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## EDITORIAL



Our dreams and our thinking are always filled with a trust in the love of God that flows within our lives and through the universe. As we look back and reflect on the evolving story of our life, we recognise the spirit of God present and active in and among us. Attuned to that Presence unfolded in the person of our Founder, we continually move closer to his dream, in our listening, our responding and our willingness to change.

Though our dreams can be big and worth dreaming, in our book of life, some pages seem unclear and difficult to understand. Anything to have real value, needs several readings; we fail for a while but when we re read we are sure to find meaning.

Every morning is another chance to continue the journey begun. A divine energy in us compels us to keep trying. Trust it. There is no other way.

Irish poet Brendan Kennelly, in his work 'begin', wrote:

*... Though we live in a world that dreams of ending  
that always seems about to give in  
something that will not acknowledge conclusion  
insists that we forever begin.*

This issue carries within it, the dreams for new beginnings lived by members of the Holy Family in the different parts of our world. They are daring, they are life giving! Surely, it gives us the hope that when we keep trying we can reap a big harvest!

## HERE IN ROME

21 sisters from the Italian unit were present here in the Generalate, Rome from 22 to 25 January. Micheline Kenda and Eithne Hughes our General Councillors animated them to relive the experience of the EGC 2018. .

Focusing on the calls that emerged during that time, the goal for these 4 days journey was:

"To take into account our reality as an Institute, and that of the world around us, discerning together the calls we hear from God and make our commitments as a Unit / Province, in view of our Mission.

The phrase - "creating a new path together" - placed in the assembly room conveyed hope and reminded the group of the special call addressed to them.



## SHARING OUR DIVERSITY THROUGH INCULTURALITY

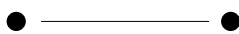
Sisters Catherine Lavery (Britain & Ireland), Geni Dos Santos (GLT member), Aldegonde Mbalanda (Canada) and Rasika Pieris (Sri Lanka – Colombo) participated in a seminar “Engaging our diversity through interculturality” organised by the UISG (International Union of Superiors General – Women) January 21<sup>st</sup> – February 1<sup>st</sup> in Rome. Here they share their experience with us.



The UISG Seminar was a very enriching experience because of the depth and competence of the speakers as well as the diversity and openness of the participants. Unity in diversity is at the root of what we are trying to live each day in our mission of communion. We are called to accept diversity in a positive way and to look for ways to integrate.

At this particular time in history when the phenomenon of migration, which we are experiencing on an unprecedented scale, is producing different reactions around the world, and our religious communities are increasingly multicultural, our intercultural lifestyle can be a prophetic voice in the world.

*(Geni - Rome)*



The seminar was attended by 180 Sisters from 45 international congregations spanning the five continents.

The theme of the seminar focused on Interculturality in Religious Life Today. The content of the first week explored terminology, culture, context and interculturality, social profiles, spirituality, theology and psychological responses. The second week we explored various topics in order to live interculturality effectively. These included handling conflict, initial formation and generational differences,

gender and leadership.

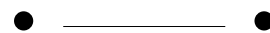
I found this seminar extremely enriching. It was a privilege to be able to participate. The discussion group of which I was a member consisted of eight Sisters living across five



continents. There was a genuine openness to listen attentively to the experience of the other person.

I found the input, particularly in the first week, both informative and challenging. I was forced to look at the areas where I have a tendency to stereotype based on limited knowledge and understanding. I began to recognise the need to “intentionally” live interculturally. I was reminded that the call to live interculturally is the call to live prophetically in a world where division is common on all levels. It is vital if I am to fully live out my mission as a Holy Family Sister.

*(Catherine - B&I)*



“The community that I live in is pluralistic in terms of culture, context, experience and so on. Living with differences in communities enhances the quality of life that we lead. I have realized that interculturality is a radical call that goes beyond coming and living together but it is still a struggle”, said one of the nuns who participated in the seminar.



Having attended the seminar opened my eyes towards the reality that we are exposed to and being part of the seminar deconstructed and reconstructed the notion that I had on

most was the openness and competence of the resource-persons and facilitators.

The first part of the session explored the definitions of some concepts that we often use: culture, intercultural, multicultural, transcultural, monocultural ... it provided me with a theoretical foundation which helped me understand the session. The second week was much more practical, with sharing drawn from life experiences. I really appreciated the exchanges in the small groups. I felt that participants in general came to the



*Sharing with the GLT*

‘interculturality’.

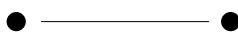
The interchangeable use of ‘interculturality’ and ‘multiculturality’ has been a phenomenon, but the nuance between the terms, focusing on the notion and reality of interculturality as a faith-based response to the challenge of multiculturalism that is faced by many of us, demands deeper understanding.

Reflections on interculturality as a radical reading of the gospel is an invitation to be conscious of the fact that there is no ‘dominant culture’ among Christians. And this draws us to conclude that there is no ‘marginalized culture’ as well. We are called to live with our differences for a common mission.

Being a member of an international congregation, I was challenged to learn about the ‘culture of the other’. Our faith demands that we build a common home where ‘difference’ is dignified and valued.

My experience of attending the seminar sheds light on the structures, ideologies, prejudices and understandings that have become barriers, which need to be changed and challenged in order for our mission to be realized.

*(Rasika - Colombo)*



In these few lines I would like to share my two weeks’ lived experience. What I liked

participants in general came to the awareness that for people from different cultures who live together, intercultural life is a genuine way of living discipleship.

Intercultural life is not a problem but a challenge, an opportunity. It is not easy, but it is desirable (God wants it) and urgent. It is demanding and is causing a revolution in religious life. It is a challenge for anyone who is in any form of ministry to others. We need strong support and very dynamic people to bring this project of interculturality to our communities.

My conclusion is that interculturality is something we need to build together..

My contribution to creating my intercultural community is my capacity for openness, and my faith and trust in Jesus Christ, the One who brought us together,. Add to this the ability to build lasting relationships while respecting others. Interculturality is a process of conversion, so I feel invited to live consciously this intercultural dimension.. I need to make an effort to know more about my own culture and to love it, in order to be able to love and respect the culture of others. I want to learn to appreciate the new. .

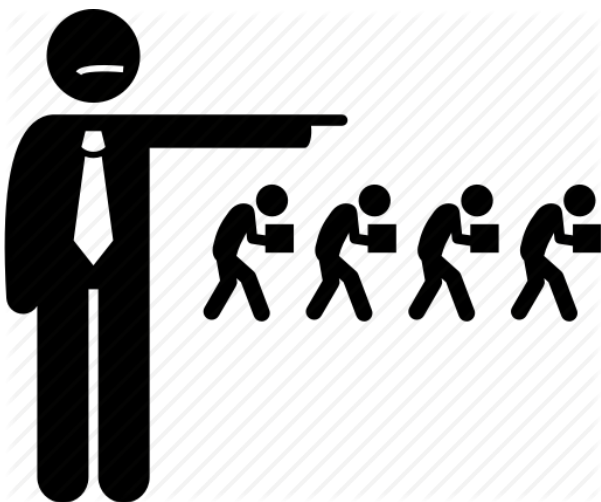
*Aldegonde - Canada*



On 17 and 18 December we had a meeting of the various parishes that are on the outskirts of Salamanca or in nearby villages.

We began by recalling some clear and insistent reflections on Work given by Pope Francis to Social Movements. We picked out some points: There is no worse type of material poverty – and I emphasise this – there is no worse type of material poverty than the one that prevents a person from earning her/his living and deprives her/him of the dignity of work. Youth unemployment, informal labour and the lack of workers' rights are the result of a deliberately chosen economic system, which places profit above the human person.

All workers, whether or not they are part of the formal salaried labour system, have the right to a just wage, social security and a pension. At this meeting, we had waste collectors, recyclers, peddlers, craftsmen, fishermen, small farmers, miners and all kinds of people who have no workers' rights, cannot belong to trade unions and have no adequate or regular income. "Today I want to join my voice to theirs and be with them in their struggle."



We dealt with a topic which is very important for us here – UNEMPLOYMENT and INSECURITY. Several people gave accounts of what had been witnessed by social action groups.

We made a distinction between employment and work in the sense that while there is al-

ways work available, what is missing is paid employment. We divided into small groups to work on two questions: "What are our common issues?" and "What are our common challenges?"

### *Some Issues*

- ☒ The insecurity and deterioration of personal and family life as well as of some cooperatives. The invisibility of the situation.
- ☒ There are many people who find themselves outside the labour market because of their age, lack of education or their impoverished circumstances. These issues affect the whole family; in some cases, they are the cause of serious conflict.
- ☒ We know that in the future there will not be work for everyone and, as well as that, what work there is will be very insecure.
- ☒ There are many aspects to issues regarding women but the situation of the women in these neighbourhoods means that they are limited to a certain type of work e.g. cleaning houses, with low pay and no contract.
- ☒ These issues have no easy solutions. We need to discover the true meaning of employment for both individuals and society in general, especially for the younger generations.

All the parishes are responding in different ways and provided us with a wide variety of demanding challenges:

- ☒ An alternative way of doing things and accompanying people at both personal and family levels. This needs to be taken on by the whole community. We must help people to open their eyes to discover resources, help and services in order to be able to deal with the threat of unemployment in the future.
- ☒ Awareness-raising with regard to the real socio-economic system is both necessary and urgent if we are to mobilise people to protest publicly.
- ☒ If future employment is not possible, we will have to claim a basic income as a means of enabling people to live with dignity.
- ☒ People must understand that, even if there is no employment, they will need to work as a way of promoting good social relationships.

☑ Encouraging work in this way needs a listening and caring reference community. This community should make itself felt in society and go out to meet other groups and cooperatives in order to bring these difficult situations into the open.

The theme of the second day was “How to educate in the age of the Smartphone”, the mobile phone. A young psychologist spoke to us from her experience of working with children and teenagers about the frightening situation regarding addiction and the responsibility/irresponsibility of parents in educating and talking to their children. What is needed most of all is that children communicate with their parents, take their school work seriously and speak at meals – something which is disappearing rapidly as they look at television or have their mobiles on the table in front of them.

Sometimes, from the age of a couple of months, parents give children their phones so that they themselves can eat or be left in peace. Then if they take the phone away, the children become very upset. Young people in general cannot live without spending hours each day on their mobiles. Their behaviour in the family changes, their studies suffer, their relationships are virtual, they lose sleep and they have access to inappropriate information (sex, anorexia, gambling etc.). The most prized First Communion gift is a smartphone and anyone who does not get one pressurises the family into giving them one on top of everything else.



We saw the need of recovering the value of relationships in the family and with friends and not depending on virtual relationships where identities are falsified and photos are exchanged which can be used later for blackmail. Some companies now track information given in the social media by those seeking employment and often reject them because of what they have said about themselves in these virtual relationships.

The two days were days of conscientisation with regard to these realities which we must deal with in our pastoral work. We also saw the need of up-dating our language and of not colluding in unhealthy situations. Rather we need to go to the root of the dangers and the loss of the ability to be human.

## **EXPERIENCE IS ENRICHING**

**Sr. Teresa McELHONE**

***La Solitude Contemplative Community***

I have lived through many changes over the years but without any disconnect. There was openness and growth in everything.

Leaves fall to make room for new life on the tree and they remain on the ground to nourish the roots. It was the same in my family. Each generation was welcomed lovingly, and grandparents and children were interested in one another and got on well together. In religious life too, we move with the times with openness and a zest for life.

The Good Father is an example for us. Yesterday's projects will not do for today and tomorrow. The context is different; the world and the Church have evolved and we see things in a new light. We have to move on with open eyes, ears and mind in the company of other people.





This means that we have to be ready to listen well and make room for others. In a contemplative community, we live close to one another. But nature teaches us how to promote life by accepting different ways of speaking, different ways of doing things and different points of view.

However, we must do this gently, taking time to dialogue, listen and internalise. For example, if I get a new household task I do not begin immediately to change everything because this would hurt the person I am replacing. There is always an appropriate way of doing things. I may have very good ideas but I can also learn a lot from the experience of an older person.

The Holy Family Contemplatives have a mission to pray for the whole Family. We need to take to heart the news we hear. This will affect us and make us more generous in our self-giving; it will help us to come out of ourselves and send us to the margins with Christ. It will intensify our prayer and purify our heart. All the members of the Holy Family support our contemplative vocation and we also support them by our daily fidelity.

## **REDISCOVERING THE “PEARL OF GREAT PRICE”**

*Srs. Charlotte KALANGOSO, Lydie KAMANDA and  
Patience GAGUNGU (D. R. Congo)*

### **Drawing from the well-springs of our Charism**

As part of the preparation for our final commitment, we have just gone through the history of the *Holy Family* with the aim of **“Returning to our sources and drawing from the well-springs of our Charism”**. This session was led by Sr. Pauline MANZUETO.

Starting with our Founder’s writings as found in various documents – the Sources, his Letters, Constitutions, Selected Texts etc. we ex-

perienced how much returning to our sources re-awakened in us **“a new life, a pioneering spirit”**.

As we listened to the Founder speaking to us in his own words today, we marvelled at his thought, his personality and his profound intuition. He was “a good man, a father who was close to his daughters rooted in God Alone and convinced of the love of God present and active in his Work”. He was concerned that his work would continue and was open to the reality of his time; he was dynamic and full of apostolic zeal. Loving, listening and communi-



cating were important to him. He kept in contact with his daughters and other people through his letters. **We have just gone through a whole Pierre Bienvenu Noailles encyclopaedia, a library.**

We were deeply touched and motivated by the work and efforts of our Good Father, of our First Sisters and of all those who have left us **“a spiritual patrimony”** which marked our origins and accompany us on our daily journey towards our Bicentenary.



We would like to express our deep gratitude for the Selected Texts, published in 1986 as a supplement our Constitutions. In the introduction to these texts, Mary SLAVEN, the Superior General, wrote, **“These selected texts related to our Constitutions represent only a very limited part of the Founder’s writings. Anyone who wishes to read more widely and to extend her knowledge of his writings in general or with regard to particular themes may do so by referring to the ‘Sources’, in the hope that they will help you to study, pray and live the Constitutions with the deep and lively conviction that we are the privileged heiresses of a great and beautiful tradition”.** (*Selected Texts pp. 7-8.*)

We developed the desire to draw from our sources, to experience the connection between our Founder’s Charism and the new emerging theology of creation and the history of the universe. We discovered a new way of

understanding and living **the Spirit of God Alone**, the richness of our Charism, **“a broader vision of communion”**, **“of being and creating family by forming a sacred community of life with all creatures”** and of interpreting in a new way expressions like complementarity, Mission, collaboration, co-responsibility, inter-relationship, Co-creator and the Spirit of God Alone as energy and impetus for the Mission.

We experienced the joy of belonging to the beautiful *Holy Family tradition*, which made us aware of our responsibility to continue to write the history of the *Holy Family* and to transmit it to future generations by the witness of our life and our apostolic dynamism. We also learned how to re-read contemporary crises in our country – political, economic, social and cultural – in the light of our *Holy Family* history inspired by the life of Jesus, Mary and Joseph in Nazareth since the Charism is lived in history by human beings and adapts to the times. And we asked ourselves how to listen and respond to present-day needs while being attentive to the signs of the times as Jesus, Mary and Joseph were, and as our Founder and First Mothers also were.

Some calls resonated with us: to be women of faith, charity and hope in order to strengthen communion among us; to be in solidarity with our people (and others who aspire to peace, happiness and sustainable development); to maintain our apostolic dynamism; to further deepen our vision of the world and to find the correct way of offering our gift of communion, compassion and the mercy of God to it today.

We would like to thank all the Sisters of the Institute who, through their research, formation sessions, and letters continue to make our Founder’s Charism relevant for today in the light of the new story of the universe in order to re-ignite the pioneering spirit in us.

“This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad.” On this blessed day, the Ngoso parish community was happy to join with the Sisters of the Holy Family of Bordeaux for a joyful celebration of the **Golden Jubilee** of the Sisters’ presence in the area. The grain of wheat has produced much fruit, and that was the reason for our thanksgiving on 21 January. We sang of the goodness of God and thanked the Lord for the loving care shown to successive generations from the very beginning to the present day. We were celebrating fifty years of faithfulness between God and God’s people.

It was actually on 10 November 1967, that the mission of Ngoso in the diocese of Idiofa opened its doors to welcome the first three missionaries – Géarda , Marie-Rose and Hilda. This missionary territory had previously been served by the Salesian Sisters of the Visitation. They had been obliged to leave in 1964 because of the danger caused by the Mulelist rebellion.



It was either a happy coincidence or an irony of history that the Association of the Holy Family was founded in similar circumstances in the 19th century. France was awakening from the nightmare of the French Revolution when P. B. Noailles founded the Association of the Holy Family, a spiritual family open to

all vocations and to every person without distinction of race, language, culture etc. with the aim of spreading and strengthening the faith of the Christian faithful and of “gathering together in unity the scattered children of God”.

It was in similar circumstances that the *Holy Family* took its first steps in Ngoso. They had been invited here by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and, without delay, dedicated themselves to the promotion of women and the education of young girls by means of the domestic science school, which is now the main high school of the country – the Ngana-Mbel High School. This school gives three options, the Arts (1954), Nutrition (1992) and General Pedagogy (2005). There are about three hundred pupils, girls and boys in the school.

Our first Sisters were equally concerned about primary health care. They took responsibility for a health centre in Ngoso, which had maternity, and nutrition units. This small centre is now a secondary hospital and employs a doctor, a Sister administrator, a laboratory assistant and a staff of experienced nurses.

The third area of the apostolate was pastoral work. The Sisters wanted very much to provide catechesis to nourish the faith of the people and to prepare adults for the sacraments. They also travelled to the villages in the bush with the Oblate Fathers and ministered to the people there. Because of their pastoral work among the families, many couples became interested in the Holy Family Charism and became Lay Associates. During the celebrations, two couples, the KASONGOS and the NGEYEVES, celebrated the Silver Jubilee of their wedding.

Today we are creatively faithful to the path traced out by our pioneers. The fertile soil of Ngoso has become a “breeding ground” for the *Holy Family* in Congo where many young women interested in sharing in the personal adventure of Pierre Bienvenu NOAILLES spend some time since that is where the pre-novitiate is.

The promotion of young people is at the forefront of our apostolic priorities. God Alone knows how many young people who have become priests and religious or who have influenced society in significant ways have passed through our schools or have been formed by our Sisters.

Among the challenges that have to be faced today is the growth of the harmful influence of sects.

This Golden Jubilee is part of our journey towards the bicentenary of the foundation of our Association in 2020. Preparation for this great event began on 30 December 2016, the

Feast of the Holy Family.

Since, of its very nature, the Jubilee is a year of freedom and liberation, of forgiveness and reconciliation and of inner renewal, we ask our Heavenly Father for mercy, and pray that God will free us from everything that, over the past fifty years, has weighed on our hearts and made the following of Jesus difficult.

May Our Lady of All Graces and our Venerable Founder to whom this Jubilee is dedicated obtain for all of us the graces, which each one needs.

## **LONG LIVE “JOY, COURAGE, AND COMMUNION”**

*Sr. Gwladys Mougo HFB,  
Cameroon-Chad*

At the beginning of 2019, we had a meeting of all the Religious women and men of the diocese of Maroua-Mokolo. It was a meeting that gave us support and encouragement for our commitment. We pick out three points, which the Bishop emphasised as characterising the consecrated person:

- Joy: What characterises a consecrated person is joy – the joy of the Gospel. Let your joy show everyone that following Christ and putting his Gospel into practice fills your heart with happiness. Pass on this joy to everyone you meet. Then many people will ask you why you are so happy and they will want to be part of this adventure with you.
- Courage: Courage is something else that characterises a Religious. Those who feel that they are loved by God put all their trust in God. This is what our Founders did when they set up new ways of serving the Reign of God. Through the power of the Spirit who goes with you, travel the roads of our diocese and show people the creative power of the Gospel.
- Communion: Finally, the consecrated person is characterised by communion. Deeply rooted in personal communion with God whom you have chosen, as the only thing necessary in your life, be tireless promoters of communion, beginning with your own communities.





## VOICE FROM MALAWI

### *Malawi community*

First of all, we would like to thank all of you dear sisters, for your prayerful wishes and concerns on our steps forwarded to expand the horizons of our province, to widen the dream of our Ven. Founder to spread the good news of love and to realize that we all belong to one big family of God.



Our hope and desire flew faster than the plane to be part of the people of Malawi. On our arrival at the Malawi airport, we realized the poverty, simplicity and the hospitality of the people.

We were welcomed by Fr. Fernando, of the Missionaries of St. Paul, a Spanish missionary working in the Benga Parish, who accompanied us to the same parish where we were to

begin our new life. The presence of Srs. Jesmin and Shanili made us more comfortable to enter into this new environment. Discussion and sharing our reflections together as a team prepared to move us forward and insert ourselves in our new mission. We gradually and efficiently entered into the life of the people through our smiles and handshakes and a few words of Chichewa. The joy and gladness they experience in the Eucharistic celebration are remarkable. Their hymns are so meditative and prayerful at the same time life giving.

The people are so simple their poverty is not a hindrance to their happy life. They make do with the minimum, because they do not know how to come out of their poverty. Their products are bought by other countries at very cheaper rates. We were able to identify some nutritious vegetables in their environment, but they do not know that these are edible. So they suffer from malnutrition.

The people begin their day with sunrise and end their day with sunset. By 6.30 pm, one could experience the silence of the darkness. We as a team have the responsibility to educate them to think and utilize the riches of nature and to be able to stand on their feet.

We miss every bit of what we had in Sri Lanka, starting from salt to electricity! However, the twinkling eyes and broad smile of the people here is great comfort to us, which also helps us to go beyond our own comforts and needs to keep us moving firmly forward.





## **LIFE IS CALLING AND I WANT TO LISTEN**

*Tere Beck*    **Argentina**

On 23 and 24 November, I was fortunate enough to be able to take part for the second or third time in the Congress of “The Stolen Childhood Network”. This is an NGO founded some ten years ago by a Sister. It deals with a wide range of areas – the violence suffered by children and teenagers, the sexual abuse of children, ill-treatment in families, under-age pregnancy, child labour, the sale of organs etc.

All the speakers were specialists in their subjects. They were very enlightening and, above all, they moved hearts and led people to ask themselves, “Where am I in all this?” We were already involved in a lot of what was spoken about but it encouraged us to become part of that or some other network in order to have more support and be more effective in what we are doing.

I was happy to see a large number of priests and religious there who are involved in this cause. When the Church is being vilified on all sides, I was delighted to see that so many were committed and prepared to take risks, like Jesus, in support of those who are suffering the most.

Some of the accounts were horrifying. It was impossible to swallow them without one’s stomach turning and causing us to cry or vomit. Seeing so much evil sent me to Jesus saying, “You know about this. Help us to find a way to bring life into this situation”.

But seeing so many people from all social classes, most of them professionals, who dedicate part of their time to giving some consolation and help to those who suffer so much encourages me to overcome small daily difficulties and fight for life even though it is difficult and brings a lot of darkness and loneliness. But the tearful eyes of those who are suffering and the lovely smiles of those who feel content are the best incentive not to abandon this little light, which, with other little lights, could start a bonfire.

***The following are a few statements, which I still remember:***

“When victims are able to speak, they are usually not believed. Victims are expected to

be sad, powerless and vulnerable”.

“The majority of the perpetrators of these abhorrent actions are men, not because they are more evil but because of a cultural pattern”.

“Tenderness is the great healer of the damage caused”.

“We need to sow the seeds of new types of masculinity”.



“The essential forum for children is listening to the survivors”.

“We need to create a space to care for the carers”. With this in view, the organisation is going to begin a virtual formation school in the near future.

The Congress ended with a creative summing up done by a puppeteer who urged us to do whatever we could to help. He encouraged us by telling us that we are already doing a lot even though there is a lot still to be done.

A book recommended to those interested in the subject was, “THE INVISIBLE SUFFERING OF CHILDREN” by Jorge Barudy.

Let us go forward with our eyes open to see reality, with our feet ready to go to those who need our help and with our hearts moved by such suffering and ready to fight for life.

“If not now, then when?”

## **THE YEAR OF THE ACTIVITIES OF “THE HOLY FAMILY MEETING HOUSE”** **(The Cerejeiras Project closes)**

Gisele,  
the Cerejeiras community

Gisele tells us that last year, the Sisters of the Cerejeiras community were involved in the activities of the “Holy Family Meeting House”. As well as doing gymnastics with women, the encouraged “capoeira” (an African- Brazilian sport which combines martial arts and dance) and a variety of crafts with the children and teenagers. At the beginning of December they held an exhibition of crafts and a demonstration of the “capoeira” which the children were learning very enthusiastically.

*“The “capoeira” is one of the most popular sports in Bahia, Brazil and holds an important place in the children’s lives. It is a cultural sport characterised by lively movement with music and dance. The teaching of the “capoeira” to children emphasises creativity, self-esteem and free movement and shows children how to use time and space in the context of movement. It helps children to be less inhibited and more confident.* (Prof. Didi)

We saw how delighted the girls and boys were with the result of their craftwork. Whatever the craft was, it was the development of their creativity and imagination that was important.



It was a good experience and it helped us to be open to the real situation of our neighbourhood and to come closer to the life of the people around us.

We ended the year with an exhibition of everything we had done with the children and a demonstration of the “capoeira” for the parents and some other people from the neighbourhood.

We shared our joy with the Sisters of Paulo de Moraes who were there. We realised that our common mission is a call to be open.

## **OPENING NEW PATHS TO RE-CYCLING ...**

*Bursars’ team.*

**Sri Lanka – Colombo**

When we had the meeting of team of participation, the members of the bursars’ team brought forward an idea about re-cycling. This has borne fruit to a certain extent through Sr. Shanili and the bursars’ team and the sisters who volunteered to carry out this project.

We collect old newspapers, books, glass and plastic bottles plastic throw away, tins, iron, metal coconut shells etc. From time to time, we collect these items from other



convents and keep them at Kirimetiyyagara convent.

Buyers of recycling materials come there to collect these things for re- cycling. SUPASA-SUddavu PAvule SAMageekayo (Holy Family Lay Associates) members and the sisters who volunteered, sorted out these items at Kirimetiyyagara. We appreciate them for their support. Our journey so far has been rather heavy and difficult. Our Sisters informed the people in their area and we were able to collect quite a lot of throwaway material. We congratulate our sisters for their willingness to help.

Our team has plan to supply to the communities with garbage bins in the near future. We trust that you will continue to help and support us in this endeavour.

## MY PAST EXPERIENCES IN INDIA

*Sr. Peter Aseervatham  
Jaffna-Sri Lanka*



After years of reflection and discernment, the Unit of Jaffna in order to make true the dream of our Ven. Founder, decided to bring the Holy Family to the soil of India. Therefore, Sr. Pushpam then Provincial of Jaffna called for volunteers.

After much reflection and prayer, and advice from Sr. Albina I volunteered, only for three years; I got permission to go. The first Holy Family foundation was laid in 1978 in Pavunjur. My first day experience itself broke my heart, a group of gypsies – known as (Narikuravar) started eating the leftover food, which we had thrown away. Pavunjur is a locality with residents poor and marginalized. Seeing us in a religious habit, they looked upon us as aliens. It was the time when Indianization was taking place at a rapid speed. So there was no the way but to adapt our way of life with regard to of dress, speech, worship, and food habits to match the situation. Through it was not easy for us at first, yet we willingly and joyfully let go of the ways we were used to for the sake our service to these, God's own people.

I served the people at Pavunjur, Ramakupam, Managalamkombu, Amaradaki, Ramanakapeta and Kaliakawala. At the beginning, rented houses and sacristies were our residence. My services included looking for land to get our houses built, responsibilities for communities, introducing the Holy Family to people, involvement in parish activities, educating for people conducting ASIPA meet-

ings. In places very far away from our houses, we used to stay for two or three weeks introducing adult education and non-formal education. In my involvement in the life of the people in various aspects of their life, I found fulfilment and happiness.

When I look back at these services, I have seen the people's progress. What we had sown in Pavunjur soil, 40 years ago has, by the grace of God, produced four Priests, three nuns, many nurses and teachers. I had opportunities to minister to the people who are different in many ways from other people in Tamil Nadu.

Language was not barrier to communicate with people speaking a different language. Love is what that matters and it was that needed to offer our services – I was entrusted with different responsibilities. I received and evaluated the 40 years of my life as a missionary in India. I have gained much for my spiritual life, I was able to adjust and adapt myself to a culture other than my own, enjoyed the support and guidance of our Sisters. Because of the laws and regulations of the government, we were not able to return to our country for quite a long time.

Now I am back at home in my motherland. The welcome we have received, the love and understanding of our Provincial Council and Sisters, are very much encouraging. I hope to continue my life and ministry here, with the blessings of our Lord and the support of our Sisters.



## **RELIVING THE VISION OF OUR FOUNDER**

*Sr. Jenet Perera  
Pakistan*

We are very conscious of the approaching great event, the bicentenary of our Holy Family presence in the world. We are called to reflect more and more on the vision and the mission of our Founder in today's emerging worldview with all its longings and aspirations as well as its ever-growing problems and hardships caused by war, terrorism, bombing and penalization of the minority .

With the change in the political arena of Pakistan, most of the people longed for a "Naya Pakistan" (a new Pakistan), which will readress their grievances and bring economic, prosperity, but this dream will take years to be realized , still the struggle of the poor continues as the cost of living is skyrocketing.

Working in the field of education daily, I experience the hardships of the poor who are struggling to educate their children and live a life worthy of human dignity. The heart-wrenching story of Saima reflects the story of many, with similar problems. When I first met Saima in the school corridors, I could hardly believe my eyes; I wondered whether I am seeing a skeleton or a human being. She looked skinny and bony. She was surrounded by five children who looked mal nourished, pale and thin. Saima, herself was suffering from T.B... As she related her sad story tears rolled down her cheeks.

When her husband got his pension on his retirement from the army, which amounted to 5 laks, (500,000rupees) he wasted the whole amount on drugs. Her dream of having her own house was thwarted. The family was left without a roof over their head. Saima's mother, a widow, who lives on her meagre income, helped her to feed her children. I succeeded in sending the man to a centre for drug users, but he only stayed for a few days there. Saima worked cleaning bungalows of the Muslims to feed her five children. She too got medication for T.B, which she did not continue. Her husband lured her into drugs and she too became a drug user. Since the only child

whom I admitted to school was, absent from school, I inquired from one of her relative and she told me that since Saima could not pay the house rent, they were evicted from the house.



As they had nowhere to go, they went to the cemetery and the watcher taking pity on the children allowed them to use the veranda of his house. This is the story of one family, but daily we come across families who are living from hand to mouth.

Educating their children is an added burden for them. We, as Holy Family Sisters try our best to find ways and means to educate our children, since they are the future of this country. We could envisage a silver lining in the horizon, as we were able to speak to the minister of education who happened to be one of our past students. He paid a courtesy visit to his Alma Mater after assuming his office as the minister of education, and we discussed with him the difficulties we are facing in educating the poor children who are unable to pay their school fees. We also enlightened him on the problem of children who are over-age and left without any education and who roam in the streets. He promised to help us in our struggle to up lift the poor. Since he had helped our school in many ways, we hope our longings will be realized in the near future.



The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines has announced: 2019 is dedicated as the “Year of the Youth” in the Philippines. This yearlong celebration started all over in the Philippines on December 2, 2018 the first Sunday of Advent. The theme for this special year is, “Filipino Youth in Mission: Beloved, Gifted, Empowered”.

The First Sunday of Advent was very special. I was able to witness to the Launching of this Year in the Diocese of Sorsogon, which took place in Bulan in our Parish Church. From early morning, youth from all the Parishes in the Dioceses of Sorsogon arrived in Bulan, in Jeeps, Tricycles, and Vans etc. The Commission on “Youth Ministry” in the Diocese in coordination with the Bulan Parish “Youth Ministry” had well organized the three days Youth Camp. The Church was packed with more than 600 youth. Good that our Church can accommodate that many people. It was a stay-in program, an opportunity for the youth and the people in Bulan to experience the beauty of the Church as the bigger FAMILY. All the participants stayed in the foster families, some in groups some in twos or threes. The people were so generous and shared their mite to support the program joyfully taking care of the youth who stayed with them.



The inauguration of the Year of the Youth was launched with the Eucharistic Celebration where the Mass presider was Bishop Arturo M. Bastes SVD DD the Bishop of



Sorsogon, and more than 35 priests were present even though it was a Sunday. There was a lot of energy around. The Sorsogon High School Seminarians started the program by enacting the story of the arrival of Christianity in the Philippines 498 years ago.

Soon after the Mass all the youth and the priests walked up to Bulan National High School where they had the program. The three days talks and activities were on the theme proposed. First day's theme was on Youth as **Beloved**, second day youth as **Gifted** and the third day youth as **Empowered**. All the afternoons were spent on workshop and sharing. We are happy that during this program there was a time given to us the Holy Family of Bordeaux to talk on the Environment awareness, the guest speakers were our Sisters and Lay Associates. The two nights were allotted for cultural festive nights, which helped them to perform their giftedness.

December 4, 2018 on the last day of the program, all the youth walked back to the Parish Church in Bulan for the Closing Eucharistic Celebration. The parade was with the “Live Rosary” On the way they had live formations of the Mysteries which doubled their fervour.

This great event took place in the Diocese of Sorsogon for the first time. The Sorsogon youth are indeed beloved, gifted and empowered for the Mission of the Church.