



# Interconnections

NO. 68

FEBRUARY 2025

INFO/COM SERVICE



“ PILGRIMS OF HOPE  
IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF PBN ”

## EUROPE

EDITORIAL	03
2025: HOLY YEAR, JUBILEE YEAR...	04
COMMUNICATORS OF HOPE	05
PILGRIMS OF HOPE	06
A SPECIAL GATHERING ...	07

## LATIN AMERICA

LAY ASSOCIATES GATHERING	08
--------------------------	----

## AFRICA

A COMMITMENT ROOTED IN COMMUNION	08
OPENING OF THE JUBILEE 2025	09
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION...	10
FROM WORDS TO ACTION	11
ABUSE AND CHALLENGES...	12
A COMMUNITY WALKING WITH GOD	13

## ASIA

EMBRACING LIFE & EMPOWERING...	14
A SYMPHONY OF CULTURES...	15
PILGRIMS OF HOPE	16
THE HOLY FAMILY TREE...	17
THE HOLY FAMILY YOUTH PHILIPPINES	18

### EDITORS :

Mercy Rani Jebamalai  
Rubeni Pejerrey  
Luís Jesús García Lomas  
Annie Anthonipillai  
Angela Molapo  
Shiyamala Eronymous  
Geni Dos Santos

### TRANSLATORS :

Eithne Hughes (London)  
Marie Carmen Leach (Spain)  
Claudine Gayongo (Rome)

**WEBSITE :** <http://www.saintefamillebordeaux.org/>

**FACEBOOK:** Sainte-Famille Bordeaux

**YOUTUBE:** <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBa2x1ncfYtTiFUasEoseSg>

**"The Association is called to walk together in a synodal way, to build the Church by being itself "one Church", "one Holy Family", united and diverse, open to all, in which its different groups and its members are in solidarity and complementarity."**

*(Meeting Point 7)*



## EDITORIAL

The month of February is special to the PBN Family. It reminds us of two important events: **The Miraculous Benediction on 3rd February 1822 and the Anniversary of the death our Founder on 8th February 1861.** Our hearts are filled with gratitude for the blessings that our Family has received from the Eucharistic Lord. down the generations until today. Also, we remember the words that echo in each one of our hearts: **"I am the One who is, and there is no other"**.

This year, 2025, the global Church entered the Jubilee year with the theme **"Pilgrims of Hope"**. A Jubilee Year is traditionally proclaimed by the Universal Church every 25 years. It reminds us of God's forgiveness and reconciliation and invites us to have a right relationship with God, others, and creation. Pope Francis inaugurated the Jubilee year by opening the first Holy Door on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2024 in St. Peter's Square, Vatican and other Papal Basilica Holy Doors were opened in different dates - St. Lateran, Saint Mary Major and St. Paul outside the walls.



We are pilgrim people on our journey. Our ultimate goal is to reach our destination: to see God face to face. During our journey, we need to find our true identity, who we are, what our gifts are, what our purpose is, and which path we need to travel in order to bear fruit and bring peace and hope to the broken and down-trodden people in our society. We live in a world where there is brokenness within ourselves and with others. Let us ask ourselves, ***as the children of PBN, how are we going to be***

***the Pilgrims of Hope in our context?***

***"Pierre Bienvenu was called and sent on a journey of faith without a roadmap, or even a road, but with a vision, a Presence, and a purpose: to gather together in communion the scattered children of God."*** (Choosing Life)

Our Founder Pierre Bienvenu Noailles is a good example for our earthly journey, inspiring us to live a synodal path with hope. He always trusted in the providence of God in all his trials and sufferings. He urges us to, ***"Go forward; there is nothing to check your course"***. He lived his own journey with faith and hope. The Holy Family Tree - where there are all kinds of fruits and flowers of all seasons, birds of every colour, and from every country: each species having its own song-helps us to walk together as a pilgrim people to sing with one voice, ***"Glory to God, Glory to God Alone, and all through Mary"***.

***"The Holy Family Tree is an inner attitude of each member of the Association. It is a way of life that shows us how to walk in the midst of all people, our brothers and sisters. To build bridges, to open doors, not to give up in the endeavour that personal relationships, work, our presence in any part of the world must be charged with dialogue, light, and hope in a Covenant of eternal love."***

Meeting Point 7 also stresses the need to be **Pilgrims of Hope** by walking together, inclusion and integration, building bridges, welcoming without excluding, transformation, co-responsibility, listening, dialogue and discernment, spreading the Charism of Communion, accepting diversity, participating in God's mission, caring for life, etc.

***'May we, the Pilgrim People of God on earth and heirs of the charismatic gift of the Venerable Pierre Bienvenu Noailles, make the dream of the Founder come true with our lives, being a "tree of encounter" for the whole human family wherever we find ourselves.'***

**Sr. Mercy Rani JEBAMALAI**

## 2025: HOLY YEAR, JUBILEE YEAR, YEAR OF GRACE

Generalate Local Community, Rome

The opening of the Holy Door is the best-known and most stirring rite, the one that marks the beginning of the Jubilee. It is a rite that symbolises the passage that every Christian must make from sin to grace.

Here in Rome, **the start of the 2025 Jubilee Year was marked by the opening of the Holy Door of St Peter's on 24 December 2024 and, on 26 December, by the opening of the Holy Door of the Rebibbia prison in Rome, a symbolic gesture strongly desired by the Sovereign Pontiff to involve the world's entire prison population in the Jubilee of Hope. The door of St John Lateran was opened on 29 December, that of St Mary Major on 1 January and finally that of St Paul Outside the Walls on 5 January 2025.**

The Local Community of the Generalate, represented by Sisters Barbara, Claudine and Christine, in communion with everyone else, the PBN family in particular, did not want to miss the first step of the Pilgrimage of Hope. On the evening of 24 December 2024, we went to St Peter's Square to take part in the Opening of the Holy Door at St. Peter's

Not having tickets to enter St. Peter's Basilica, where the ceremonies were taking place, we stood with so many other people in St Peter's Square to watch the giant screens.

The weather was not at all kind, but we had the impression that nobody was thinking about that. Everyone seemed to be moved by faith and the



love of God, in serene anticipation of this long-awaited special moment. Some were singing, others were dancing, greeting each other, taking photos, discussing the Jubilee or other realities of life, while others were sleeping because they had come from far away and arrived a few hours too early. We were all trying to position ourselves so that we could see and experience this 'unique' moment in our Christian faith, **but not alone, together**, responding to Jesus' call to his bride, the Church: 'COME! Leave everything! **Together**, we enter into the mysteries of discovering the presence and merciful love of God, a love that never disappoints.

As soon as the prayer began the thousands of people gathered in St Peter's Square suddenly fell silent, attentive to the ceremony to open the Holy Door, followed by the Mass presided over by Pope Francis, surrounded by numerous cardinals, bishops and priests. A deep and impressive atmosphere of prayer reigned in the Square. We were moved by this proof of maturity and



**"PILGRIMS OF HOPE"**

awareness of the reason why we were gathered in this sacred place and of the profound meaning of the mystery of this moment.

Each of us undoubtedly carried a message to offer God: a testimony of our faith, thanksgiving for the end of the year, the new year on the horizon and intentions for those who could not physically join us.

The One who IS disposed our hearts so that nothing could prevent us from reaching out to Him and sharing the joy and graces of the Jubilee with others.

After the celebrations, despite the many upsetting events we are experiencing in the world

(wars, natural disasters, violence, mass migrations, etc.), the Holy Father's call to HOPE gave us inner comfort and a feeling of serenity inspired by faith.

It was with great emotion that we took part in this event. It was a powerful experience of a living Church entering the Jubilee Year as fervent pilgrims. It was a moment for us members of the Family of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles to experience the words of our

Good Father in the first article of our Constitutions: 'Jesus came to gather together all the children of God dispersed in one family' in their diversity of languages, cultures, nations, etc. It was a moment when God touched our hearts and spoke to us through the attitudes of others.

THE JUBILEE has begun, with the whole Church participating spiritually, inviting us to convert and renew our faith, hope, love and solidarity. The

Pope hopes that this event will be a moment of spiritual self-examination and a time for acts of charity towards those most in need.

May God help us all, in this HOLY JUBILEE YEAR, to live as PILGRIMS of HOPE and to open wide the doors of our hearts to facilitate the passage of every person to peace, joy and hope, wherever we may be.

---

## “COMMUNICATORS OF HOPE”

The communication service is part and parcel of our everyday life, where we can reach one another globally through social media platforms. As we are aware, the Jubilee year began in 2024 with the opening of the **Holy Door** by Pope Francis with the theme *“Pilgrims of Hope”*. Rome is filled with Jubilee celebrations. There are many Jubilee programmes organized throughout this year, and people from around the world are coming to participate.

On 24<sup>th</sup> January 2025, ten thousand communication professionals inaugurated the first Jubilee event of the Holy Year with a three-day programme for the **‘Jubilee of the World of Communication’**. I was happy to participate in this programme on behalf of our PBN Family from **24 – 26 January 2025**. Especially invited to participate in this Jubilee event were journalists, media professionals, managers and editors of newspapers, members of boards of directors, video makers, graphic designers, copywriters, PR staff, social media managers, audit and video technicians, typographers, IT experts, etc.

**Being the first Jubilee event of the Holy Year, the Jubilee of World Communication Day began with a penitential liturgy at the Basilica of St. John Lateran on the feast of the Patron Saint of journalists and writers – St. Francis de Sales.** The registered members were allowed to partake in this three-day programme.

### Sr. Mercy Rani JEBAMALAI International Communication Team



**The second day:** The participants gathered near **CASTEL SANT'ANGELO** according to language. In a prayerful atmosphere, each group, reciting the psalms, carried the Jubilee Symbol in procession towards St. Peter's Square and entered the Basilica through the Holy Door where we received God's strength for our mission. After a short break, two conferences were held in **Paul VI Hall** in the Vatican. **Maria Ressa, Nobel Peace**

*Prize Laureate, advocate for freedom of expression, and CEO of Rappler (Philippines), and Colum McCann an author of numerous works and co-founder of Narrative 4- a global non-profit which uses storytelling to better communities, spoke on the theme "Hope Comes from Action".*

Both talks were very interesting, innovative and challenging in the current reality. These words caught my attention:

*As we stand in the sacred space, it is the time of grace and reflection and recommitment to the values that bind us together as a global community... As communicators we need to speak with clarity, and have courage to stand for the truth, and build bridges.*

#### 4. Suggestion were given to the communicators:

- ☞ Collaborate
- ☞ Speak the truth with more clarity.
- ☞ Protect the most vulnerable
- ☞ Recognize your power

⇒ To journey a short distance with another is to create a story. Through our story - telling and ability we are able to understand others and bring everyone closer to one another.

After the conference, we all enjoyed and admired a **musical concert**. When Pope Francis entered the hall, everyone acclaimed and said, **"Papa Francisco, we love you."** He was happy to see the big group of communicators who joined from around the world, and he stressed the importance of the role of the communicator in sharing hope, giving voice to the voiceless, and educating themselves to communicate truthfully.

In the afternoon, the focus was on **"Dialogues with the city"**. The participants raised many questions regarding the challenges a communicator faces in different countries and how to tackle such a situation to speak the truth... **Maria Ressa and McCann**, the journalists, shared their own experiences to understand clearly the challenges that they faced in their work.

**Third Day:** The final day was concluded with the Holy Mass celebrated by Pope Francis on **"Sunday of the Word of God."**

It was interesting and inspiring to meet thousands of communicators who are longing to use their work to bring about peace and hope for the world.

## "PILGRIMS OF HOPE"



There are moments when life is filled with light and the heart is full of deep joy. Often it is the most humble and simple things that help to ignite the flame.

On Saturday 1st February, the community of Las Flores participated in the **'Pilgrimage of Hope'** of the Deanery to

which we belong.

Our neighbourhood of Las Flores has some characteristics with which you are no doubt already familiar. Some of its inhabitants are immigrants, among them

Moroccans of the Muslim religion, others are evangelicals, there are non-practising Catholics... But there is also a group of very dedicated parishioners who, with their sincere life, are leaven, a seed that will one day germinate. With them we carried out an intense

## Malaga Community, Spain

and fervent preparation.

During the previous week we had some special moments: contemplative prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, catechesis on this opportunity that the Church offers us, confession, concrete actions of love and charity, etc. All this accompanied by the small community of **Oblates of Mary Immaculate** who take care of our Parish.

On the 1st of February we made this Pilgrimage of Hope. There was a carefully prepared ceremony in the **'Church of the Martyrs'** (a very popular church in Malaga) and then we walked through the streets to the

Cathedral, mixing our austere pilgrim march with the hustle and bustle of the tourists. This contrast helped us to realise that we live in a reality for which we give our lives, desiring to unite it to that of Jesus who offers his love to all.

In the Cathedral, as we passed through the Holy Door and throughout the celebration, we felt strongly that we are Church, represented by the Bishop and all our assembly; we experienced very intense moments in the Eucharist, in

which we kept in mind the realities of our world.. With Jesus we offered, once again, our life and our gratitude, aware that we are pilgrims, yes, but Pilgrims of Hope.

---

## A SPECIAL GATHERING WITH THE SUPERIOR GENERAL...

Sr.Ewa Różycka, Poland



On the third Saturday in November 2024, at our monthly meeting of the **Lay Associates of the Holy Family in Skierniewice**, we invited **Ana Maria Alcalde**, our Superior General, who was visiting the Polish Province at the time, and **Magdalena Ajdys**, the Provincial. It was dedicated to synodality.

At the beginning there was time to talk about ourselves, our family, and our time of formation in the PBN Family. In addition to the Associates, there were three ladies present who were directly preparing to make their commitments and another three who have been in our group for a year. We shared how we experienced the visit of some of us to Martillac for the meeting of the Associates of Europe. The last two years have also been a time of discussing and exploring the different stations of the Pilgrimage of the Holy Family. Ana Maria shared about the Associates and Priest Associates in different parts of the world. It was very interesting to know about the PBN Family members around the world.

After getting acquainted and hearing so much interesting information about the witnessing of communion by members of the PBN Family and after refreshments prepared by the various ladies, the second part of the meeting followed.

Sister Teresa Miriam Kurda made a presentation on the theme of SYNODALITY, and Sister Ana María gave an introduction to **Meeting Point 7**; a copy was presented to each Associate in a simple ceremony. We plan to study it for the next few months, to reflect on it more deeply. **Father Pierre Bienvenu Noailles** already lived the spirit of synodality in the local Church 200 years ago. It is at the heart of our charism. Let us share it with the world.

---

**'The charism that God gave to Pierre Bienvenu Noailles is more relevant than ever and we have the co-responsibility to offer it to the Church and to the world.'**

## LAY ASSOCIATES—BRAZIL

On November 30, 2024, the annual assembly of the Lay Associates was held in the Parish of São Vicente de Paulo, in a community centre in Jardim Caiçara, home territory of a group of Associates called “Our Lady of Aparecida”. The Assembly was attended by 20 members from 2 groups (Our Lady of Aparecida and the Good Father group).



This assembly began with the celebration of the Eucharist. After Mass, we had a delicious breakfast and spent some time in conversation.

Then came the opening of the Assembly. Vanda, the Speaker, began by posing the following question: What do you understand by

Synodality? A few minutes’ sharing of responses followed, then she gave her input on ‘The Principles of Synodality of the Papacy of Francis and Synodality in the Life and Work of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles’: ‘The Holy Family Tree, A Synodal Dream’, sharing a creative explanation of Synodality and the Tree of the Holy Family.

Vanda ended her intervention with a prayer:

Come, Holy Spirit! You inspire new tongues and place words of life on our lips: keep us from becoming a “museum Church”, beautiful but mute, with much past and little future. Come among us, so that in this synodal experience we will not lose our enthusiasm, dilute the power of prophecy, or descend into useless and unproductive discussions. Come, Spirit of love, open our hearts to hear your voice! Come, Spirit of holiness, renew the holy People of God! Come, Creator Spirit, renew the face of the earth!

(Pope Francis, Rome, 9 October 2021)

“ The Holy Family Tree, A Synodal Dream”

After the Conference, the Associates discussed plans for 2025, and the Assembly ended with a festive lunch.

## A COMMITMENT ROOTED IN COMMUNION

On the 30th of November 2024, our Province in Lesotho witnessed a historic and joyous occasion as **Father Sakhi Simon Mofokeng** of the

Diocese of Bethlehem made his commitment as a Priest Associate in the Holy Family. This momentous event marked the first time we experienced

**Sr. Julia Maeane, Lesotho**

such a profound connection between our Charism of Communion and the life of a dedicated priest. Father Simon’s dedication to family



ministry came to light through heartfelt speeches shared during the celebration. The speakers testified to his unwavering passion for fostering strong family bonds, a value that resonates deeply with our Charism. As Fr. Mosebetsi, delegated by the Bishop of Bethlehem eloquently puts it, **“Communion runs in his blood as he is also working tirelessly in the diocese as liaison priest for families,”** a testament to

how naturally he embodies the spirit of unity and love that defines the Holy Family.

The celebration was graced by the presence of many of Father Sakhi’s parishioners, a clear indication of his profound impact on their lives. Their presence not only honoured him but also symbolized the essence of Communion, building relationships that inspire and nurture one another. This unique event has

inspired us to continue spreading the Charism of Communion with renewed zeal. Father Simon’s commitment is a beacon of hope, reminding us that the values of unity, love, and family are timeless and ever-relevant. As a Province, we are immensely delighted to have witnessed this event and are confident that **Father Sakhi will be a shining example of a Priest Associate who carries forward our mission as the Holy Family Association.**

## OPENING OF THE JUBILEE 2025



As part of the preparations for the **Feast of the Holy Family and the opening of the Jubilee Year 2025**, we, the members of the PBN family in Idiofa, lived the Holy Family pilgrimage, following in the footsteps of our role models: JMJ, true pilgrims of Hope, on the eve of the aforementioned feast.

In response to the Holy

Father's request to all Bishops to be able to celebrate the Holy Eucharist for the opening of the Jubilee Year, the Holy Year, on Holy Family Sunday, **His Excellency Bishop José Moko** celebrated a beautiful Eucharist for this purpose. On the esplanade of Saint Kizito's cathedral in Idiofa, the Bishop began by explaining to all the Christians the profound

## Srs. Alphonsine & Thérèse Congo/ Burkina Faso

meaning of a Jubilee.

The Jubilee Year is a year of joy and thanksgiving to the Lord for all his blessings. We have been invited to live this Holy Year in hope, and to become signs of hope among the people of God, as the theme of this Jubilee Year indicates: **‘Pilgrims of Hope’**. His Excellency announced the Jubilee indulgence, imploring divine mercy for all our sins.

In an attitude of prayer, the Christian population, on pilgrimage to the Cathedral, sang and asked forgiveness for our sins and the sins of our world. On arriving at the door of the Cathedral, His Excellency opened the door and all the Christians entered through the central door to obtain purification from their sins.

In his homily, Bishop José emphasised the importance of the family, which is the foundation of all life. Parents have a responsibility to show their children the ways of the Church, of school, of fraternal

life. The family is a school of love, forgiveness, sharing, reconciliation and joy. Each person's history is shaped by their family experience, and each person is invited to take responsibility for his or her own history with a view to self-fulfilment.

He also expressed his great joy at the presence of the Holy Family Sisters in the Diocese.

He urged us to be experts in communion and to bear true witness to our Family spirituality in this world shattered and torn apart by wars, hatred and divisions of all kinds.

At the end of Mass, a festive meal at the Novitiate brought together all the members of the PBN Family: Lay Members, Seculars and Apostolic Sisters in glad celebration.

We expressed our deep joy at experiencing this great event for the Church and sang the wonders of God in this Jubilee Year. May Jesus, Mary and Joseph, true pilgrims of hope, teach us to become clear signs of hope for the many brothers and sisters who live in conditions of distress.

---

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND SKILL TRAINING

The Holy Family Lay Associates of Bushuro in Uganda had a dream while they were still in the time of formation. They dreamt of a project in their village that would help people to develop themselves through skills-training. Meanwhile the call came to reflect on “**Laudato Si,**” which invited us to protect our environment. As a response, the members started in their own gardens with sustainable agriculture. Those who knew the subject helped others. Out of this small effort was born the project for **TRAINING IN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES IN BUSHURO COMMUNITY.** It is a joint effort of the Apostolic Sisters and Lay Associates, supported by the Noailles Foundation. The centre is situated at the heart of the village. **A Lay Associate works as coordinator and the Leadership Committee includes Lay Associates and Apostolic Sisters. Like the Good Father’s dream tree, it is open to all: men and women, young and old, people of all religions, and those from the village and outside. Anyone can find a place in it, in order to “sing**



**their song” in harmony with others.**

The main objective of the project is twofold: empowering the youth and adult men and women of Bushuro with skills for protecting the environment and skills-training for income-generating activities. The effort is to eradicate poverty by encouraging the community to work at their own household level with the support of one another.

Under environmental protection comes recycling and reuse of waste products, terracing, mulching, crop rotation, use of composite manure, planting of trees, refusal of plastic, and cleansing of the environment. Skills training activities are



numerous: sewing, knitting, hairdressing, cooking, beads work, animal rearing, making of baskets, soap, vaseline, shoe polish, candles, body lotions, bathing sponges, shopping bags, etc. The project is for three years.

We are fortunate to have a few members among the Lay Associates who are knowledge-

able in environmental protection and new methods of agriculture. While the project provides the material at an initial level, these members provide instructions. Later they visit the home gardens to provide further instruction. According to the first round of visits, all except one had succeeded to different degrees,

and all needed on-the-spot instructions. We are now in the 7th month, and members work with enthusiasm and hope. When the Sisters and Associates met for the celebration of the Holy Family feast, one member spontaneously mentioned that she earned 30,000 Uganda shillings after her first harvest of carrots.

Another said she earned 60,000. The third said she earned 100,000. It was a pleasant surprise to everyone. After the festive meal, all visited the vegetable garden of the sisters, which is part of the project. The sisters were given instructions they needed.

**Mrs. Sara TUMWEBAZE**  
**Sr. Winifreda WASLATHANTRIGE**  
 Uganda

## FROM WORDS TO ACTION...

**A life that continues to bloom in its twilight years: the experience of a septuagenarian!**

We are accustomed to hearing or giving 'eulogies' for loved ones at funerals or 'last good-byes' when they are no longer with us.

On this page, I would like to take the liberty of talking about someone who is still alive. Certainly this person is not a 'saint', but a human being who shares the values and weaknesses of every living human being.

**Sr. Winifreda is a missionary in our Rwanda-Uganda Unit, living in the community of Kitumba in the diocese of Kabale (Uganda).**

The flowering and radiance of her life, even in her twilight years, touches me deeply and invites and challenges me too to continue to live as a significant presence in the community, to give the best of myself with my strengths and weaknesses.

Seeing her live and observing her, in this movement of 'joyful giving' and 'her sense of sacrifice' on a daily basis beyond

the age limit of 75, I am touched and amazed, because 'as she grows older, she still bears fruit ... she keeps her greenness' Ps91, 15-16; like a tree that is planted by the side of a stream that is the Charism of P.B.N., which is unfolding today through the way we welcome all the newness and opportunities that this gives us, the connection with synodality.... and 'continuing to be a channel for transmitting life' through: her passion for the Institute/Family of P.B.N by accompanying the young people in formation: the Pre-novices, the Temporary Professed; by the common formation and accompaniment of the Associate-Couples... Her generosity and availability to provide secretarial and translation services during Assemblies or other Family meetings. **Her passion for safeguarding the Earth - Our Common Home.**

Her passion for 'vulnerable people' - abandoned children, couples in difficulty, prisoners... people on the margins of society.... She knows how to give freely of her time to meet urgent needs. She can still take the motorbike to reach people



on the periphery if necessary. It seems to me that through Sr. Wini's small, simple gestures, we can contemplate the goodness and wisdom of Universal love and the beauty of an age that shines forth and that is passing on to us its heritage, hope - apostolic zeal right into the sunset.

It's really wonderful to discover that, like our Sr. Wini, I understand and live in a different way the expression 'taking care of life until its twilight', because it seems to me that she sees the opposite: it's 'the person in the twilight of life who still takes care of the life of others'. Is this not 'a call' for me and perhaps for each of us too, to draw inspiration and learn from her legacy of Faith - of hope - of love; to choose

more to give 'the best of myself, to open myself up to the dimension of universal Love and to pay more attention to the needs of others / of the

community and of those around us, because small daily gestures offered with love, joy, hope and perseverance can

transform the lives of others and my own.

**Sr. Pauline MANZUETO**  
Rwanda-Uganda

---

## ABUSE AND CHALLENGES IN THE CHURCH AND IN RELIGIOUS LIFE

A session for Young Professed Sisters was held in Garoua from 09 to 12 January on the theme of 'Abuse and Challenges in the Church and in Religious Life', led by Sister Blandine, Superior General of the Pious Sisters of Mary Queen of Apostles of Yagoua.

This session was beneficial for us as followers of Christ. We learned that the word abuse means the excessive use of something and can be of several kinds, including psychological abuse, abuse of power, sexual abuse, abuse of trust, material abuse, abuse of language, etc. The presenter focused on two abuses that are recurrent in our environments: abuse of power and sexual abuse.

According to our experience, the abuses that we suffer in our daily lives in one way or another are deception and malice, which the Church firmly condemns in all its forms, and accompanies the victims.

Authority is a power conferred on an individual who has the ability to act, giving him or her a power over people that can be misused. The Church is constantly raising awareness of sexual abuse, which destroys life. Consecrated persons suffer many kinds of abuse that have an impact on religious life, but unfortunately consecrated persons are also among the abusers.

We are invited to become aware of the vices that are corrupting our religious world. Because once you've been subjected to them, you'll suffer repercussions such as infections, insomnia, fear, lack of concentration and depression.

Having worked on some questions namely: Is it possible to eradicate abuse in our personal lives, in our communities and in the Church? What are the paths of liberation for me, after this theme



*'The opening of the Holy Door symbolises the opening of the Heart of Christ to humanity'*

that we have looked at?, we realised that we are called to combat this phenomenon through prayer, awareness, openness to accompaniment, radicality in our choice of life and a review of our initial motivations.

To conclude, Sister Blandine emphasised the Holy Father's message for this Jubilee Year on the theme: 'Pilgrims Of Hope'. She said that **the opening of the Holy Door symbolises the opening of the Heart of Christ to humanity, and as Religious we are invited to give back the joy of life to people in despair.**

**Srs. Victorine KWADA & Sabine MAIMOUNA**  
Cameroun / Chad

## A COMMUNITY WALKING WITH GOD

We are in the parish of Saint Jacques de Mokolo-Mboua. This parish in the town has a Franco-English community, i.e. people from very far south and those who speak English. At the start of the Year 2025, they asked me to lead them in a Day of Recollection to live out the Jubilee Theme: **'PILGRIMS OF HOPE'**.

The whole community was there at 8.30am.

To live like a pilgrim is to get **moving, to walk together, it's a spiritual journey.**

To go on pilgrimage is to leave... It's to break with one's surroundings and set out on a journey towards somewhere else, towards someone. It means accepting risk, the unexpected, adventure. It means accepting to let yourself be led, to let yourself be uninstalled for the sake of the essential, the encounter. Pilgrims walk for a long time and with many others. They are carried by others, they also carry others; step by step, as they meet others, friendship, solidarity and communion are forged.

**Pilgrims experience fatigue, silence and contemplation. The long walk purifies, empties and renews them.** The walk leads to detachment, to living the Essential. The walk takes the pilgrim on a path to his own heart, where, in inner silence, he lives in Presence.



(cf. Pilgrimage of the Holy Family).

We looked at how to live in hope in the midst of this challenging world.

**We are not men and women of fear, but of hope. Hope does not deceive. God's love has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.**

Hope is one of the three theological virtues: **FAITH, HOPE, CHARITY.** It is the part of faith that focuses on the future. Seeing what we hope for is no longer hope. Hope mobilises us towards the future.

The Pope has chosen this theme and this word to help us get through this world with its many challenges: disease, war, hunger, injustice.... What's happening in this world is troubling us.

There is a great link between hope and patience.

Look at how a tree grows, how a person grows... In the face of suffering and above all death, life is not over but is transformed. This implies in our lives a way of living with God

that commits us: (cf. Romans 5,3-5; Luke 12, 6-7-12)

**The family of Nazareth: a model of hope**

We have the model of a couple, a family that walked with hope: Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Take time to look at JMJ in Nazareth. Try to see how Mary reacted to the challenges of her time, how Joseph reacted and how Jesus reacted. Let's look at Jesus himself, what was his experience of life here on earth? How did he behave at different times? Beginning with his disciples' lack of understanding of his mission, human values, service and leadership...

As Pilgrims of Hope on the road to reconciliation and peace, we must learn to look at Jesus, to contemplate him, to call on him often when we have worries, for he said: ***'Who can make his hair black or white by worrying?'*** Mt 6:24-34.

The community was delighted with this day, which ended with confession, the Eucharist and a fraternal meal. We thank God for this shared life.

**Agnès ONGWISA**  
Cameroun / Chad

## EMBRACING LIFE AND EMPOWERING THE YOUTH; A PILGRIM'S JOURNEY OF HOPE



Life presents countless opportunities for growth, beauty, and service. As I reflect on my own journey, I see life as a gift to be cherished. I believe in living with a spirit of gratitude and joy. Life is an opportunity that I seize with purpose. It is a beauty that I admire with wonder. Life is a promise that I strive to fulfil, a song that I sing with enthusiasm, and a precious gift that I offer to others through joyful service.

**As one of the many who walk in the footsteps of our Founder, Ven. PBN, I consider myself a bird in the Holy Family Tree, spreading the fragrance of love and communion within the synodal Church.** My ministry is to engage with the students of **Nanjil Catholic College of Arts and Science at Kaliakkavilai (Diocesan College)**, accompanying them on their pilgrim journey. I am deeply grateful to God for using me as His instrument, allowing me to kindle the flame of hope in their hearts.

When I observe today's youth, I understand that many people may hold a negative opinion about them. However, I firmly believe that today's youth are not so different from those of any other time in history. They possess great potential, filled with various talents, capabili-

ties, and aptitudes. What they need is the right environment to thrive - a platform of opportunities, encouragement, and support. In my role, I make it a priority to welcome them with warmth, a smile, and cheerfulness. This positive beginning, I believe, helps them start their day with energy and enthusiasm, giving them the strength to face their challenges and complete their day with purpose.

At the college, I am responsible for taking care of the sick, organizing seminars on various topics, conducting awareness programs, and providing counseling. When students come to me with personal challenges, I listen attentively and walk with them, offering discernment tips and leadership advice. These interactions help them gain self-awareness, discover their dreams, and envision a better future. It is heartening to see them build their confidence and begin mastering their personal lives.

**It is a sad reality that some of our youth feel lost, hopeless, and at a crossroads, having lost their sense of purpose.** In these troubling times, they need support and encouragement. I strive, in my small way, to help them rediscover the value of life, reminding

them that problems are a part of life's journey. We all need to dream positively and take steps toward those dreams with hope and determination.

Through personal dialogue and deep listening, I find that I can inspire a sense of joy and purpose in the youth. I feel called to bring hope to the hopeless. By organizing seminars and outreach programs, I motivate them to stay positive, energetic, and focused on their goals. I encourage them to use their talents for the good of others and society, reminding them that they are the pillars of their families and the future of our country. I make an effort to connect with them on their level, adopting their language, culture, and style, which helps create a bond of trust and understanding.

**One area of special concern is helping students overcome the dangers of drug addiction.** Through addiction awareness programs, I help them understand the harmful effects of substance abuse and how it can shatter their dreams and future. With hope and encouragement, I guide them toward recovery and renewal, helping them regain their energy and motivation. I am proud to witness their efforts to reclaim their status as the shining stars of the college.

As a pilgrim, rooted in the charisma of our community, I feel chosen by God to go to those who feel hopeless and to bring them hope. I am called to celebrate life with them. Pope

Francis reminds us that **"Prayer is the first strength of hope,"** and that young people are the first pilgrims of hope. Hope, he says, is an anchor for our lives, giving us the courage to cross the threshold of despair. As we

embark on this journey of the Jubilee Year, I encourage everyone to bring courage, hope, and peace to those in need.

**In this spirit, I continue my ministry, grateful for the oppor-**

**tunity to serve the young, to nurture their dreams, and to help them become the builders of peace and joy in the world.**

**Sr. Arockia Mari FRANCIS  
India**

---

## **A SYMPHONY OF CULTURES: WALKING TOGETHER AS ONE**

The Holy Family tree stands as a symbol of unity, diversity, and shared purpose. Just as a tree has branches that extend in all directions yet remain rooted in the same ground, our journey as members of the Holy Family calls us to embrace our unique identities while growing together in faith and mission.

On January 14th, the Novitiate community in Sri Lanka came together to celebrate "Thai Pongal" Cultural Day, a vibrant expression of the Holy Family's synodal dream. **Novices from Colombo, Jaffna, Malawi, and Pakistan gathered to honour the rich variety of cultures within their formation community.** This day of celebration highlighted the beauty of diversity and the strength of unity in our shared vocation.

The day began with a heartfelt welcome extended to all, including Provincials, Councilors, and community members. Each culture was highlighted in turn, **starting with Pakistan, followed by Sinhalese and Tamil traditions.** Each group welcomed participants in their traditional ways, offering a glimpse into their unique customs and values. From colourful attire to mesmerizing performances and delectable traditional foods, every moment was a celebration of life and heritage.

This cultural immersion deepened our understanding of one another. We laughed together, sang together, and shared stories that reflected the heart of our Holy Family mission to foster



interconnectedness and solidarity. Each interaction was a step closer to realizing our synodal dream: walking together as a community that values every voice and celebrates every difference.

As the day concluded, all participants joined in singing songs in multiple languages, a symbolic act of harmony and unity. The shared meal that followed was more than just a feast; it was a communion of hearts, where flavours from each culture blended into a reminder of our shared humanity.

This experience was not merely an event but a reflective lesson in living the Holy Family spirit. It reinforced the importance of intercultural living, mutual respect, and the joy of walking together in faith. As we nurture the Holy Family tree, let us continue to dream of a world where diversity is celebrated and communion flourishes. **Together, we can build a future rooted in love, understanding, and the shared mission of the Holy Family.**

**Novitiate Community  
Colombo, Sri Lanka**

## PILGRIMS OF HOPE



Hope is a feeling of expectation and desire for a particular thing to happen; it's also a feeling of trust.

In the Sacred Scripture we see the people of Israel waiting for the promised Messiah. Mary, too, with her humble attitude and deep contemplation, accepted the plan of God in her life; this is the beginning of the Good News for all. The angel Gabriel said to Mary, *"He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and his reign will have no end"* (Lk 1:32). In the Magnificat, Mary praises God, *"He has come to the help of Israel, his servant, mindful of his faithful love according to the promise he made to our ancestors of his mercy to Abraham and his descendants forever"* (Lk 1:54).

The object of Christian hope is the coming of God's Kingdom, God's reign on earth. We remain hopeful even when there appears to be no

sign of hope at all. Our hope is based upon God and God alone.

The present situation of the Vicariate is very fragile - decreasing in numbers, ageing of sisters, and no new members. The beginning of this New Year gave us an assurance that the Lord wants this branch to continue. In our Constitution, Art. 199, we read, **"The communities welcome simply and discreetly those who seek the Lord in silence and solitude. These visits are both a call and a grace for the community itself"**. We had the joy of welcoming two young women who have a desire for a contemplative life.

**One person shared** "This experience is an answer to a long-held desire of mine. From the very beginning, I was struck by the peace that permeates this house. The silence here is not merely the absence of noise but a profound invitation to encounter God in stillness. It creates a peaceful atmosphere, allowing me to listen more deeply to God's voice in prayer. The rhythm of daily life revolves around prayer, the Holy Mass, adoration, and community living and work. I felt each Holy Mass as a moment of spiritual renewal, drawing me deeper into the mystery of the Eucharist. Adoration becomes a cherished time to rest in God's presence and experi-

ence his love. The community life is simple yet beautiful. The Sisters' humility, joy, and dedication to their vocation deeply inspire me. Their silent, yet vibrant presence reflects the essence of a life centred in God. In these eleven days, I experienced an inner peace and joy that words cannot fully express. I leave Nagoda Contemplative House filled with gratitude for this opportunity".

**The second person shared,** "The 4 days of the life I spent here, away from my usual activities, has been very meaningful for me. During the first two days I found it very difficult to be away from the very intimate life I had with my mother and sister. Now I have got used to it a little. Though the spoken English was difficult, I got the courage to speak without fear, though I made many mistakes. I got the opportunity to get rid of some wrong ideas I had on religious life and understand its real meaning. I express my thanks to all for all the benefits that I have received in this house".

We as a community thank the Lord for his blessing and assurance. He said, **"I am who I am"**. We accompany those who are searching for God in our prayer that the Lord may show them the way so that they may respond to the call-in-faith that He extends to them.

Vicariate  
Nagoda, Sri Lanka

## 'THE HOLY FAMILY TREE, A SYNODAL DREAM'

Synodality is a term used in the Catholic Church to describe a style of being and acting that emphasizes communion, participation, and mission. At its core, **synodality is about the whole People of God journeying together, listening to each other, and discerning God's will for the Church.** It involves all members of the Church, from bishops and priests to lay people and religious, sharing their experiences, insights, and perspectives.

Pope Francis has emphasized the importance of synodality as a way of renewing the Church and making it more responsive to the needs of the world. This common journey is both a gift and a task. We will be able to discern the processes to seek God's will and pursue the pathways to which God calls us towards deeper communion, fuller participation, and greater openness to fulfilling our mission in the world.

The entire People of God share a common dignity and vocation through Baptism. All of us are called in virtue of our Baptism to be active participants in the life of the Church. In parishes, small Christian communities, lay movements, religious communities, and other forms of communion, women and men, young people and the elderly are all invited to listen to one another in order to hear the promptings of the Holy Spirit, who comes to guide our human efforts, breathing life and vitality into the Church and leading us into deeper communion for our mission in the world.

The synodal process involves listening to the voices of all members of the Church, praying together, and discerning God's will for the Church. It is a chance to learn from each other, to grow in our understanding of the Gospel, and to work together to build a more just and compassionate world. It is a way of making decisions together, rather than having them imposed from above.

The tree is the symbol of the Holy Family. It is a song of life, verdant, full, deep, rooted firmly in the source that gives it life, its branches supporting flowers of every colour, fruits of every season, birds of every kind, united in singing in one single song: Glory to God Alone, a song to life, to creation, to communion, welcoming diversity, inclusiveness, and the inter-relatedness of everything that exists, thus achieving a harmony that we can imagine only in God.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin says that "The church is like a great tree whose roots must be energetically anchored in the earth while its leaves are serenely exposed to the bright sunlight. In this way, she sums up a whole range of beats in a single living and all-embracing act, each one of which corresponds to a particular degree or a possible form of spiritualization."

**What is the connection between the Holy Family Tree and the synodal dream?**



- ☞ The Holy Family tree, which is symbolizing the members of our different vocations, exemplifies the importance of shared experiences and challenges in building communion. A synodal Church emphasizes walking together, listening to each other, and supporting one another on the path of faith.
- ☞ The Holy Family serves as a model for the family as the **"domestic Church,"** the primary place where faith is nurtured and passed on. A synodal Church recognizes and supports the vital role of families in evangelization and discipleship.
- ☞ The Holy Family's willingness to follow God's will, even when it means facing uncertainty and hardship, is a powerful example of discernment and obedience. A synodal Church encourages prayerful discernment and a willingness to embrace God's guidance in all its decisions.
- ☞ Despite their challenges, the Holy Family's journey was ultimately one of hope and joy. A synodal Church seeks to bring the

joy of the Gospel to the world, even in the midst of suffering and uncertainty.

One tangible experience was an example for me that we as a PBN family have started to give witness to the synodal dream through our ministries. The members of different vocations had an exposure programme at Murasumoddai in Kilinochchi. Three days were spent in that place, visiting the families, enlightening the children and youth with the

help of the parish priest. The people of that particular place accommodated us in their houses and provided for our needs. The Sisters, Lay Associates, a Secular member and Priest Associates shared this ministry and cherished the experience as a real synodal journey: discerning together, praying with the people, listening to their stories of joys and struggles, and supporting them to strengthen their faith in order to live their role of families in evangelization and disci-

pliship. Therefore, I would say that while embracing the values and example of the life of the Holy Family, the Church can move towards a more synodal and inclusive future, where all members feel welcomed, valued, and empowered to participate in the life and mission of the Church.

**Sr. Joiline Raji STANLEY**  
Jaffna, Sri Lanka

---

## THE HOLY FAMILY YOUTH PHILIPPINES

In one of the **Inter-Vocational Meetings**, the Ministry for the Youth was discussed with the Lay Associates who had been tasked to do it as part of their own Mission /Ministry. This has been re-echoed in the succeeding Meetings. With the help of the Apostolic Sisters, initial meetings and formation for the Youth were done, but there has been no unified formation for the Philippines and the Sri Lankan Youth Model was adapted and used.

The HFB Rizal Community has opened its doors for Youth Activities especially by the SAPYM SOS. This is a Youth Group organized by Fr.George A Fajardo: Priest Associate in the Philippines. This is the Sap of the Young Macer-Scouts of St. Joseph, aimed to train and develop the youth and enthusiasts in the Discipline of the Filipino Martial Arts of Arnis and Shidokan Karate. This is a comprehensive

program with its **Three (3) Pillars** which are:

- ☞ **Personal Development through the Arts of Arnis and Karate;**
- ☞ **Environmental Awareness and Protection through the Scouting Skills and Program**
- ☞ **Spiritual Growth through Seminars, Reflection and Church Service.**

It was through the inspiration and guidance of Sr.Ida Joseph that the seed was sown for this group to become the Members of the Holy Family Youth. With her guidance, talks and seminars regarding the Life of the Founder PBN was introduced and added to the training of the youth. And when the PBN Foundation opened its doors a Youth Program was proposed, approved and implemented with the Module on the Life of PBN as part of its Formation Program.



The HFB Rizal Community with Srs. Bernie De Silva and Sujeewa Gunathilake organized the Youth Activity as part of the Celebration of the Feast of the Holy Family last December 28, 2024 in the PBN Hall Rizal, Gubat. The Community was all present: the Lay Associates, the Apostolic Sisters and the Priest Associates.

In the Liturgy, twelve of the

youth who had participated in the Formation, underwent a Rite of Commitment as Full Members of the Holy Family Youth; some of them are also members of the SAPYM-SOS. It is hoped that when the Formation Modules are standardized and given to the other members, there will be more who will commit as Members of the Holy Family Youth. This is also timely since with the Synodality inspired by the Holy

**Father, Pope Francis and the call for the Jubilee Year of Hope, the Children and the Youth are not just symbols but Real Hope of the Church and the World.**

The Re-Vitalization and Formation of the Holy Family Youth will surely be Hope for our PBN Family.

**Fr. George Fajardo**  
**Priest Associate, Philippines**