became the second Sister in the present community to have reached the age of 100, after Sr. Hilary Fitzgerald in 2021.

Sr. Sandra Harrington gives this account of the day:

“Well, it doesn’t get any better.”, “*A super day*”, “*Unforgettable*”, “*One in a million*”, were some of the remarks heard during the day. Whether they referred to Teresa, or to the total number of congratulations cards she received, we are unsure, but they aptly described the style of the day and its protagonist.

The day dawned a little overcast, but the eagerness of anticipation soon wafted away the clouds. From early morning, willing hands of caring staff and Sisters highlighted the occasion with decorations of balloons and banners.

The house buzzed all morning with calls from near and far offering Good Wishes.

Naturally,

Teresa was in her element and excited to answer them. Mass was scheduled to begin at 11am. Shortly before that, Teresa’s family arrived. Her nephew, five nieces and two grandnieces had flown in from Belfast the previous evening, and were delighted to see their lovely “Auntie Kathleen” again, and wish her well.

The lady from Ardboe greeted them along with Catherine (Unit Leader), and all the Sisters from her own and nearby communities.

Our Mass was celebrated by Fr. John Mc Manus, a regular celebrant here and a great friend of St. Teresa from her Stalybridge days. Teresa’s

nieces did the readings, using a beautiful booklet produced by Joan including Teresa’s favorite hymns. We had an outstanding sermon by Fr. John, with reminiscences of scenes in Stalybridge, where Teresa had been the Leader. Apparently, things did not always go to plan and he recounted various incidents, which had not done so! These stories caused some merriment in the chapel, which Teresa enjoyed.

A “surprise” presentation of a Papal Blessing was presented at the end of Mass,

and also a framed telegram of Congratulations from King Charles and his Consort! Numerous photos were taken amid the garlands of flowers and bouquets which



had arrived during the week. Teresa took all the fuss with cool aplomb; she was so content just to see and enjoy her close family, all her sister Lizzie’s children.

After Mass, we enjoyed a celebratory meal. After an interval, her family returned to see Teresa cutting the cake and enjoying a toast to her long life and well-being. Her niece Frances gave a vote of thanks to all who had made the day possible and enjoyable. She shared some of her family’s history of Teresa’s early years, its joys and traumas in the loss of family members and the emigration of her two sisters to the US. Finally, Teresa showed her skills as a raconteur,

when she recited with Lucia's help:

"Shall my soul pass thro' old Ireland" – on its journey to its Maker..."

Not a dry eye was to be seen. Next door in the community room, Ceilidh (Irish) music was heard. The Irish tenors were in

full voice. While Teresa chatted with her family and friends, reminiscing about the past and also recounting the prayer/video presentation given by Catherine the previous evening to all the sisters on Teresa's beginnings in Ardboe. The iconic Celtic Cross which symbolized so much of

our Irish forebears and culture was displayed in the video, a meaningful symbol to Teresa, her family and community of our Faith.

Dare we say: "AD MULTOS ANNOS"?

**Sr. Sandra Harrington
Britain & Ireland**

FAMILY GATHERING...



On Saturday evening, January 14, a meeting was held between the Sisters of the Holy Family and the Lay Associates of the Holy Family, who came from Skierniewice and Lodz. The venue for the meeting was the Sisters of the Holy Family House in Lodz, where the Sisters have a Nursery school. It is a picturesque place located in a forest setting.

The prelude to the meeting was a **"getting to know you"** exercise, during which the Sisters and guests shared life experiences and talked about serving God. The atmosphere was so welcoming from the start that there was no need to break the ice.

The second feature of the meeting was a joint nativity play. Each person present drew a role for themselves and took an active part in the

performance, which also fostered integration. Singing Christmas carols together, accompanied by a guitar, emphasized the festive atmosphere of the Christmas Season.

The third and final point of the meeting consisted of praying together in the chapel, entrusting one's affairs and families to the care of the Holy Family. The gathering ended with a candlelit dinner at a beautifully set Christmas table, fragrant with tasty fresh

cakes and fruit. It was also a time of relaxed conversation and making closer friends.

From start to finish, the meeting was conducted in a very friendly, warm, and family-like atmosphere. It was not forced, but natural and genuine. In the midst of mutual cordiality, joy at meeting one another, and thanksgiving for the gift of the each one, one could feel the presence of the living God, "born" in Lodz's Arturówek one January evening in the middle of the forest. On that day, the words "and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" became a fact and a living testimony that Jesus lives among us. Even our Father Founder Pierre B. Noailles smiled warmly in the picture.

**Aneta Caban
Lay Associate, Poland**

“TO BUILD A BETTER FUTURE, BUILD A BETTER BRAIN”



The heart's aim of women religious is to express their charism by demonstrating God's love through acts of service in SRI LANKA. We 9 participants from women religious congregations gathered together, as one body at NayakaKanda, Good Shepherd Convent, Wattala, Colombo, on 27th morning during the month of January 2023.

Together we are convinced that now is the best time to embark on our project [Child Care for Children Sri Lanka] CCCSL as many children and families are being affected by the current situation in Sri Lanka and that is, unfortunately, continuing to worsen with each passing day.

As of the 31st August 2022, headline inflation was documented at 64.3% and as of the 27th of September, food inflation increased to

94.9%. Against this backdrop, families are being compelled to give up their children to institutional care as they are unable to make ends meet. A vast number of social problems have arisen with greater intensity including homelessness, suicide, robberies, and underworld criminal activities as a result of the crisis. Our experience of working together for the past two years has helped the women congregations to motivate each other, to share our expertise and learnings, and to explore the possibility of moving towards family care. This experience gave CCCSL immense hope in working together toward one goal and changing the approach in the care sector. We are really proud to say that this is the first time women religious have been working together in the childcare sector. CCCSL believes that this intensive

work will touch and motivate other congregations of women religious to possibly embrace care reform.

The church is recognized for providing child care services in the Island, when it takes initiatives for reintegration; the non-government organizations will support the implementation of child care reform too. Eight Holy Family Sisters from both Colombo and Jaffna Units participated passionately in the workshop. It was an invitation to carry out the mission of care reform in our own Units. As the coordinator for this special task, I remember the word: My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you PROTECT them” (St.John17:15)

On the first day Dr. Sohani Fernando, an Independent consultant, and a licensed clinical social worker was with us in sharing her experi-

ences on the impact of institutional care on children. She asked us to remember, and draw on some of our childhood memories. Her input clearly explained the Global Trends in caring for Children. We were inspired to look at it from a different perspective, under the following headings:

- ☞ **Global Trends in caring for Children- Current Conditions**
- ☞ **Sri Lanka's Current Position on Institutionalization**
- ☞ **The National Alternative care Policy for Children in Sri Lanka**
- ☞ **Children in alternative care systems**
- ☞ **Children in Contact or**

Conflict with the Law

We were awakened to reunification and reintegration. This Section focuses on children who have been removed from their families to ensure their safety and is based on the principle that the first goal is to reunite and re-integrate them with their families as soon as possible.

On the second day Sr. Saminthini, RDS, the coordinator of the CCCSL moved us to understand our purpose of this journey. She emphasized the importance of journeying together to transform care for children. She presented a report on the Catholic Care for Children Sri Lanka's project Proposal- 1st Phase. We all studied together. According to

census data taken in 2019, there are 10,632 children in 379 Child Care Institutions (CCCSL) across the Island nation. Our Vision is framed as:

“Women religious are champions in reforming the Child Care Sector in Sri Lanka creating families and family-like care with loving, healthy, and protective environment.”

We are aware of the urgent need to strengthen families with the best parenting skills and other essential spiritual, educational, health, and livelihood support.

On the third day, we presented this proposal to work on it. We observed everyone enthusiastic to implement the said project.

“We are the World, We are the children

We are the ones who make a brighter day, so let's start giving

There's a choice we're making, we're saving our own lives

It's true we'll make a better day just you and me”.

Sr.Nirosa Pathmasenan
Jaffna, SRI LANKA

