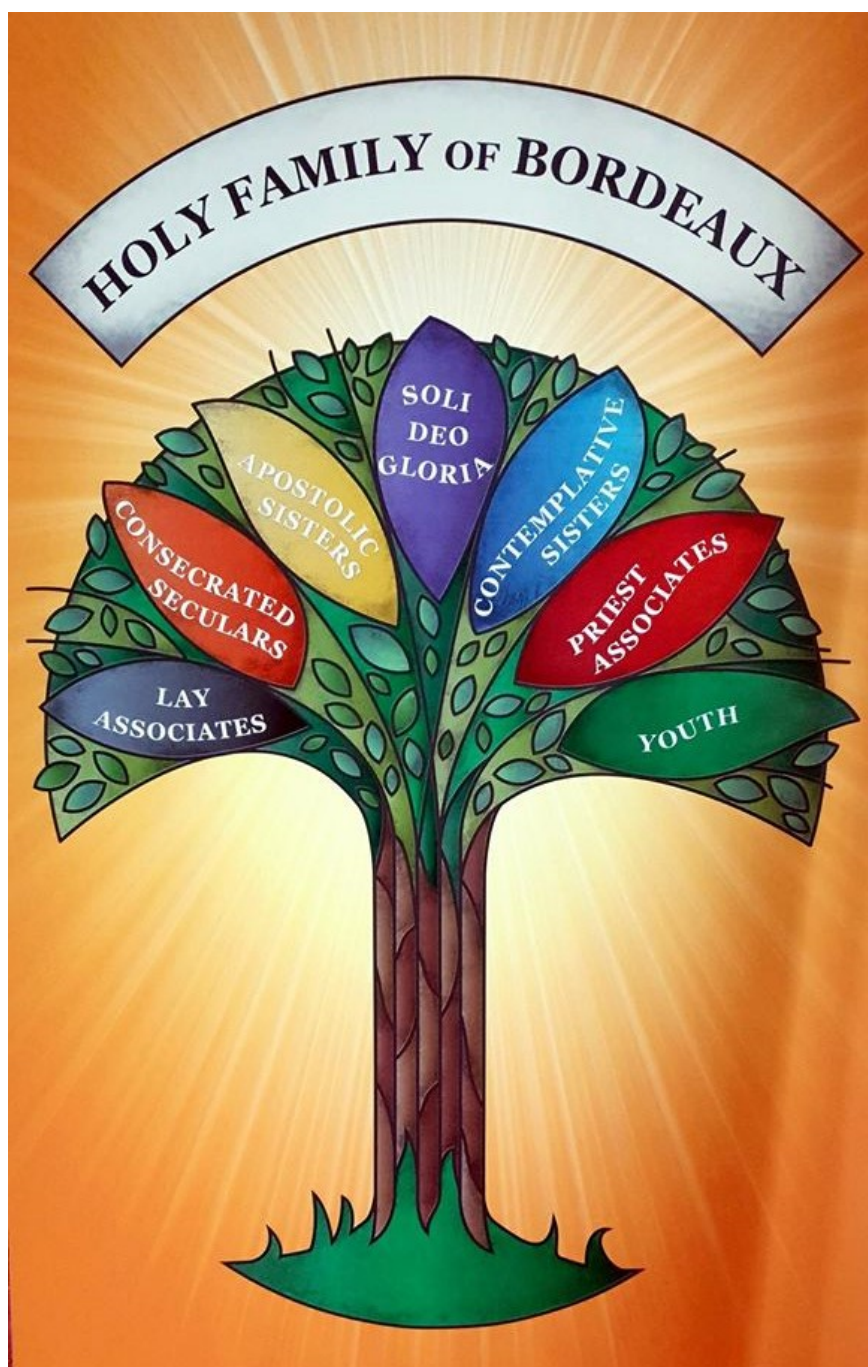




interconnections

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The banner used by our Holy Family members in Ireland at the World Meeting of Families.

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EDITORIAL

“We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak.”

But, why is it that so many of us go through the day behaving as if we have only mouths and no ears?

Why it is so hard to be a good listener? May be the problem with listening starts very early in childhood - the relatives ask the parents about their children - is the child walking yet, is he / she talking yet?

No doubt the parents take a lot of pain to teach their children to walk, talk etc... but how much of attention is paid to teach a child to truly listen? On the other hand, how can the children learn the art of listening, when at home what they experience is so much talking and noise rather than an atmosphere of listening to one another?

We are bombarded today with a lot of noise, coming from various sources. However, it is also true that there is a deep longing to seek quietness and solitude. So we find today, that the world in general and religious people in particular, give emphasis to attentive listening... to deep inner listening.... to spiritual listening.

Listening is a way of life we need to learn and grow into. Listening is being Present... being present to the depths... to be connected to the inner Source, inner being. It is a doorway to the inner space of the ‘other’.

Good listening manifests and reflects our relationship with God. Our inability to listen well to others may be symptomatic of a chatty spirit that is drowning out the voice of God. One who can no longer listen to the other, to one’s surrounding, to one’s self,

will soon be no longer listening to God either. This is the beginning of the death of the spiritual life. . .



A famous story from the Ramayana, an epic poem in the Hindu tradition, illustrates the power of careful/attentive listening. The story speaks of Rama – the hero of this epic, an incarnation of the God Vishnu - walking in the forest with some of his companions. When Rama starts hearing the faint whisper of a voice, he asks his companions if they too could hear it. “No” was their reply. Rama begins to walk toward the whisper. As he gets closer, he recognizes that it is his name that is being called - “Rama...Rama.” Even as the voice becomes louder, his friends still say they could not hear it. Finally, Rama comes to a large boulder from which the sound comes. He then places his two hands gently on the boulder. At this point, the rock breaks open and inside is a person who has been stuck in the rock through a magic spell. By listening to and following the whisper, he was able to discover what was locked up and so release it.

Thus, to listen mindfully is to give care, in order to hear the faint whispers inside others and ourselves and to discover the significant thoughts, feelings, and desires that

may be hidden or overlooked. Once discovered, the quiet whispers then have the opportunity to be heard and once heard, they could be brought to realization.

Therefore the best ministry you might do today is to listen to someone's pain all the way to the bottom." In the scripture, we find the disciples going to Emmaus saying, "Were not our hearts burning within us (Lk 24)" which urges them to go and proclaim their experience. When we attentively listen to someone or to the cosmos, our hearts will truly burn with the fire of desire to do the good called for at that very moment.

'Listening' had been the KEY word at the recent Synod of Bishops on Youth. In his Opening words, Pope Francis addressed those gathered saying -

"If you say something I do not like, I have to listen even more, because everyone has the right to be heard, just as everyone has the right to

speak". This open listening requires courage in speaking and in becoming the voice of many young people in the world who are not present. It is this listening that creates space for dialogue.

Keep your gaze fixed on the good that "often makes no sound; it is neither a topic for blogs, nor front page news".

In other words, to plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to flourish, inspire trust, bind up wounds, weave together relationships, awaken a dawn of hope, learn from one another. All young people, with no one excluded - a vision of the future filled with the joy of the Gospel."

These words of Pope Francis challenge us to a profound listening, to learn listening as a way of entering into another's life, a way that invites a change within our own selves, urging us to reach out. For what I listen to, will surely transform me!



HERE IN ROME

A very warm welcome to you dear Claudine, to be part of the local community at the Generalate! Claudine GAYONGO THAMBWE, from R.D. Congo, came to Rome on 1 June 2018. Considering the importance of new members learning the Italian language, as soon as she arrived here, she was offered a language course for three months. Residing at Via Dei Gracchi community during this time, gave her space to improve her conversational skills. She is back now to join us as a member of this community.

We are glad to have you with us Claudine and we wish you all the blessings as you begin this new phase of your life here!





From 9th – 15th October the members of the “Roots” team met in the Generalate.

The last General Chapter reminded us that “it is the spirit of God Alone that gives energy and impetus for mission” and throughout the Family, reflections are taking place, helping us to explore our spirituality in the light of new insights. As a

follow-up the General Leadership Team asked that a further reflection be made regarding the understanding of mission today. During their meeting, the members of the team had a very profound and rich experience of searching and reflecting, marked by deep listening and open dialogue. It is hoped that a similar possibility and process will be made available to all at a later date. *“Roots” Team*

A two-day session for religious was organized by SEDOS on the theme “Contribution of Women Religious in Mission”. Nearly 45 Religious, men & women, participated in it and a few of us from the Generalate were among them.

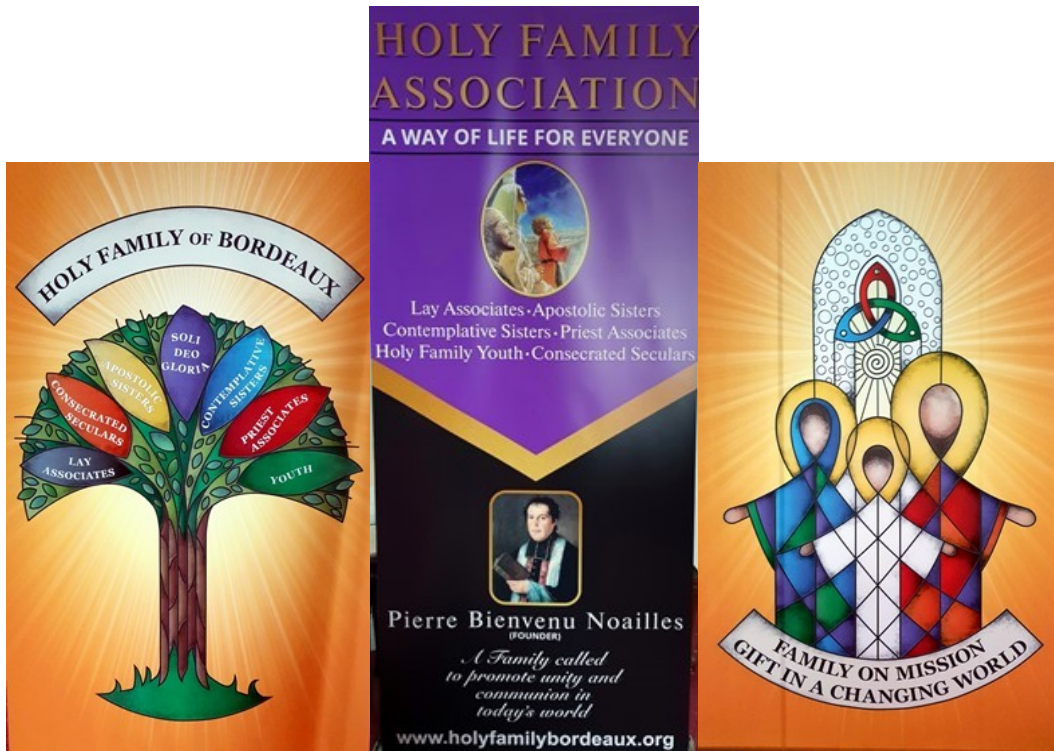
On the first day, we had two input reflections: one on the “Place of women Religious in History” given by Catherine Marion, a Professor at the Catholic Institute of Paris. Based on the Bible, she presented women’s great mission, their role and participation. Speaking about the *language of presence* among people, and underlined the importance at present, of formation of missionaries. With an interesting and challenging input, Sr. Marie-Helene Robert, OLA dealt with Biblical Missionary Spirituality: the Mission of Mary; Mary as our model and Mother for the universe. The small group sharing and the Plenary at the end of the day were enriching.

On the second day, touching on the practical aspect, Sr. Anne Falola, OLA, spoke on “Realities and struggles of

women Religious in Mission”. Basing her reflection on the two Biblical women – Ruth and the Samaritan woman at the well, she elaborated the mission and the struggles in religious life, underlining the need for a paradigm shift. A four-member panel from 4 different congregations shared on the contribution of Religious Women in joint Mission. The day ended with this practical and challenging Panel discussion.

It was a good opportunity for me to have an international and inter-congregational encounter and to broaden horizons about the reality of religious life at present. Mother Mary’s commitment to Mission until the end of Calvary is a real model and a challenge for me to overcome my own struggles in this journey. On the whole the two-day session, helped me to renew my own faith journey as a religious woman in present context – and to move forward with courage, fixing my eyes on Jesus.

*Jessica Albert
Generalate, Local Community*



Here you can see the large life-size banners that graced the stand

Invited, as a member of the General Leadership Team, to attend the 2018 World Meeting of Families, I was more than happy to spend some time in my native Dublin. However, I had some questions – since this was an event particularly directed towards the conventional Catholic family, (mother-father-children), was there really a place for Religious – even Religious from the Holy Family of Bordeaux, who form part of a worldwide spiritual Family? In the prevailing troubled atmosphere of the Church in Ireland, would it be better to keep a low profile? What was my/our role? What kind of difference could we make?

You can deduce from the above that I did not really know what to expect.

I knew that we, Holy Family, had a stand at the main venue, and that our Sisters in Ireland, spearheaded by the community of Newbridge, under the leadership of Sr. Catherine Moran, had been promoting our participation, and preparing materials for the exhibit.

A great deal of Holy Family dreaming, thinking, planning and collaboration had gone into the preparation, and a list of volunteers – comprising Sisters, lay Associates, and member of the Secular Group – had been drawn up to be a “Family presence”, to participate in the three-day event at the Pastoral Congress, and to take turns to welcome those who stopped at the stand to admire or to seek information – written or oral.

The venue for the Congress – the RDS (Royal Dublin Society) was founded in 1731. It is a philanthropic society that continues to further the economic and cultural development of Ireland. Its home is Ireland's largest exhibition and conference centre. The space available is really extensive, including two large exhibition halls. Our stand was located at the junction of the two – and thousands passed by each day, in a constant stream that bore joyful witness to the intercultural diversity that is our church.

The Congress was an organizational masterpiece; in addition to the exhibition halls, there were two Prayer Spaces, a Family arena (stadium) where the Eucharist was celebrated each afternoon, between other family events; there were separate recreational areas allotted for children and for youth; catechetics programmes for children and teenagers; and at least seven conference-spaces, occupied simultaneously three times per day for panel discussions on various themes... Extremely interesting topics, and world-renowned speakers – making us regret at times that we could not have (at least) bi-location, in order to be able to attend more than one panel discussion at the same time!

The main theme for the World Meeting was **“The Gospel of the Family: Joy for the World”** and, according to the Archbishop of Dublin, *“It sets out to be not just a passing event or a fleeting celebration of the ideals of family life. It is a moment in which the entire Church can deepen its*



Archbishop Eamon Martin, Primate of All Ireland, joined the Sisters and Lay Associates for a photoshoot behind the stall.

reflection on the teaching of Pope Francis' 2016 apostolic exhortation “Amoris Laetitia”.

The key topics relating to family, drawn from Amoris Laetitia, were;

- ◆ The role of technology in the Family
- ◆ The impact of conflict on families and children
- ◆ Building a more sustainable approach to the economy, work and the environment
- ◆ Faith and family
- ◆ Women’s leadership roles, globally and locally
- ◆ The role of education in raising families out of poverty.

Reflecting on these topics, it occurs to me that they can usefully be explored, not only in our ministries, but also in our communities and within our Family... there are video and audio recordings of different talks available on the WMOF website, which is in various languages, which could be of help.

The three-day Pastoral Congress in the RDS preceded the arrival of Pope Francis on Saturday, September 25; the main event that day being a two-

hour “Festival of Families” for 70,000 people in Croke Park, the famous stadium in North Dublin- a breathtaking show, full of song, dance, and joy – and a rapturous welcome for the Pope, when he was driven around to greet the people from his small Pope mobile.



Sisters and a Consecrated secular wait for Mass to begin

The coverage in the media, however, during the World Meeting and the Pope’s visit, was very much centred on discussions, protests and polemics on a topic that has shattered the Church in Ireland and confused so many: the clergy abuse crisis, the actions of the Bishops in protecting the institution at the expense of the victims, and also the issue of State and Church mistreatment and exploitation of girls and young women judged to be “immoral”, in what were known as “Magdalene Laundries”, the last of which closed only in 1996.

The Pope met with victims, and at the beginning of the Final Eucharistic Celebration in Dublin’s Phoenix Park, (attended by more than 300,000 people, despite wind and heavy rain)

He made the following penitential act, handwritten in Spanish:

Yesterday, I met with eight survivors

who have suffered abuse of power, of conscience and sexual abuse. Taking up on what they said to me, I want to place before the mercy of the Lord these crimes and ask forgiveness for them.

- *We ask forgiveness for the abuses in Ireland, abuses of power, of conscience and sexual abuse perpetrated by members with roles of responsibility in the Church. In a special way, we ask pardon for all the abuses committed in various types of institutions run by male or female religious and by other members of the Church. Furthermore, we ask forgiveness for the cases of exploitation through manual work that so many minors were inflicted.*
- *We ask forgiveness for the times that as a Church we did not show survivors of all kinds of abuse: compassion and the search for justice and truth through concrete actions. We ask forgiveness.*
- *We ask forgiveness for some members of the Church's hierarchy who did not take charge of these painful situations and kept quiet. We ask forgiveness.*
- *We ask forgiveness for the children who were taken away from their moms and for all those times when many single mothers were told that to seek their children who had been separated from them - and the same was told to their daughters and sons who were looking for their mothers - that this was a mortal sin. This is not a mortal sin but the Fourth Commandment. We ask forgiveness.*

Lord, sustain and increase this state of shame and repentance and give us the strength to commit ourselves so that these things never happen again and justice may be done. Amen.

The World Meeting of Families 2018 brought home to me very strongly the pain and the anger in Ireland; I became aware of a strong sense of disillusionment and betrayal with regard to the Church as institution...

the certainties of past generations have gone; and yet hundreds of thousands still turned out in atrocious weather, for the closing Mass, in faith and with the desire to hear a word of hope and encouragement that would give them the strength to go on believing.

*Eithne Hughes - GLT
Generalate Rome*



The WMOF Icon

The icon was specially commissioned for the world meeting, written by iconographer Mihai Cucu, assisted by the Redemptoristine Sisters of Iona Rd. Dublin.

The Icon travelled to all 26 dioceses in Ireland in the year preceding the WMOF; petitions for prayer from families were prayed for by contemplative communities around the country.

The Icon was placed in a large tented Prayer-space at the WMOF Site.
(see website for explanation)



On Saturday, October 6th, thousands of Polish youth met in the National Stadium of Warsaw, Poland. A special 12-hour retreat was organized for them focused on the theme of Synod 2018 - 'Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment'. This was in response to the bishops' invitation to dedicate this year for youth and spent time with young people.

Two groups of youth from where we Holy Family are present participated in this unique event. While Sisters Barbara SYGITOWICZ, Wioletta KRZYMOWSKA and Urszula MYSZAK accompanied the group from Plecka Dabrowa, Sister Aneta KARKUT came with the group from Skierniewice.

The participants prayed, sang, danced, listened to the witnesses of famous people – youth/adult - such as actors and musicians. They laughed together and had time to think about life; they could find answers to the questions they carry every day and I believe many returned home with a new attitude towards life, strengthened and filled

with the power of the Spirit to witness to their faith courageously.

At the opening, 20 nuns from different congregations entered the Stadium on motor scooters, leading a statue of Our Lady to the Stadium platform. Then there was time for prayer, conferences, concerts, art shows, the Holy Mass and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The young people had the opportunity to talk personally to famous artists, nuns, priests and even bishops. The meeting finished with the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, which was exposed in a monstrance from one of the twelve chapels in the world dedicated to prayer for peace. The monstrance during this meeting was from the new chapel opened in September in Niepokalanów, the place founded by St. Maxymilian Kolbe, a Polish martyr.

Some participants share their impressions:

'The meeting in the Stadium was a marvellous moment of worship of the God who is, who was and who comes to us in our daily life. The

witness of faith given by people who experienced the living God, who is always near, who loves, who heals us, was amazing. It was a sharing of faith like sharing the bread... It was a great opportunity to see the enthusiasm of the young Church.'

SR. WIOLETTA

'The atmosphere in the Stadium was great. The 'free hugging' touched me. It proved that we all need closeness. We all want to be welcomed by others. A lot of people took part in this moment of the meeting.'

'The Youth Stadium was an interesting experience with a pleasant atmosphere. I was impressed by the conference of Marcin Zieliński, a Polish evangelizer whose witness of God's healing power was touching. I liked the concerts and music, when we could praise the Lord.'

'What I liked the most was the concert of 'Rock & Fire' band and the entering of the meeting with nuns on the motor scooters.'

'What stayed in my heart was the intercessory prayer and the concert of 'Rock & Fire' band.'

'The Youth Stadium was for me the experience of youth's enthusiasm and the joy of faith. The music bands

were great. The conferences given by different people were wonderful because they expressed their strong faith and God's power.'

'God answered all my questions.'

'The conferences for youth were beautiful. I remember especially the meeting with the priest Michał Misiak, a street evangelizer who was reminding us that God loves especially the sinners. Especially those who experienced love as the sinners could become an evangelizer. Many young people made their confession. Nearly 600 priests were waiting during the whole meeting. The priests shared that the confessions were really deep and concrete. There was also the possibility to meet families with children. To summarize, the meeting was for those who feel young no matter how old.'

SR. ANETA

40 thousand young people in one place showed that the Church is still young and that there is the future for our Christian story. Let us give thanks to the Lord and pray that He may enlighten the hearts of youth.

*Agnieszka
Poland*



SUMMER CAMPS

SPAIN

This year, the traditional *Holy Family* camp was held in Priego de Córdoba from 23 to 29 July with pupils from both primary and secondary schools and about thirty supervisors.

At the end of every school year we begin our camp. So Friday after Friday, we have different experiences and activities together, bringing the Gospel to life and building community. We also have meetings with the Diocese of Malaga and take part in retreats and other activities. We also have gatherings at different levels with interesting themes. Our objective is always clear – to get to know and live the Gospel as a single Family.



Every year we choose a film which shows the smallest pupils the values and views that we want to transmit to them. We have got into the skin of heroes like Hercules and great friends like the characters in *Toy Story*. We have experienced the magic of *Narnia* and the madness of *Wonderland* where we fought for the good of that

country in the same way that we should struggle for the Kingdom of God.

When the little ones see that their favourite characters have many of the values that we deal with in the Friday groups, they are filled with enthusiasm and the desire to be like them. In all the camps, we show those taking part that if they follow Jesus, every simple gesture will become great if it really comes from the heart.

This year we spoke about the importance of the real person within each one and that, however different we are, we all have the same aim. In one film, monsters work at obtaining energy. This energy then becomes light. So let us take that light, the light of the Lord, and light up people's hearts with it. Helping others, giving ourselves to others, collaborating etc. has been our way of obtaining energy and transmitting the message of Jesus in the light of the "Flame" which is burning in every corner of the camp. Every day we deepened a value. After breakfast we illustrated this value through a scene from a film. The children had the task of finding this value in what we had prepared for them. Once they found it, they dramatized it in two groups – the smaller children in one group and the older ones in another group.

The older group was given more time for reflection while the younger group

demonstrated the value in play and drama.

During the afternoon other activities and workshops relating to the film were organised. These were meant to encourage other values such as teamwork, respect etc. and did not deal with the specific value for that day.

Finally, we spent the evening all together as a big family. Each night we had some kind of different activity to continue emphasising the value of the day. And, of course we ended

with a prayer in an attitude of respect and recollection. This was a very important time of the day.

We have lived a week together as a big family – the big Family which our Good Father, Pierre Bienvenu Noailles dreamed of. We are part of that great dream which, under the protection of Mary, our “White Lady”, we will continue to build up and consolidate.

*Montse Llamas and the Supervisors’
Team of Malaga*

THANK YOU, LORD

VICARIATE



“Father, all-powerful and ever-living God, we do well always and everywhere to give you thanks. You have no need of our praise, yet our desire to thank you is itself your gift.”¹

With this introduction to Preface IV, we wish to express our gratitude for the Diamond Jubilee celebration of Sr. Miren ARRATIBEL (La Solitude, Martillac).

Sister Miren had no particular desires for the celebration. She wanted to celebrate quietly in community and thank the Lord for all he had done in her life. Above all, she wanted to welcome God’s eternal love in the depths of her heart and to listen again to the Lord’s call and to respond with “*loving audacity*”.²

And since “*community life is built up through our acceptance of one another... and our relationships are strengthened by our sharing of joys and difficulties*”,³ the community shared the joy of the gift of Sr. Miren.

¹ Preface IV.

² St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus

³ Constitutions Art 38

The evening before,(07/09/2018) we gathered for a celebratory prayer. Everyone thanked the Lord for what he had done and is still doing in our Sister's life of prayer and service. ⁴

Sr. Miren expressed her gratitude to the Lord with a simple *"Thank you"* for the gift of her vocation, his love, fidelity and mercy.

On 8 September 2018, Our Lady's birthday, the Eucharist was celebrated for Sr. Miren's intentions on her Diamond Jubilee. Three Sisters from Sri Lanka who were attending the International Session ⁵ celebrated their Jubilees with her. Sr. Bonita (Colombo) celebrated her Golden Jubilee and Srs. Thayalaseeli and Valentina; (Jaffna) celebrated their Silver Jubilee. The renewal of vows reminded me of my own journey because it was also on 8 September that I began my novitiate in Idiofa (D.R. of Congo).

The whole Family of P. B. Noailles, represented by the two communities of La Solitude and the Sisters attending the Session, celebrated Sr Miren's joyful thanksgiving.

Mass was followed by an aperitif and a joyful meal.

Sometime before the celebration, Sr. Miren had a period of renewal in Lourdes close to Our Lady whom she loves so much. Sisters from the community joined her on her last day there.



Everything is grace and provides an opportunity to recognise God and God's wonders in our everyday life. Excited by the celebration, I said to Sr. Miren, *"60 years is a lot! I am only ten years professed."* Sr Miren replied, *"60 years is only a day in the Lord's eyes."*

We discover the Lord's call asking for our loving response on a daily basis. That is why "we rely on God's faithfulness, sure of his love, his light and his strength." ⁶

*Sr. Christine FENE-FENE
Contemplative Community*

⁴ The world relies on three things: the Word of God, service and pure generosity. (Rabbi Eliezer)

⁵ Theme of the session: Humanising with the Heart

⁶ Art 9 of our Constitutions.

THE HOPE OF A PEOPLE

CAMEROON

“I have seen the suffering of my people... I have heard their cry... Yes, I know their suffering... !”

Exodus 3.

For over a year now we have been hearing the cries of distress of the people and they are becoming louder every day.



It could have been expected that with the end of the terror experienced in the Extreme North of the country with the violent attacks of Boko Haram – which is still feared – people would once again be safe.

Unfortunately, that was not the case. Security is still very fragile in our country as can be seen from the recent violence in the English-speaking regions of the North and South West.

The present tension began in October 2016 in the town of Bamenda, the capital of the North West of Cameroon, with a strike by the lawyers who were not in agreement that the Organisation Code for harmonisation in Africa (Ohada) and other legal texts voted on by the Assembly should be translated into English. A month later, teachers stopped working in protest against the appointment of French-speaking people in English-speaking regions. Following on from these events, a group representing various bodies was formed. This group called themselves

“Ambazonians” and wanted to set up a federal state called “Ambazonia”.

At the moment it looks as though we are being plunged into an endless civil war. The people’s suffering is constantly getting worse. People are terrified. They are seeking refuge in places that are more or less peaceful even though this means the sadness of leaving their own homes and villages.

Goods are vandalised and destroyed. This situation in the west of the country is a cause of ever-growing worry to us because the whole of life is being destroyed.

The future of young people is uncertain because they are not receiving any education and everything is coming to a halt. The people desperately want peace, stability, harmony and unity. And we wonder how to respond to the call of God who sees, hears and knows the suffering of God’s people and says to us, “Go then. I am sending you to those who are suffering”.

The cries of suffering, division and famine are getting louder and challenge all of us. We share this suffering with our sisters and brothers in the North and South West and, with trusting hearts, offer it to the God of Peace at each Eucharist.

In union with our Religious Leaders (the Council of the Protestant Churches of Cameroon, the Superior Islamic Council and the Bishops’ Conference of Cameroon), we plead for peace and invite all those who seek solidarity, peace, dialogue and justice to join with us. May Mary, the patroness of Cameroon, intercede for us and keep us in the peace of her Son.

*Sr. Gwladys TCHOUANKUI MOUGO -
Cameroon/Chad*

SEE... JUDGE... ACT...

SOUTH AFRICA

Holy Family Priest Associate

Fr. Mokesh Kantilal Morar, is presently in formation as a Holy Family Priest Associate, in Johannesburg, South Africa. He is the chaplain to Holy Family College, Parktown and is the Organizer of the Young Christian Students (YCS) movement in SA, which is active in several schools in the archdiocese of Johannesburg. This movement of students, for students, is faith based and empowers the students to stop, reflect and act on what is happening in their lives and the world, taking faith-based action on social injustices, following their Christian beliefs. The students are challenged to take direct action on issues they face.



Fr. Mokesh Morar (second from right) at the launch of his book.

The method used is the SEE, JUDGE, ACT method:

SEE exactly what the situation is, **JUDGE** it according to their Christian faith and social teachings of the church and to

ACT on the issue accordingly, inspired by the mission of Jesus.

Mr Jabulani Tshabala, a graduate and a volunteer facilitator with Fr. Mokesh, received a certificate of Appreciation from Father, for accompanying three new groups of YCS in the Vaal area. This was a remarkable landmark in the revival of the movement, whose members seek to build their leadership, themselves, for the greater good of society. They do this in schools during Assemblies and in various Workshops in parishes among the youth. YCS groups are present at Holy College and McAuley House (Parktown); St Martin's and Immaculata HS (Soweto Johannesburg) and Summat College (CBD). Students have planned and run workshops and camps over the last few years.

Promoting the culture of Reading and Writing:

Fr. Mokesh is also very involved with the Jozi (Johannesburg) Book Fair which takes place every year in September and seeks to highlight literature written by and for the working class, that is often ignored and never acknowledged.

An important aim is to mobilise women whoever they are – the girl child in school, in tertiary institutions, working or unemployed – to explore the position of women in communities and to study their literature. At the fair this year, Fr. Mokesh Morar having launched a book *“Christianity and Socialism Today: Lesson and Possibilities from Kerala”* shared his research on Kerala, (an Indian state) which shows that it is not necessary to raise the per capita income in order to raise the standard of living for all.

Fr. Mokesh said that the people and communist government focussed on making quality services, such as education, health and transport accessible and affordable for all, especially the poor. To quote Mokesh “Even today Kerala has one of the lowest per capita incomes in the world- even lower than the rest of India- and yet it has one of the highest

standards of living for all its citizens, comparable to that of the Nordic countries.”

To learn more about Fr. Mokesh Kantilal Morar, please watch the video on the Holy Family in South Africa.

South Africa

THE THIRD LATIN-AMERICAN MEETING OF CONSECRATED SECULARS



The Joy of Belonging

The third meeting of the Seculars of Latin America took place in the Betania retreat house in Lima (Peru) from 2 to 5 August.

The meeting opened with an audio-greeting from María Dolores Pérez Ple, General Leader of the *Holy Family* Secular Institute. Then, in a letter, María Dolores encouraged us to enter fully into the meeting. The theme for reflection was “The Joy of Belonging”. The meeting ended with the drawing up of the following statement:

The Secular Group of Latin America, moved by the Family spirit, live our vocation joyfully. Looking at

ourselves and recognising our differences, we realised that we are gradually growing as Seculars in Latin America. We accompany one another without feeling that we are indispensable but are part of a group with which we identify. We live a Charism which enables us to grow and calls us to maturity so that we can work for the unity of the group and the Family. We find our identity, both as persons and as a group, in the Charism while still remaining who we are. We discover our riches and place them at the service of the Family of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles.

Out of this identity we live the joy of belonging to the Secular Institute of the Holy Family of Bordeaux. This joy of belonging has a triple path of communion which helps us in our human relationships. The experience of God which we live in all circumstances helps us to live

contemplation in our everyday lives and express it in the mission of being a sign and presence of unity in the Church, in society and in the midst of our particular life-situations. We are deeply committed to the defence of justice and the care of our planet in order to promote life.

THANKING HISTORY, CELEBRATING LIFE

ARGENTINA



Almost all important events begin with a dream.

The beginning of our history was marked by our Good Father's cosmic dream.

With the dream of spreading and strengthening the faith everywhere, a group of courageous Sisters brought the *Holy Family* Charism to Argentina and opened a community in Juan José Castelli in June 1971.

Six years later, in April 1977, a new community was opened in Quitilipi, with only two Sisters – Teresa Riega and Emilia Fernández. In time, some others joined them. The first mission of this community was involvement in rural pastoral work in the area in which we now live and in the aboriginal colony.

As they went through the countryside visiting families, the Sisters noticed that the majority of young women had nothing else to do when they finished their primary education but to remain in the country and marry young. The young men had the option of going to the city by bicycle to study. So the Sisters, in dialogue with the families, began to dream of a hostel where young women of limited resources could stay. With characteristic generosity, the Franciscan Friars Minor donated land for the hostel.

The first idea was that the Sisters would provide accommodation and guidance, and the families would provide the food.

It worked like that for a short time. But the difficulties of paying for the

food increased. Then Señora Elena Tercich, well-known for her big, generous heart, who was working in the Ministry for Social Welfare made the proposal that the Ministry should be asked to provide food for the young women. That plan was followed through and that is how we are functioning to the present day even with

It is not easy to know how best to create a climate of freedom as well as responsibility when dealing with thirty teenagers with different histories and lifestyles. We try to achieve this in dialogue with the families. Together, we try to find what is best for the young women and evaluate what we are doing constantly.



the ever-increasing complications of the administrative demands of the present Ministry for Social Development.

The dream of having a second-level, and sometimes third-level, education was completed by having a holistic education. Sewing, yoga, karate and care of the earth workshops were offered. The young women also received a catechetical and biblical formation and took part in retreats and pastoral work. They had sports as well - sometimes in collaboration young men's hostel.

In recent years, classes for student support were increased because of all the teachers' strikes. This ensured that the young women did not waste their precious study time.

Sometimes a Sister had to be nurse, counsellor, psychologist and even child-minder since some young women had babies while they were living in the hostel.

On 18 August we celebrated the 35th anniversary of the opening of the *Holy Family* hostel. We invited all the young women and Sisters who were part of the dream to the celebration.

Many young women have passed through, and are still passing through, this house sharing their joy with us and touching our hearts in a way that helps us to listen deeply to their needs. It is not always easy to discover these needs because of changing cultural and family life as well as their ability to navigate around the social media etc.

This celebration led us to a new awareness that, although it sometimes seems that we have little success, the experiences shared by those who passed through here many years ago helped us to evaluate the fruits of this ministry optimistically.

Echoes Heard

Spending five of my teenage years in this house gave me the only

opportunity I had to study and have a different future.

Learning to live with others, to share to forgive, to laugh together helped me to grow as a woman and to have the family which I have today.

Thanks to the Christian formation which I received in the hostel, I am now the director of rural community and this makes me very happy. Here I learned how to dream and to fight for those dreams.

Thank you, Sisters for all that you gave us.

This celebration also convinced us of the need to encourage meetings. The

joy of these women when they met again after perhaps 30 years was boundless.

It convinced us too of the need to celebrate history, to re-read it, to learn from experience and above all to rejoice because of all the seeds that were sown, grew and became a big tree which today shelters other lives.

Our Good Father's dream continues to be expressed in everyday love.

*Srs, Zulema FRANK and
Teresa BECK,
Community of Quitilipi, Chaco,
Argentina*

PASTORAL CARE FOR CHILDREN

PHILIPPINES

We the Sisters in Bulan Philippines and the Lay Associates and with some volunteer leaders have been working with the 'Pastoral Care for Children's Program since 2017 June.

We are taking care of 70 selected families in Obrero among the underprivileged, and those who live in the peripheries. We are glad that we are called to be God's instruments of Good News to these unvisited families. Yes, we are the hands and the feet of God to reach out to these families. We are glad to see the improvement of these families taking more responsibility for their children; their health, spiritual and social welfare.



With these 70 families we feel that we have built the bigger family of God where God is really visible in their simple, fragile and vulnerable situations.



During our regular leader's meetings we take time to read, reflect, and share the Word of God. During one of our meetings we were inspired to reach out to another area. We prayed about it and discerned with the guidance of the Parish Priest. So, our priority was to choose Zone 2 the poorest and the biggest Barangay in Bulan. it has a population of 6,260 which consists of 1,500 families and 1,003 household and a high percentage of undernourished children and indigent families. This area is always prone to typhoons and floods since it is near the sea. Most of them are fisher folk. We are glad that we have chosen this area to expand our service.

Sr. Bernie and a few Pastoral Care of Children volunteer leaders first met the Baragay Officials and introduced the Program. They were willing to accommodate the PCC program and to give their full support. Their initial interest to support the program was very encouraging.

So, we made arrangements to meet the volunteer leaders and in preparation we had several meetings. So, the Leaders Training Seminar took place from July 21-23, 2018. The blessing is most of the volunteer leaders are working in the Barangay clinic as health workers and midwives.

The three days intensive Training Seminar for the Leaders was conducted by Mrs. Erlinda Querimit one of the National PCC Formators from Manila. The 15 Volunteer Leaders received their accomplishment certificate on July 23, 2018.

Monthly the Leaders have 3 main activities to accomplish. First is home visitation by the first week of the month. The second activity is the Leaders meeting where they share their experiences on the home visitation in the light of the Gospel of the day. The third activity is the Celebration of Life; where all the families meet with their children. It is a time for spiritual and values formation, parents to share their stories, clarify their questions and doubts and a joyful time with the bigger family.

Being part of this program as a volunteer leader, I am blessed that I am able to accompany families in our care.

*Rosenia Gito, Lay Associate –
Bulan, Philippines*

SESSION WITH THE LAY ASSOCIATES PAKISTAN

During the holiday month, from 15th to 17th July, our Lay Associates in Pakistan had a two- day session. This was in view of preparing for the bicentenary of our foundation. There were thirty participants from both Punjab and frontier Provinces. The theme for this session was :

Live Communion, Celebrate Family, Be Mission in Today's World:

Based on the theme our Delegation Leader, Sr. Angelina Sohan delivered the opening talk. She underlined the complexity of the concept of family and its multiple meanings. She said that the Family is linked to environments, cultures and time; that it evokes notions of relationships , affection, closeness, mutuality, love given and received: It is the home. On the other hand, there is the pain and frustration caused by violence and conflict. She added that living communion in today's world is a challenge but is possible and that 'to live in a Family is to recognise our interdependence.'

Speaking on different topics some of our Sisters generously shared their knowledge with the Lay Associates. This was an opportunity for the Lay Associates to revise their Action Plan.

Here are some of the important elements from this 2018 to 2021 Plan:

1. Celebrating communion among PBN Family and the universe family to be explored and strengthened.
2. To plant more trees, clean the environment and share more about the universe family.
3. Share Power Points on the emerging world view and the cosmic walk.
4. Animate the teachers and children to keep the environment clean and train them to grow and love plants.
5. Get experts help to animate in ecology.
6. Inculcate Holy Family values in the Associates , youth and children.
7. Preparation to celebrate the Bicentenary as a Family.

At the end the Lay Associates decided to pay more attention this year, towards planting more trees, keeping the environment clean and training of people to grow and love plants.

Sr. Sumble
(*National leader of the Lay Associates*)
Pakistan

