

Interconnections

INFO/COM Service



1820-2020



No: 56

January 2020

Live & Communion



Celebrate Family

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EDITORS :

Maristella Annie Anthonipillai
Christine Fene Fene

TRANSLATORS :

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

WEB SITE : <http://www.saintefamillebordeaux.org/v2/>

FACEBOOK: Sainte-Famille Bordeaux

EDITORIAL

There was a king who received a very special gift; two beautiful, magnificent, peregrine Falcons. He handed them over to a man, who was expert in training falcons. After a couple of months the trainer informed the king that one of the 2 falcons was doing really well; flying majestically, soaring into heights of the sky. But the other one, it had not moved at all from its branch- from the very day that he had started training them.

The king brought healers and sorcerers from all over the place to try and get the falcon to move, but the bird just wouldn't fly.



Having tried everything he could, the frustrated king said to his minister, "maybe we need someone, more familiar with nature, someone who understands animals and birds. I think only such a person can solve this problem. Go look for someone like this from the country side and assign this task to him.

The next morning the king was thrilled to see the 2nd falcon soaring high above the palace gardens. Delighted, he called his minister, and asked him to get the doer of this miracle to him.

The minister brought a simple farmer to

the king; the king asked the farmer, "How did you make this falcon fly"? The farmer replied "it was very easy, your royal highness. I simply cut the branch on which the bird was sitting".

We are all created to fly, to live by the incredible potential that we have all been invested with. But often we sit on our branches clinging to the things that are familiar to us remaining stuck in our comfort zones. Not willing to venture out.

Not willing to take risks. (By Gaur Gopal Das)

Can we still live our purpose as we begin our 3rd century?

Psychologist Viktor Frankl, who survived imprisonment in Nazi concentration camps in World War II, put his experience into words in the book, 'Man's Search for Meaning.' Frankl's purpose, his will to live despite imprisonment in the harshest conditions, came from his desire to write about the experience afterwards. Frankl noted, too, that others who survived the camps had a specific purpose—they were determined to see their families after the war or to help other prisoners live, maintaining a sense of humanity.

The challenge for us today, is to identify and give meaning to our purpose for being; to bring forth a different way of seeing and living in this world. As we prepare for the General Chapter and the celebration of the bicentenary, we listen deeply to life around us, think afresh so as to see and respond in the way God does.

The choice is ours! What we make of and how we live our 3rd century is our making!

The mission of Consecrated life in a changing world

Claudine Gayongo

Local community at the Generalate.



Every year, the Institute of the Theology of the Consecrated Life (ITVC), "The Claretianum" in Rome organises study days for Religious on current topics of general interest. From 10 to 13 December 2019, the 45th such conference was held in the Pontifical Urbanian University under the theme, "The Mission of Consecrated Life in a Changing World". Annie ANTHONIPILLAI, Claudine GAYONGO, Jessica A. PATRICK and Marie-Pierre OTIBA, from the local community in the Generalate, took part in this.

Reflecting on the role of consecrated life in the contemporary mission of the Spirit, Professor José Cristo Re García Paredes emphasised his conviction saying that the foundation of the mission of the Church, and therefore of consecrated life, is the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit who advocates and initiates the mission; unites men and women of all times, races and cultures who live in community and share in the mission of proclaiming Christ present in the world.

It is necessary that we ask ourselves what is the deep and specific meaning of mission in our own context. But, as Professor Cristo Re emphasised, the danger is to behave as protagonists and put ourselves at the centre of the mission. We need to keep reminding ourselves that we are just **instruments** – anonymous **collaborators** of the Spirit – and allow the Spirit to act in and through us. That is the power that will enable us to live the reason for our existence in our own context.

It is not surprising that the challenge of our mission is credibility. What if our words do not touch our daily life? Professor Carlos García Andrade, when speaking about the mission of consecrated life incarnated in a changing world, referred us to community life. Jesus whom we proclaim, is present in community through our authentic personal relationships enriched by our differences. Community life touches the essence of mission. We are strong as long as the

words we share are rooted in our common life.

Underlining activism as another danger which threatens us today, Professor Fabrizio Pieri, spoke of "the love of Christ which urges us on "(2Cor 5:14), and emphasised on the importance of being attached to Christ. The encounter of Paul of Tarsus with Christ resulted in a deep relationship that gave him an irresistible power to proclaim the Gospel – for he said, "It is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me." Such an encounter with Christ is crucial for all of us so as to be transformed into his own heart.

Speaking on "How a missionary prays", Gonzalo Fernández said, "The mission of consecrated life does not consist in doing things but of seeking the origin of one's activity and the spirit in which I carry it out".

Addressing the question of the role of consecrated life in the digital network,

Patrizia Morgante spoke of the challenges and how to live meaningfully in this digital social space, being always focused on mission. For this, it has to be intentional, organised, and effective and be the object of deep discernment. "**Communication**" she said, "is the life of every human community and the digital network is just a space which people use to communicate and share life".

This brief overview of the mission of consecrated life made me aware of the different contexts in which consecrated people live and work. In a rapidly changing world, the situations of each continent, country and community are quite different from the other and our response to the needs of our contemporaries must take account of contextual differences in this changing world.

These reflections also made me more aware of the question for our 20th General Chapter, "Can we still live our Purpose as we begin this third century?"

Working at la Solitude

**Sr. Odette UWIMANA - Contemplative
La Solitude, Martillac**

Jesus, Mary and Joseph lived by the work of their hands for the love of the Father and in the service of their brothers and sisters. They are an example to us of a humble and hard-working family. At Nazareth we see the dignity of work. (Constitutions, Art. 203)

Our contemplative life has a rhythm of prayer and work. Each Sister has a task through which she serves the community for the common good and in order to have a balanced life. When I entered the novitiate I received the task of working in the garden. At that time it consisted mainly of weeding around the house.



While I was waiting for the weeds to grow Sr. Griet taught me how to sew and Sr. Teresa taught me how to look after the sacristy. One day we went to the market to buy flowers for the chapel. They were very beautiful but very expensive. I began to grow flowers close to the house. They grew well but there weren't enough for the whole year. Then I asked for a piece of ground in the garden so that we could have flowers all year round. Among the flowers, I grew vegetables that we eat in Africa. We ate them and they were delicious. The following year I grew some vegetables for the community. Visitors admired them and I gave them some to taste.

In 2018, I sowed a few different kinds of vegetables. Visitors to the garden suggested that I should sell them. Since I had no intentions of selling them, I gave them whatever they wanted and they paid me whatever they liked. They told their friends about it. They consulted French law to see if we would have to declare the garden or if we were liable for tax. We found out that we were not taxable and did not have to declare anything.

In 2019, those who wanted to buy the "Contemplatives' vegetables" – as they called them – suggested that we leave them at the chapel entrance and mark the price on them. I decided on €2 per kilo no matter what the vegetable was. When they had tasted the vegetables they bought between €2 and €50 worth of them because they said they had never eaten real organic vegetables before. We made €1300. This year they ordered what they wanted – tomatoes, aubergines, lettuce, peppers, courgettes,

corn, green beans, potatoes, sweet potatoes, peas, radishes, cucumber etc. The list will get longer depending on who visits the garden.



I work for two hours in the morning depending on the weather. During the Winter when the earth is resting I collect manure. In the Summer when it is very hot I do the watering in the evening because the days are longer. Sometimes the young Sisters help me in whatever way they can. In silence and solitude I work while I pray and pray while I work. The idea of praying always then makes sense and helps me to be in solidarity with both those who work and those who are unemployed. It helps me also as I struggle not to forget God as our Constitutions invite us to do.

Every task, however simple, unites us to the creative and redemptive work of God.
(Constitutions, Art. 204)

The Prayer of the Gardener of La Solitude

Lord, I thank you that you have created everything in wisdom and love. Thank you for the earth that produces so much fruit, vegetables and flowers to feed people and animals. I give thanks for

Pierre Bienvenu Noailles, our Good Father, whom you inspired to choose Martillac for his future daughters. Thank you for all our Mothers who protected this treasure. Thank you for calling me to live on this holy ground as a Contemplative Sister of the Holy Family of Bordeaux and for giving me a love for working on the land.

Lord, you know that the earth cannot produce fruit if it is not well nourished. I ask you to bless Stéphane and his family; he works in the Domaine of La Solitude and keeps his donkey and horses at the bottom of the vineyard. Bless the animals who generously give me abundant manure to nourish the garden. That is why we will have a good harvest this year.

May you be blessed, Lord, for all the different sorts of grain but especially for all I am going to plant in the garden which you have also blessed. I thank you for the sense of sharing and the expertise of all the people who prepare seeds for

the gardeners, not forgetting the men and women who share their experience and advice so that we can have a good harvest.



May you be blessed, Lord, for the water that helps us during the hot weather. Bless all the people who come to admire and encourage the plants. You know that plants are like people and need affection. Finally, Lord, bless the men and women who will eat the produce of this garden. All for your greater glory. Amen.

The Holy Family in PINTO

The Holy Family always tries to adapt to the inevitable and progressive ageing process of the Sisters. We want to ensure that those who have dedicated their whole life to the service of others will be able to spend the last stage of their life living out their commitment to the full.

We realise that we are getting old but we are often not ready to face that reality and to make the necessary changes to our way of living. Whether we like it or not, we are beginning a stage of life that is different from anything that has gone before. But as well as the losses we experience, we find that we have new opportunities. We

The Pinto Community

need to adjust our mindset gradually and accept peacefully that the time is coming for us to begin "The Third Age". This is when the Care Home appears on our horizon.

For us, a Care Home for the Elderly is, above all, a community – a space where we can look at old age in the eye and decide to "live until we die". We know that life is a whole and if the first part has been very good, why should we expect the second half to be any less so?

Today we are going to look at Pinto – one of our four Care Homes in Spain.

Pinto is a small town. It is welcoming and cheerful with several green areas and plenty of low-level housing – ideal for its sixty thousand inhabitants. What is it like for the *Holy Family* in Pinto? It is a very suitable locality for them. Not only that, but it is the place where the Work of P.B. Noailles took root and grew in Spain. It was here that Mother Bonnat who was chosen by the Founder to establish the *Holy Family* in this country, found a place close to Madrid to house a group of orphans. It was a small group which she had gathered together as soon as she arrived in the capital, attracted as she was by her fondness for abandoned little girls.

In the middle of the nineteenth century (1856) a *Holy Family* Home for orphans was set up in Pinto with a lot of hardship and very little money. It went through many changes over the course of a century. Leaving aside the three years of the Civil War when it became a military hospital, Pinto was a college for orphaned girls and a private school for thirty years. Then it opened its doors to local girls and boys. When secondary education became obligatory in 1994, a new building was added. It continues to function now as part of the Santo Domingo Educational Trust like all the other *Holy Family* educational establishments in Spain.

The college buildings have also gone through several changes. The oldest part which was built in the nineteenth century was handed over to the Civil Administration of Pinto in the 60's and is now the Municipal Cultural Centre. The chapel was given to the diocese of Getafe and

became the parish church of the flourishing parish of San José. It has been refurbished architecturally and continues to serve the local congregation.

At the moment, the college also has spacious, well-kept sports grounds with two recently-built pavilions. There is a lovely orchard and garden on the adjoining land and that is where we find the modern and well-equipped Care Home. It is a three-storey building with forty-six en-suite single rooms. It also has two dining rooms and two chapels as well all the facilities needed in a home for the elderly.



Since the Sister-Carers were getting old themselves, the Province had to engage a company called AUSOLAN to help. This company has people specially trained for the care of the elderly and looks after the kitchen, the laundry and the cleaning. The employees of the company have now become part of the Care Home Family.

Thanks to their dedication, professionalism and sensitivity (very much appreciated by the community), the Sisters are very well looked after and, most importantly, continue to smile in their old age.

At the same time, the Sisters form a community. They have personal and community prayer, community meetings,

liturgy preparation etc. They celebrate feasts together and take part in recreational activities. Recently, some of them prepared for Christmas and the Epiphany with great imagination and creativity. Normally, a group of Sisters spend some time each morning knitting warm gloves for needy people in the area. They also have exercises and spend time reading and looking at television. Each one can choose what she likes best and is most suitable for her current state of health.

Thanks to the college which for almost two centuries has kept the *Holy Family* spirit alive, and planted the seed not only among the pupils, their families and the staff but also in the town of Pinto, lasting bonds have been forged. These are still alive and there is a very good relationship between the Sisters and the local people. The house is open and every week a group of women use a room for prayer and reflection and come to the community Mass every day. They often meet the Sisters informally and share their joys and sorrows with them. The Sisters offer their services to the parish too – on the parish council,

with Caritas, in the parish office etc. One Sister is a weekly volunteer with “The Bridge of Hope” in Madrid. She works with Sisters of thirteen other Congregations to help migrants. The whole community share in her interest and work for the people who come to the Centre.



The Sisters also establish new relationships among themselves which stimulate and support them. They remember with gratitude the words of our Founder, “My dear Daughters, live and die in the bosom of the *Holy Family* lavishing on one another the loving care that befits affectionate sisters”. (Preface to the General Rules 1851)

Mark the Bicentenary year!

Canada unit



The Sisters of the Charlemagne community joined Doreen and Carmel to celebrate the *Holy Family* Bicentenary in the Tamil Parish in Montreal on 28th December 2020.

Sr. Marceline from Aylmer and Sr. Paulette from Quebec also joined them.

The celebration began with the Mass of the day – the feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

The parish community took the opportunity to commend the children and the adults on their conscientiousness in attending catechetics classes every

-speaking parish of St. Mark on 16th February. The Charlemagne community will have a big celebration in the Parish of St. John the Baptist in Montreal on 26th April. At that celebration young Polish, Tamil, African and Quebecois people will lead the Liturgy and ensure a festive atmosphere during the meal. On 24th May the Charlemagne Sisters will join Sr. Maria to celebrate in the Polish parish.

On 27th June, all the members of the *Holy Family* in Quebec – Sisters, Seculars Laity and Friends are invited to Sillery to celebrate together their happiness at belonging to such a beautiful spiritual Family spread throughout the world. Our hearts are indeed happy and grateful. The bicentenary is also an opportunity to renew our zeal and love for those around us so that nobody feels lonely or abandoned. The *Holy Family* will remain alive and well as long as we care for the most vulnerable people. So, dear members of the *Holy Family* make the Bicentenary Year a time of thanksgiving!

Enjoy the celebrations for the *Holy Family* Bicentenary!



Sunday morning. It is a very lively parish. One hundred and forty-five young people meet every Sunday morning with several parents who are also catechists.

Srs. Doreen and Carmel also attend. The children, the adults and the parents thanked the Sisters on the occasion of the bicentenary. Everyone was happy to meet and celebrate around a festive meal.

This was just a beginning. We will continue to celebrate throughout 2020.

The Aylmer community will celebrate with the French-speaking parish of St. Paul on 2nd February and with the English



The Love that brings Freedom! Cheer up!! Get up!! He is calling you!!!

Sr. Vinnarasi Arokiam - The Community of Posadas-Misiones

I began my prison pastoral work in 2017 as part of a team of lay people and priests. Our motto was "Jesus is a prisoner".



Life in prison is complicated – sometimes very complicated. To be deprived of freedom – not being in control of one's time – causes dreadful suffering to a human being. But the greatest suffering of all is not to be able to choose who one is because of being unable to choose what to do. The main aim of the prison system should be to help the prisoner to regain a sense of personal responsibility while moving towards complete personal freedom.

We must recognise that these men and women, young and old, who have committed crimes of various degrees are human beings. And that will help them on their journey to recognise themselves as such, discover who they really are and use their freedom responsibly.

Human beings are healthy because our ethical and spiritual dimensions go beyond illness. Whatever situation they

are in, we need to see people as complete human beings who are spiritual, free and responsible, who have values and who seek meaning in their lives.

I visit the prisoners on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. I always visit women, men and young people. Once a month I go to Loreto to visit the prisoners who are serving a life sentence. I have to prepare myself very well for those visits in order to be able to share Scripture, stories, celebrations, praise and the Mass.

They look forward very much to my visits. I go there just to be with them, to listen, to help and to accompany. I experience with them all their weaknesses, sorrows, worries and illness.

There are times when those who do wrong and make mistakes have to go through a process to in order to become free again. This is very hard for some of them. They always say to me, "Why did this happen to me? How can I get over it?". Many of them are innocent but their families do not visit them and they don't know anyone to help them to get out.

Our group organises visits to the prisoners' families. It is a very difficult situation for the families but we prepare them and encourage them to visit their relatives who are in prison.

The prisoners have a lot of activities. They can study, learn how to cook, do carpentry, sew, and do other crafts. They ask us for some items and we provide

them. This is a time to be with them and to give myself to them.



I have had several experiences that have made an impact on my life. One of these was when I asked the question, "What do you want to give, share, talk about and sew, with Jesus?" When they replied, I realised that the prisoners see the face of God in prison even while they

are experiencing difficulties and are separated from society. I saw, for example, how they question themselves a lot over why they did what they did and found themselves in prison serving sentences. Pope Francis says, "Keep going, be patient and gentle. If God is with us, who can be against us?" Then we wonder how we can be sure that God is with us. St. Augustine says, "Give me what you are asking me for and ask me for what you want".

"Those who love move out of themselves, are attractive to others, give themselves to others and form life-giving relationships. Because of God's love for all, nobody is useless or insignificant. Each one of us is a mission in the world because we are the fruit of God's love", says Pope Francis.

RECYCLING – caring for Mother Nature

Antonia Rocha Marmo - Holy Family Consecrated Secular

Antonia and her brother who is a nurse gather recyclable material while they are on their morning walk. They wash it and sell it to make money for poor people and general pastoral work in Santos. Others follow their example and the town is cleaner now.

When I saw the situation of so many people who are suffering from hunger, thirst and other privations, I wondered how I could help them. The doctor had advised my brother to walk and this provided us with the opportunity to do something.

We decided to go for a walk every morning and to gather cans, bottle tops, labels etc. as we went. We would sell these and make money to improve the health of

poor people, help those working with children, buy wheelchairs for disabled people who would like to go to church and do other things like caring for the environment. Pope Francis asks us to care for Mother Nature in his documents. It was a case of combining duty with pleasure.

Our walk also served as an example for other people who began to collect drinks cans and other recyclable things at home,



in bars, restaurants etc. When we walked down the street in the morning, people would give us bags of cans. At the moment, there are various places in Santos where people call out to us to say they have cans for us.

When we have about 40 kilos of recyclables, I call on one of the poor street-people who has a little cart. He helps me to bring them to the place where I sell them. Afterwards I give him a tip and buy

him a cup of coffee. This makes him happy. This is how my brother and I try to do our bit for recycling. I know it is not much but it helps the poor and the needy. It is also a way of caring for nature and of reducing pollution in the streets.



Street Evangelisation

Sr. Gisele Kateme – São Paulo, Brazil

In this article Sr. Gisele writes about being part of the group "Bento de Portão". Every Tuesday afternoon she goes to visit homeless people in Santo Amaro, Sao Paulo with several volunteers and Religious men and women. In October they spoke and prayed about the Amazon Synod and finished the meeting with a power-point presentation on the life of Sr. Dulce who had just been canonised.



The hostel *Pousada da Esperança* in Santo Amaro used to provide shelter for 120 homeless people. They received food,

had washing facilities and were assisted in finding work, regularising documents and drawing up Cvs. When the hostel closed in 2019, the number of homeless people on the street increased.

As a result of this, a group of volunteers was formed. Many of these were elderly, retired people. Others were former employees of the *Rede Rua*. And there were other volunteers such as Fr. Arlindo Pereira Dias, SVD. There were also several Sisters from various Congregations, including the Holy Family of Bordeaux, in the group.

Since last October this group has been

meeting every Tuesday in front of the Cathedral. Their aim is to meet the people who live on the streets – women, men, young people and children. They meet them between 6.30 pm and 8.00 pm. During the month of October, the visits focused on the Amazon Synod in communion with Pope Francis, all the participants of the Synod and all the people of Brazil.

During the reflection on the Synod, the volunteers and the street dwellers prayed for the Synod and listened to a reflection by Fr. Josimo Poetry on the struggle to promote life and safeguard the environment. A film was shown on the life of St. Dulce of the Poor. The meeting ended with a celebratory meal for the poorest people.

During our visits we always chat to the

street dwellers. Their requests for help in regularising their documentation and their concerns about judicial processes are always on the increase. We conduct these visits in a very simple but dedicated way. The homeless people need visitors who respect them as human beings.

Finally, we are aware that these people respect and listen attentively to one another and appreciate one another's dignity.



GO TO THE PERIPHERY

Anualita BUSINGE - Gikongoro Community (Rwanda-Uganda)

The people of Gikongoro in general, as almost everywhere in Rwanda, live on agriculture. Batwa or pygmies living in that region do not own land; they constitute a minority and are marginalized.



This population is scattered in the different provinces of the country and live in ghetto. They are distinguished by their poor life-style, their untreated and neglected dress.

Socially they live in extreme poverty linked to unemployment and lack of schooling. They live from their pottery work and are often used for any kind of work. Throughout the day they sit on the side road, waiting for someone to hire them to carry heavy loads on their shoulders but at a ridiculous price. Unemployment pushes them into alcoholism with all the consequences that it generates for their families, education, food, clothing and schooling for their children. Their habitats are very rudimentary and unhealthy. They live from day to day. Most of their children do not attend school and are thus increasingly marginalized.

Faced with this problem of marginalized people in the social field, we feel challenged. It is true that we will not be

able to face all their problems. So, we thought of helping them with schooling and hygiene to promote the gradual integration into society and to improve their living conditions. Thanks to the help of the Noailles Foundation since 2016, we have been able to encourage them to work together in the fields and to raise awareness in order to send their children to school.

We noticed the change of these children. Earlier they were unhappy and sad, now they are joyful, clean, well dressed and going to school. They make friends with all the other children of the village. We see that the school results are good, even if there are some who are weak; at least they are proud to be in school. Mothers also felt considered, respected in their dignity as

women. Many of the children have received the sacraments and their parents feel responsible for the growth and development of their children.



The community of Gikongoro will continue working with these families, to improve the living conditions so that they can be motivated and respected and live without feeling marginalized.

MY EXPERIENCE WITH THE HOLY FAMILY SISTERS

Kemigisha Promise (Rwanda-Uganda)

16 In the year 2012 I joined the Sewing Course in the Buhara Holy Family Parish, which is run by Holy Family Sisters. I was happy to learn hand stitches, dressmaking, embroidery and fabric painting. After finishing my two years of learning, I was appointed to help Sr. Regin in the training of others. Through this process, I improved my skills. When I started making school uniforms, I learnt other skills like knitting and making of trousers for the Secondary school.



Through this work, I earned money to buy my own sewing machine and to support my

family, especially paying school fees for my younger sisters and brothers. I learned not only sewing but also good values for life. Sr. Regin was very particular in helping us to learn how to foresee, plan, economise and save for the future. I enjoyed the outing at Lake Bunyoni where I had never been before.

So far, I have trained two groups with Sr. Regin. With the second group, I had the joy of learning from Sr. Winie the beads works such as necklaces, bangles, earrings and rosaries. I started working with sisters in 2014 and I am happy to collaborate with them as we begin our next course in February 2020. It gives me great joy to help the young women of the parish. May God bless the sisters and all those who collaborate with them as the Holy Family celebrates the bicentenary of their life in 2020.

Glory be to God Alone !

Initial Formation: Congo and Cameroon-Tchad Teams meet

Sr. Elodie IBWILAKWINGI Kingabwa/Kinshasa

Last year, from 16th to 20th December, the two French-speaking Leadership Teams from Cameroon/Chad and D. R. Congo along with their Initial Formation Teams, had a meeting in Kinshasa. Sixteen Sisters took part in this meeting. It was facilitated by two members of the General Leadership Team – Geni and Micheline.

The aim of this meeting was to enter into a process of discernment based on the present-day situation to listen to what the Lord is calling us to today and to commit ourselves to an initial formation of quality for the mission and also to dialogue together to see how the Teams could collaborate better. I am very happy with the experience which achieved its objectives.

We renewed our vows on 18th December, the anniversary of the approval of our Constitutions. The internationality of the group during the Eucharist celebrated by the parish priest, Fr. Quévin who is a Salesian, touched me very much. We were Brazilian, Cameroonian, Chadian and Congolese. As our Founder said, "In my

dream the *Holy Family* appeared to me as a giant tree, a kind of oak with leafy branches. On it were birds of every colour and from every country..."



I am convinced that our Charism is a gift to be shared during this bicentenary year. It is not our private property as was emphasised during our meeting. We must remain open in order to share it with others. As Pope Francis says, "Charisms are gifts for the renewal of the Church. They are not closed patrimonies given to a group to be kept safe. Rather, they are gifts of the Spirit". May Jesus, Mary and Joseph intercede for us.

BE A LIGHT

"You are the light of the World" (Mt5:14). Light is the symbol of life, which illumines the darkness and gives hope to the hopeless. Each one of us is called to be a light through our services. We the Holy Family Sisters are happy to collaborate with the Jesuit Refugees Service (JRS) for the past fifteen years. Many of our sisters worked for the Sri Lankan Refugees in four

Sr. Arockia Mari FRANCIS - India

campes in four zones in Tamil Nadu. We have touched the lives of many through counseling, women empowerment, children parliament, career guidance etc. I thank God for giving me an opportunity to work for them.

The theme of our General Chapter ***'Can we live our purpose as we begin our third century?'*** urged me to work with JRS (Jesuit Refugee Service) zealously

through which I am able to spread the fragrance of the Holy Family. When I visited them for the first time in the camps, I was moved to tears and felt helpless to see their pathetic condition without even having their basic needs. The people shared with me their pain and sufferings and I was able to console them. Along with JRS staff I approach the government officials for their basic needs and work for their rights. Though the people get everything to run their livelihood, I was really shocked to hear their inner cry for identification, for they felt neither belonging to Sri Lanka nor India. They questioned as to where to go and what would be their future?



The Indian Government has started the NRC (National Register of Citizens) which is a register of all Indian citizens, which is mandated by The Citizenship Act 1955 as amended in 2003. The government plans to implement it for the rest of India by 2021. In this situation most of the

refugees expressed their anguish for acquiring Indian citizenship. Besides there are differences of views between the older generation, who are more open to go back, and the younger generation, who were born in India since the 1990s who dislike the idea of moving to Sri Lanka. Their relatives being settled in the different parts of the world, they feel that India is their Mother Land.

In the midst all these struggles and confusions, I greatly appreciate our commitment to work with JRS. We provide advanced level training, like beautician, designer and tailoring to the women, evening tuition to the children. Many people benefit from these courses and become engineers, doctors, teachers and technicians etc. Especially we focus on the income generating programs enabling them to stand on their own feet. I am happy to see them growing and fulfilled in life.

As a Holy Family Sister, it gives me joy to render my service to them. Working nearly four to eight hours daily, I engage myself fully sharing God given gifts with them. I feel proud about our Holy Family members who attentive to the signs of the time, respond to the needs of the people in our own context. Glory to God Alone, may Jesus, Mary and Joseph look upon the suffering and bring relief to each one of them. **Let us dream and work towards the New Society in Love.**

Drawing from our own wells – a new way of being mission

PBN community – Katuneriya Colombo unit

The 11th of July 2019 was significant day for all of us, as the three member-community (Ildophonese, Rita and Rasika) began a new venture in Katuneriya Convent. It is a new way of being on a journey towards communion. Along with Jesmin Fernando, the Unit leader, Chandani Jayasuriya, a member of the leadership team, five Holy Family lay associates, one secular member, one priest associate and a member of the Holy Family youth opted to be involved in this journey of re-vitalizing the vision of our Founder whose dream was a big family: being a family and building family.



“Thinking of a family on the move where all PBN members could reflect, work and journey together within the present context is a challenge and at the same time, a call for our family with five vocations, in focusing on the mission of communion,” said Jesmin Fernando. Chandani Jayasuriya’s sharing on calls that emerged during the last Family Congress helped us see that belonging to a larger Family makes it important and inevitable to think of new ways of journeying together as ONE family. Nevertheless, none of us gathered on that day had any clarity of our forward

journey –where to begin and how to move, except, that we all desired to fish in the unknown waters. We longed to deepen our spirituality together as one Family, following in the footsteps of the Holy Family of Nazareth and the Founder. We all wished to search for a new and radical way of living our mission and sharing our spirit with everyone so that whatever we do or say, would be the result of connecting with the divine within and within an interconnected universe.

We discerned a new way of being community, drawing from the well of our experience, moving from a triangle model to a circular model in exercising responsibility for living the same mission. While being equally recognized as members of one family, we remain faithful to our own vocation. Uniting with one another through life sharing, listening and giving space to be oneself was a felt need. Therefore, we decided to gather once a month as a community with

two objectives; (1) to reflect together and deepen our own spirituality and (2) to share our experience of being together and experience God’s love, being with the people. So in our monthly gathering we focused on ‘who I am and the purpose of my life’. We also began a journey of solidarity with a group of marginalized people living in the coastal belt.

We realized that carrying out our own ideas will not only be irrelevant but even distance people from us. Hence it was essential that we bring people with whom we like to journey, listen to them and

discern God's will together, as they become part of this journey. This process of reflection and discerning together resulted in some action proposals: namely, to have a training program for school dropouts, English class for children, an association for children and youth to experience the beauty of living as family and an awareness program on parental responsibility. We also felt the need of sharing our Family spirit, through establishing Holy Family associations for adults, youth and children. Certain comments heard for the last six months have shown us the path towards the future:

A mother - "What you do is priceless because you not only teach English to our children but also lead them to live life fruitfully. We are really grateful."

A father who regularly comes for the monthly parents' gathering - "Honestly, at first I came here to please my wife but now I see the importance of coming here.... I have learnt how to be a good husband and a father."

A school dropout - "This is really a good opportunity for us to learn something rather than wasting time sitting at home."

A Holy Family Lay Associate couple - "we live together, but we have no time to listen to each other and to discuss matters about us. Here as a couple, we reflect and share together learning from each other and from the life journey of the Holy Family of Nazareth."

A Holy Family child - "I love to come for the Holy Family children's association."

A member of the Holy Family youth association (20 year old girl) - "I was

really touched by the life of the Founder. When I reflect on his life and vision I feel I have a remarkable role to play in my society. We need to awaken our youth...."

One from women's association - "It is here that I became aware of the beauty of being a woman. I am a worthy person. As a group we can learn from each other and search for ways to overcome our economic barriers. When united, women can do many things."

A community member - "I am really touched by the openness, enthusiasm and simplicity of the people. They teach us, challenge us and show us the way, so, are we open to the voice of these people"

These are a few voices that have echoed in the past six months. The beauty is that we, as members of the Family of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles share our work and try our best to reach the people as a Family. This, is the result of deep listening to our inner being where we experience the powerful presence of God. In our reflection we try to avoid being 'doers' or 'givers' but journey together with the people in mutual sharing, because we all are resource persons gifted with different abilities and qualities.

Journeying together as people with different backgrounds, ideologies and desires is not an easy task. However, with deep listening and understanding in God, we were able to experience differences not as a threat or an obstacle but as a path to create a better journey. We are aware that we need to move towards future, building a world where we all could live with freedom and dignity. This is the dream of our community.

Making communion possible

The Holy Family sisters of Jaffna Unit have started a project namely "Youth for change" at Mallavi in 2017. We have been journeying together with the people at Jeyapuram, Therangkandal and Anichiyankulam in their experiences of joys, difficulties and even in their struggles.

I was given the opportunity to work with these people for a short period. I am happy to share my experiences with you all. This project was carried out by Sr. Labora Marry Croos as the coordinator with the guidance of Mrs. Regina Ramalingam, (Lay Associate) while connecting with all the Family members of PBN in the Unit.



We engaged in activities such as Education, Human development, Creating awareness among the 150 war-affected young men and women and (facilitating them to lead on inclusive life style) supported them in leading an integrated life. This project tells the story of 150 youth (unemployed, disabled, rehabilitated, orphaned) who had been identified and provided with opportunities to come up in their life.

The efforts towards uplifting them have borne fruit and many changes have taken

Sr. Yvonne Roche , Sri Lanka - Jaffna

place in the lives of the war-affected youth enabling them to have a new start in life. They are gradually coming out of their struggle, sharing their difficulties and realizing the responsibility for their own life. They are also aware that its improvement is in their hands. Their counseling sessions were a great help to build them up so that now they are able to help others as well.

Sewing and handcraft were a means of bringing out and developing their hidden talents which has shown them a path of earning their own living. It is a joy to see them blooming and making creative efforts to use their potential to gain an income to better their living.

Some achievements and hopes for future:

Beauty parlor, weaving, tailoring and welding

Pathmalogini one of the vibrant youth members, already has a weaving equipment and has now even provided sarees, suridhars and other clothes to shops like ROMA FOUR in Colombo, which has picked up good sales. She is already training one or two of our youth and is willing to share her profit with them.

Providing another weaving machine and some thread for a start - which if not will be an expense they cannot bear - could promote a small business enterprise among youth which would be a long living livelihood venture bringing together other youth too. Since there are no job opportunities open to youth in these are-

as it would also create job opportunities at a small scale among the youth. A trainer could be for a period of 6-9 months with a small remuneration for weaving is a strenuous job and needs skill and commitment with time and energy.

Having the same concept of promoting and making job opportunities at local level in Jeyapuram too, we intend to upgrade the tailoring shop of Balamoorthy to engage more youth especially the boys, in sewing to bring in an income.

Baba and Gaja too have started their own beauty parlor and tailoring shops respectively. The products from the trained youth on sewing will be displayed for sale in these two shops in Mulankavil and Mallavi which would make marketing easier for the youth. Moreover, these activities will enhance building a collective mind set and nurturing relationship among them.

This project has come to an end in December 2019. To continue their life journey this project has shown them a path. We are grateful that now they are able to stand on their own feet. They themselves have formed a group and started educating others. Many leaders are being born among them to take up the challenge and move forward in life.

This movement ("Youth for Change") has been registered as a non-governmental organization, under the voluntary social service on 31st July 2019. A land was

purchased and the foundation stone laid for a 'Meditation Centre' in commemoration of the historical event of the Holy Family – the 200 years of our existence (1820-2020). This was declared open by Sr. Theophane Croos, the Unit Leader of Jaffna, together with Sr. Jesmin Fernando, the Unit Leader of Colombo – a venture much welcomed and appreciated by members of the "Youth for change", villagers and well-wishers.



When looking back over the past years I am filled with gratitude for God's marvelous deeds experienced in all our undertakings through various people especially through our PBN Family members. It is amazing to see the changes that have made an impact on these youth, affecting their daily life. Thus the Charism of the Holy Family –'Communion' is made known to others and kept alive in that area where there is no Holy Family presence. May God be glorified!

Creatively energized to celebrate bicentenary

We the Holy Family in the Philippines welcomed the Bicentenary of our Foundation as an opportunity to make our Charism known in spiritual preparation and in meaningful Activities that promoted the Association of the Holy Family among our People and very especially among the Youth.

Our target was 200 for each Activity - a significant Number – in view of celebrating the Bicentenary. Our Programs were varied in choice, very much needed and calling us to become alert to the Signs of the Times and the urgent calls that come from our World today. Here we share with you our 2 special Programs held in view of the Bicentenary.

Campaign for “carbon free families” & tree planting

Late year 2019 two of us – from the Core Group for Environment participated in the Ecology Ministers Convention organized by the “Climate Emergency” Organization in Collaboration with like-minded Groups in Manila.

The urgent call to promote Carbon Free Families caught our attention and we made efforts to do this, in our area of Cluster 1 that covers 7 Barrios conducting 4 Seminars to give Awareness on becoming “Carbon Free” . We started with the Parents of the Nutrition Beneficiaries and 3 more Groups and extended it to the Local national Senior high School.

The aim of the Seminars was to raise consciousness on the imminent danger that was forecast and to solicit their coop-

PBN Family in the Philippines

eration to become committed to the advocacy for Climate Emergency. We campaigned to recruit 200 Students and 200 Parents of Rizal National Senior School to be first Group to pledge to become “Carbon Free” Families.



It was a combined effort – we, the PBN Family, in partnership with the School Administration and Parents - worked in collaboration with our Mission Communion in mind, that brought excellent results. Though the program aimed at 200 Participants, the entire Student body (600) and more than 200 Parents participated in the event of the day.

We combined another Activity with the Carbon Free Pledge – THE TREE PLANTING – a symbolical act for the pledging Students and Parents to remember their commitment on a daily basis to abide by the Pledge to be Carbon Free Families.

We made a request to the Municipal Mayor of the local town, prior to the Pledging Event to solicit Seedlings for Tree Planting. Our request was for 200 Seedlings and we received for free 300 assorted Seedlings. In addition the ardent promoter of Environment in the Diocese and a Holy Family Priest Associate – Msgr. Melchor Esperida gifted us with 150 Pili-tree Seedlings.

The Event of "Pledging" took place in the School premises with great solemnity as a way forward for other families to follow. 200 Booklets compiled by the Coordinator for Holy Family Environment were distributed to the 200 Students and Parents who took part in the Pledge. It was a sincere effort on the part of the Students and Parents to become pioneers in this sacred act of commitment to Care for our Common Home.



The ceremony began at 1pm . There was a short input on "The urgency to become Carbon Free" delivered by one of the co-teachers of the Committee for Environment. This was followed by an inspirational Message from the director for Diocesan Ecology Desk Fr. George Fajardo and Fr. Benedicto Furo and the Blessing of the Seedling was done by Msgr. Melchor Esperida – all three Priests Associates of the Holy Family very much involved in Environment Advocacy.

The Rizal National Senior high School Students took the lead to initiate the Pledging of the selected 200 Students and the Parents. They pledged according to the formula prepared in the Booklet and read the content led by the Student Leaders of each Class.

Other students request for their turn to be included in the campaign for Carbon Free School and Families.

The Apostolic Sisters and the lay Associates distributed the Seedlings to the Selected 200 Students and Parents to be planted in their own homes as a remembrance of their pledge to be Carbon Free Families. Of course, we included more than 200 as we had more than enough Seedlings to be shared.

It was a happy Event with real conviction that caring for our Common home is a personal responsibility as well as a collective endeavour that calls for wholehearted cooperation and goodwill. We witnessed to Communion in gathering our People and the Youth for a cause that is urgent and sacred.

Remembering the compassionate heart of our Founder

Our Founder's love for the Poor, the Sick and the excluded in society cannot be forgotten during this time of our preparation for the celebration of the Bicentenary. His closeness to those on the peripheries of his time is a great inspiration for us PBN Family Members to make option for the Poor as our priority.

It was timely just in the aftermath of Typhoon "Tisoy" this Medical Mission was indeed a welcoming Activity. The PBN Family organized the Medical Mission in which our target of 200 expanded to nearly 390 - comprised of Children, Adults and Senior Citizens – mostly the Sick of Cluster 1 that includes 06 Barrios. The chief Organizers of the Medical Mission were the Lay Associates of Sorso-gon who worked diligently to solicit Medicine and to set up the venue for the operational Medical Mission.

It was a combined effort of the PBN

Family, the Local Government Unit Doctors and private Doctors who rendered Free Service on our request. The Health Workers from the Gubat Municipality and Barangay Rizal offered their services too.



There were 06 Doctors - 03 from the Municipality of Gubat and 04 from Provincial Hospital of Sorsogon City – the Nieces and Nephews of our Lay Associates of Sorsogon. There were Nurses, Health workers and Volunteers – who made it easy for the Doctors to attend to the Patients.

In addition, one of the Holy Family Lay Associate – Ophthalmologist checked and distributed Reading Eye Glasses to 150 persons both young and old.

It was a very successful and beneficial Medical Mission that came as a blessing to the indigent persons who very much lacked Medical Assistance.

We, the PBN Family in the Philippines express our gratitude to God for providing us with the opportunity throughout

these 3 Years to let our People to taste the Charism of the Holy Family of Bordeaux in simple but effective ways to Be and to Build Family in Communion. The call return to the SOURCE is timely but not an end with these years' preparation. It is the foretaste to go deeper to discover the treasure left to us as a legacy by our beloved Founder. It is our responsibility to keep it alive and to share it with the generations to come. The specialty of our Charism is not in holding it as our property. The beauty and fragrance of our Charism is revealed in bringing it to the four corners of the World for people to know, taste and own it.



It is a challenge for us as we step into the 3rd Holy Family Century to make our presence felt far and wide and that we boldly take risks to make ourselves visible. How pleasant and beautiful it is for the Five Vocations of the Holy Family to live together, witnessing to the Charism of Communion as Communities of Communion!

