



Voices of our Sisters and the Collaborators

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Editorial

Dear Sisters,

It's a great joy to communicate the life of the Congregation through this 6th issue of the Bulletin. In spite of the many difficulties life continues and keeps evolving in all our communities and the missions.

We have just celebrated Easter and we continue to live the Eastertide with Hope.

I wholeheartedly thank the Sisters who have shared their life experiences, stories of their mission, life of the Provinces, Jubilees, etc. The Sisters enjoy reading the Bulletin and take great interest in the life of each sister and the mission. Our bonds are deepened by our sharing and the exchange of our life experiences. May St. Emilie bless us and keep us united as one family.

I thank Sr. Janet for her formative article on the Charism and Spirituality of the Congregation. It certainly helps us to see the Charism of our Congregation in a different perspective.

We have an interesting series of articles that are beginning in this Bulletin called 'From The Archives' and is the hand of Sr. Margaret Anne who while going through the history of the congregation found some letters and information that is very inspiring for us all.

Thank you dear Sisters for your interest and cooperation.

With all my best wishes,

Renee Quadros SJA

SPIRITUALITY and all that!

Part THREE



In the last two articles I outlined my ideas that spirituality is describing God's gift to each of us which enables us to reach out to others including God Himself. Each person is conceived with many gifts, all of which need to be nurtured and used if they are to develop with the person as they mature and come to play their part in God's plan to bring every person into the fullness of their likeness of the God of love. No-one is born with their spirituality fully formed, not even Jesus and Mary. They were both born with unsullied holiness; we could break off here to discuss what 'holiness' means but it is too big a subject to include, let us just accept that holiness is a measure of how close we are to God. In this article I will not discuss how St. Emilie's Spiritual Strengths developed, but I do want to emphasize that they DID develop. She had to grow into them. I will be sharing what are her Spiritual Strengths which are revealed through her writings. These writings were written by the mature Emilie so they reflect her strengths as a mature Christian.

All my life as a Sister of St. Joseph I was told that our Spirituality was based on the Incarnation. I always struggled to understand what that meant as every other Sister I met from other Congregations said the same thing. So I feel it is important to say something about this. Before Christ came we did not know about the Father and the Spirit. God was GOD; Holy (meaning untouchable and even dangerous, to look on His face was to die); He was 'Out There' (I am not sure where 'out there' is but he was not close or easily 'touched'); He loves us deeply and some people developed amazing relationships with Him; He gave us Commands and demanded a strict adherence to them to remain in His favor. The Old Testament quite clearly tells us that God loves us, has great patience and great mercy for us but we have misused our freedom and we have chosen to turn from Him and have fallen into sin. This has created a great obstacle between us. Into this situation God takes the initiative and sends Jesus, God and man. He is Emmanuel, God with us. This changes the way we experience God. Every person who follows Jesus is a Christian and their spirituality, their habitual way of responding to God's touch, is affected or based on the 'fact' of the Incarnation. We now know that in the one God



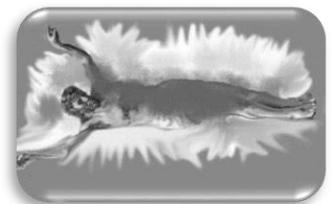
there are three persons, one in being but taking different 'roles' in the Godhead. In our lives God has chosen to reveal Himself to us by letting us experience His action through Jesus, a man like us yet also God, through the Holy Spirit whose action in our lives is constant but 'veiled' so that many do not realize that they are His actions. Both Jesus and the Spirit reveal to us the Father to whom the Son prayed and to whom He was obedient unto death. So, yes, every Congregation's Spirituality is affected and shaped by the Incarnation because we are Christians. The Mystery of the Incarnation is a vast topic and the question I ask to the Lord is, what part of this Mystery do you give to us to bring to your people? There is no way that can be answered in this short article. A book could be written on this, and it still would not contain all that can be said.

However, the reason why I feel that to understand the Spirituality of the Congregation is so important, is because our Spirituality is the means that God has given us to play the role in the Mystery of the Incarnation which He has allotted to us. The first person to be formed by God in this specific Spirituality was St. Emilie. If we look at St. Emilie's cocktail of Spiritual Strengths, an understanding of this Spirituality can develop. The following is a brief summary of her Spiritual Strengths which can be divided into four categories.



Remain in my presence, if you stray I will recall you.

The first group is what I call personal virtues. These virtues seem to have developed in her as she grew and as a result of God's touch in her life, but also what she seemed to feel should also be part of the Sisters' lives. The greatest among these is what she called 'Recollection'. In her understanding, this gift from God gave her a growing



awareness of God's presence at all times even in the midst of her routine daily activities. In the first article of her 1835 she wrote, recollection, which must be like the soul of this Congregation.' To be the soul is to be a vital and deep part of the entity. Emilie felt that every Sister had this gift and she should ceaselessly strive' to develop it. What is being said here is that each of us called by God to be a Sister of St. Joseph HAS already been given the seed of this virtue/attitude. If we are open God will let it grow in us. If we are not willing, it will not grow, God never forces us. There are many other virtues in this group the most important include a gift of prayer, a trust in God's Providence and the total gift of self. The second category are those which come as God's revelation to her through the many mystical experiences

she has. The mystical experiences actually encouraged her to respond to these virtues and attitudes which God had already marked as important to her when He created her. Her vision of the Incarnate and crucified Lord in the in St. Peter's Church is well known to most of us. From this and other experiences she had of God's love matured many of her great Spiritual gifts. These include her love of Eucharistic adoration; her contemplation of the wounds of Christ and the depth of God's love for us all; her understanding of the role that suffering united to Jesus can play in salvation and most important her commitment to what she called, the virtue of Works of Charity. Also, in this group, there comes the dedication of the Congregation to St. Joseph and especially 'of the Apparition', from the Gospel of St. Matthew.



The third category is that of Mission. Her home town of Gaillac had a devotion to St. Francis Xavier who was a great foreign Missionary and maybe this was the first seed that was sown in her to go out to those who did not know Christ. Emilie wrote in a letter to a priest who had invited her to Greece, 'my vocation is explicitly for the missions' (letter 382, 1853). With this calling God gave her, and us, many necessary spiritual gifts to carry out the varied calls which come to us.

The last group of Spiritual Strengths I have called Lifestyle. In this group are the gifts needed to live Religious Life and in addition the call to live a simple way of living. In her letters Emilie does not discuss her views on these topics but occasionally she intervenes when she feels someone is not living the rule. It is the same with the simplicity of our lifestyle. She does not discuss it, she just lived it and it was passed on over the generations.

In this article I have tried to illustrate the richness of the heritage we all have, God has called each one of us to join Emilie and to carry out His will in the same manner that she did. He has given each one of us the necessary spiritual strengths that enable us to form a unique apostolic body in the Church. We each have a unique spirituality but we also have the seeds for those virtues and attitudes that bring us into union with each other and form the bases of the spiritual 'cocktail' which is unique to the Congregation. They are God's gifts to each of us but He waits for us to accept them. If you ask Him, he will help you to understand and develop them in your life today. If we allow Him to do this, we will live our lives in Him and play the role her created us to play in His plan.



Sr. Janet M. Arrowsmith

From the Archives - Part 1.

Remembering our past involves something like letting light into more and more of the corners and byways of our identity; what returns in memory is now set in a larger landscape. We have learned; we have grown. The past is never over, but it is not everything.

R. Williams.

During the past few years I have had the opportunity to explore a variety of documents in our archives. These include past copies of the 'Entre Nous', letters of Superior Generals and accounts of the life of different Sisters throughout the Congregation. As I read this material, I kept coming across references to World War 11 and of how these years 1939-1945 were lived throughout the Congregation. Reading this material was a moving experience, not only the personal accounts of different Sisters but the way in which they lived and responded to the incredible situations which they were faced with.

History has the ability to inform and motivate our hopes and expectations. Today in light of the pandemic and the current world conflicts our history, if integrated and reflected upon, can help us discover an energy and a pathway in which to view present realities. In researching and writing this article I appreciate the assistance I received from Sisters in other Provinces.

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We begin with snippets from the letters of Mother Francoise de Sales Le Gal, Superior General (1933 – 1947) in relation to life during World War 11. Her letters outline the realities of these difficult years throughout the Congregation.

The first letter is written from Marseilles on the 29th November 1936 where she comments:

The dawn of 1937 seems very dark and stormy, let us be ready by prayer and sacrifice.

On the 2nd June 1937 she again writes:

In these times of universal confusion, when everything is falsified and complicated, I feel the necessity of speaking to you about simplicity, a virtue required to all those who want to follow Christ who appeared on earth bearing the features of trust, candour and grace.

During the war years' communication between the Mother House and the Provinces and Regions were curtailed. The resumption of communications is outlined in a letter written again by Mother Francoise de Sales Le Gal, on 28th August 1944.

Blessed be God! Here we are at last after long years of war which have seemed centuries to me, and yet I have never been so near you, as during this sad period of separation and of trial. In thought I was in the midst of you united to your prayers, to your works, to your sorrows, to your cares and hopes. ... This time of trial has been hard for all. Each one has suffered from isolation especially our superiors who were accustomed to submit to us their



decisions, projects and difficulties. The good Master has certainly made up for what was impossible by granting them light and strength. Now let us no longer remain isolated, independent but let us again unite and forget our petty interests for the general good of our Congregation. United we are called to be strong and our Congregation, tried by war, will be like a united vine which has been pruned and will bear good fruit. It will flourish and spread, sustained by the fidelity, generosity and a spirit of abnegation of its moment.

The war has caused much ruin. Our Congregation has not been spared. Four sisters have been victims of bombardment, namely Sister Dorothea Condamine of Sfax North Africa 14 December 1943; Mother Teresa of the Child Jesus Junguent at Peiraeus 11th December 1943, Sr. Valentine Brousse at Piraeus Greece 11 January 1944; and Mother Josephine Lorenzetti at Castelfiorentino Italy 9 March 1944.

The sufferings endured by our sisters, their courageous patience in relieving all, corporal and spiritual miseries which are so numerous during this period of misfortune, give us the firm hope that God will send us good vocations to fill the void and to continue to clear the way and sow the harvest in the field of our good Father.

Many of our houses have been struck with bombs, several were completely destroyed. Let us re animate our confidence in Divine Providence. It is His House. He will reconstruct the ruins and succour those in need. Our Blessed Mother experienced the benefits of this confidence when she said "I know no other line of conduct for religious than to follow the dictates of Providence and act always in accordance with its views".

In June 1945 Mother Françoise de Sales Le Gal again writes:

The war in Europe is over. It is a great blessing! However heavy clouds still darken the horizon. Let us ask God to scatter them and to strive for peace for all nations, so that His reign of Love will be spread all over the world.

The War in the Pacific area concluded later, on 15th August 1945, and in the Fremantle History of the House we find:

Our Lady's Feast brought great joy to this fair land which had been at War with the Japanese. On that lovely morning the sirens on boats and whistles on trains blew. This brought the good news which we had been expecting for some days. ... The school children had a two-day holiday and quite enjoyed all the excitement

A further letter in this same year, 1945 states:

According to our Constitutions the General Chapter should be held this year, but owing to these troubled times and the difficulties of travelling it will not take place. We have been advised to wait. It is a great disappointment for me who wish too much to see you after these six anxious and terrible years of war which have separated us and cut off all correspondence. The scourge of war has struck all the regions of



our Congregation, and it is still destroying our houses in the East and in the Far East. Let us redouble our prayers, our fervor and our generosity in God's service so as to draw the blessings of Peace on the whole world, a just and lasting peace. It is then that we shall be able to hold our General Chapter.

The following year, July 1946, Mother Françoise de Sales and another sister had an audience with the Pope after which she communicates his message to the Congregation.

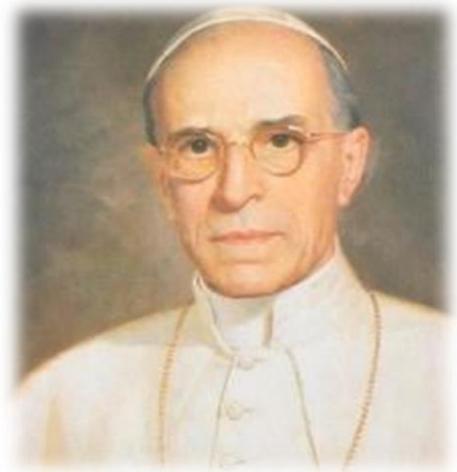
Our Holy Father kindly asked if our Congregation had suffered during the war and whether we had had any victims. I answered that 6 sisters had been killed by bombs. Three in Tuscany, two in Greece, one in Tunisia and our sisters in Burma had had to endure great privations. On hearing this, a look of compassion spread over his countenance then, he asked what works we had undertaken.

Having assured our Holy Father of our filial affection I begged His Holiness to give me a watchword, a word of reference for our sisters. After having recollected himself for a moment he replied:

Tell them that I wish them to lead an Interior Life. An Interior life he repeated. He repeated once again, your interior life must be all the more intense because you are engaged in exterior works.

I assured His Holiness that I would transmit his words to all the Sisters.

This she did in a letter to the Congregation in July 1946. It is evident that the experience of these difficult years was lived in extreme situations and conditions with an alertness to the action of Divine Providence. Some of these experiences from Provinces and individual Sisters will be presented in a further article in a future Bulletin.



Thanksgiving Mass of 175th Arrival in Myanmar by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Apparition



The 175th Arrival Anniversary of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition in Myanmar (Burma) was celebrated at 10:00 am, on 26 February 2022 at St. Joseph's Convent, Mandalay.

The Jubilee Mass was led by Archbishop Marco Tin Win, the Archbishop of Mandalay in the presence of the St. Joseph sisters and their students. Before the beginning of Mass, the Jubilee messages of Pope Francis and other religious leaders was read.

In his homily the Archbishop said:

"We celebrate the Jubilee as an event prepared for us by God. The period of 175 years is full of grace and blessings. Looking back on 175 years we see many blessings and graces in this missionary journey. Even today, it is not easy for missionaries to come to Myanmar where there is little electricity and difficulties in the provision of food. The first missionary Sisters came to bring Christ to the people for their salvation, even to the point of risking their life. They contributed to a missionary way of life with humility and accepting the inevitable challenges. Their missionary spirit is remembered and celebrated in this Jubilee today.

In the first epistle of Peter 4:14, it said "If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and God rests on you". They are blessed because they obeyed the voice of the Holy Spirit. In looking back 175 years, we can meditate on what inspired them and recall that the Spirit of the Lord is upon us, as we all celebrate this Jubilee today. Let us spend the Jubilee year with the Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit of the Lord is upon us. Let us listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit, and try to be sacrificial and humble missionaries. Let's go to the lowest and poor places and undertake missionary work. The Lord Jesus Christ said he was anointed to set the prisoner free and to forgive the sinner. In our mission let us heal the blindness of our age."



The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition were the first female missionary group to arrive in Burma. The history of the arrival of the Sisters in Myanmar is as follows:

On the 8th October 1845 Mother Emilie was in Malta. It was from here that the plan of making a foundation in far off Burma was to eventuate. In Malta, Emilie met Fr Bruno of the Congregation of the Oblates of Piedmont, a missionary from Burma who desired to obtain the help of the Sisters for the mission. There was a need for women religious to care and educate abandoned children, and young women in boarding and day schools and to establish a care home for the elderly. Fr Bruno made known his desire to Mother Emilie, who had long cherished the idea of sending Sisters under the patronage of St Francis Xavier to missionary countries. Mother Emilie waited for the Lord's plan to become clearer and finally sent six Sisters to Burma. They arrived at Mawlamyine on 17 June

1847. Today in accord with the Pope’s intentions we walk together praising and thanking God for what He has done.

These sisters worked hard in the mission dedicating their life to a mission of love and of sowing seeds of faith which continue to grow today. They undertook all kinds of charitable works in a spirit of service witnessing to the love of God and for His greater glory. Over the years the support and education of the girls, enabling them to stand on their own feet, has been constant. At the same time, we participated in the mission of the Catholic Church in a variety of ways. There are 35 communities in Burma and there may be over 40 if we count all the small branches. Most Communities are in the Mandalay Diocese. Over the 175 years the dedication and sacrifices of our sisters are well known.



The opening celebration of our Jubilee year began in Mandalay.

Thanksgiving Masses for the arrival in Myanmar of the Sisters will be celebrated in different dioceses with Mawlamyine hosting the main celebration

“At this time, we thank all the Sisters who have gone before us for their wholehearted dedication and for all the sisters who are dedicating their lives to our present mission. Please pray for all the St. Joseph sisters that they can dedicate their lives until the end. May the blessing of the jubilee shower upon all of you. Amen”. (Sr. Marie Therese Phe Ling Yah, Provincial of Myanmar).

Sr. Lucia Thandar Aung, SJA
Mandalay Community



*The 175th Jubilee Celebration
of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition
and the Silver and Golden Jubilee of three sisters in Kalay,
Myanmar*



The celebration was held on the 22nd March, 2022 in Kalay and led by Bishop Felix and 17 priests. It was a successful and joyful occasion.

We were blest to celebrate the Jubilee of 175 years of the presence of our SJA Sisters in Myanmar. On this occasion we recalled our pioneer sisters who were chosen and sent by St. Emilie our foundress. They left for Myanmar (Burma) without hesitation with no fear of the distance and difficulties they were to encounter. We also recalled and thanked our former sisters who were leaders during these 175 years. Those sisters who laboured to establish the mission and the Province as it is today.



In looking back, we are aware of the many difficulties faced caused by the dictatorship government. But difficulties and hardships disguised God's blessings. Over the years the mission spread to India, and Thailand. We thank the Lord for the blessings he had bestowed on our Province and our Jubilarian Sisters.

In his message Archbishop Paul Tschang said, "You have remained rooted in God and reality, remembering the past with gratitude, embracing challenges with hope and taking a risk together for a mission." We keep in mind this Jubilee year as a year of "Liberation and Consolation" as it is described in Leviticus chapter 25.

Bishop Felix, bishop of Kalay diocese said in his homily, “We need to be liberated from the slavery of material concerns and search for an inner liberation”. Inner liberation is very important in everyday life especially in a Jubilee year. That is our theme for the Jubilee and for our Congregation after 2019 General Chapter.

We thank our former Provincial Sr. Magdalene and the present Provincial Sr. Marie Therese Phe Ling Yah who led and supported each sister. They prayed and worked hard for the success of the Jubilee celebrations. We are unable to celebrate at a Provincial level in one place due to the political situation in our country. But God is working in His own way as we celebrate in the different dioceses. We have been busy preparing these celebrations and are thankful for what we have experienced during these various celebrations.

These Celebrations are being held in the midst of the darkness of our political situation. Participation by the bishop and priests from the pastoral center, along with the faithful at St Mary’s parish and other guests and our Sisters resulted in a packed Church.

Thank you, Lord, for keeping us safe and protect us in the midst of the Pandemic and the conflict in our country. We really grateful for all your blessings bestowed upon us

The Jubilarians – Sr. Alberta (Golden) Srs. Perpetua and Margarita (Silver)

It is You, Lord, who have provided us with more than we could ever have imagined.

You have surrounded us with your countless blessings.



Sr.. Anny Sui Te and Sr. Margarita Sai Tin Thiam



A family reunion after ten years of separation

It is no longer a surprise to say that Covid-19 is shaking up our way of life, our traditions and our ways of being, seeing and doing things. I would like to share an experience which resulted in a lost opportunity to visit my home country (Myanmar) due to the political situation.

As a missionary in France, we can have a visit every 3 years. Since the beginning of 2021, I had been thinking of visiting my family, friends and our Sisters in my native country. I was also hoping it would allow me to meet the Sisters during the 175th Jubilee celebrations of the arrival of our Sisters in Burma (Myanmar). However, I found myself at an impasse since my initial plan was prevented by the military coup along with the negative consequences in the health care system. What was I to do in this situation? Was it worth risking my life and that of my family? It was not an easy conversation to talk about. Air ticket costs were very expensive, and I would have to spend 2 weeks of my 1-month holiday in quarantine and be subject to the insecurity within the country.

I sought advice from several people and took time to discern the situation. Part of my family live in the United States, and the possibility of visiting them came to me. Permission from the Provincial of the time (Sr. Cecilia Schembri) was given immediately, after my request, along with the unanimous agreement of my family. I headed for the United States to spend my holidays with my 3 brothers who had been there for almost 10 years. It was very emotional to find them at Grand Rapid (Michigan) Airport.



We spent a lot of time together reminiscing about our childhood. Some memories were similar; others of the same event were at times different. Seeing them during my stay there gave me an assurance/confidence because they “live with dignity like the others” (house, work, car, studies), in short, with everything necessary for life! I also got to know my 2 new little nephews who were born there, and with whom the conversations were very funny as we had to use gestures, and a mixture of 2 languages .

Beyond the family circle, I had the chance to meet Burmese communities and some close friends, all who welcomed me warmly. It was a joy to share our experiences. I had a good time praying and singing with them in our mother tongue in a place which was completely unknown to them a few years ago. Above all, I could see that they too were making a better life like the others.

The joy we felt at our first meeting was reversed into tears at the same airport when the time came to leave. It took me several days to get over this separation and return to my normal life. The words from St Paul (Rm 8, 18) "there is no common measure between the sufferings of the present time and the glory that will be revealed to us" resonated with me and helped me to overcome this trial by turning it into strength.

In hindsight, if someone would have asked me my regrets today, certainly it would be my Mom's physical absence from among us. However, thanks to the social network, we were able to communicate almost every day and to exchange news, to pray and sing, especially at meal times. In summary, I can say that I made the right decision, even though I would have liked to go to my country that I love so much. While I wait 3 years for my next vacation, I give thanks to God and thank the responsible Sisters for having granted me this beautiful opportunity which I could not have imagined 6 months ago.

Sister Veronica KHUP SAN PALL St Maur (France)



My life belongs totally to God.

This is my testimony and is unique for his love surpasses everything. I give thanks to the Lord who has called me to religious life and sustains me by his grace as I journey with my vocation.

Originally, I never thought of myself as becoming a sister as I considered I did not have the potential to be a religious. I did not own any certificates which is a norm to being a religious. It is normal in our village, especially for the girls, after their elementary education is finished and go to work. As I was in a similar situation and from a humble family once, I completed my elementary education I learned traditional textile weaving which provided financial assistance for my family.

I grew up in an environment where religious etiquette and moral values are treasured and I followed a simple routine of life. However, there was to be a turning point which changed my life. I had never dreamt that I would hear the gentle whispering sound of my God. I began to discern this call and decided firmly to respond to the call. I experienced the presence and love of God and found the way to become a sister. I was prepared with all I needed to overcome all hindrances and obstacles. Throughout my religious life His love and care for me has been revealed in several unspeakable ways.

I have been in 6 different missions and have been in the Larnaca community in Cyprus since 2001. It is not an easy mission for me. There is a language barrier, and I have insufficient abilities and other difficulties in this current mission. I work for the Lord and for the good of the people. *“Go and with what you have and will receive do all the good you can.”* I turn to God who called me to this way of life and who comforts me in my situation as I work for his humanity and witness His love. He continues to give me the graces required and I believe that there is nothing except the grace of God aiding me in persevering in religious life.

Sr. Cecilia Yin Mya
Larnaca



The Island of Bohol - Philippines

A Frightening Experience

I am very thankful to God and to my community for my first holiday since becoming a SJA Sister. I travelled to my hometown on Pitogo Island, Purok 4, Pres. Carlos P. Garcia Bohol at Central Visayas. I arrived at the seaport to find the coastguard had cancelled all the motorboats due to the incoming super typhoon. Upon learning this news, I was a little bit upset. I asked myself, shall I go back to our convent or go to my sister's mother – in- law's house nearby so I don't have to spend money for transportation. The security guards suggested I go to another place where I would find illegal motorboats

I was a little bit worried about my mother who would be alone during the coming super typhoon. I found an illegal motorboat. The other passengers, many of whom I recognized, were also stranded. After two hours we were able to cross the sea. In the middle of our journey there was heavy rain and as the motorboat had no cover, we and all our things were wet. Thanks be to God I arrived home safely.

The following day, 16th December 2021, my mother and I were preparing to attend the first day of Misa de Gallo or Dawn Mass. It was windy and had been raining from 9:00 am – 12:00 noon. Our barangay captain was roaming around reminding that all should evacuate, especially those who live near the seaside, as the predicted storm signal was at number 4 level. A storm surge was expected. We discussed whether we should evacuate or not and reasoned that we are used to many typhoons, strong winds and roaring waves and were not frightened and considered that it will just be normal.



We also prepared, at least 1 set of clothes, food, medicine, flashlight, mobile phones and water. At 1:00 pm, the electricity was cut off and the winds strengthened. Our bathroom was the first part of our house to be destroyed. It was terrifying. At 2pm, the typhoon became stronger. Our neighbours went to the evacuation centre and we decided to evacuate to our relative's house, 10 minutes walking distance away and from there could still watch our house. The weather forecast said at 7pm in the evening, the typhoon 'Odette' will hit Bohol. By 6pm, the typhoon had become stronger and the wooden window of the house we had evacuated to, flew away. The rain came in and destroyed the kitchen. We panicked, and tried to call the rescuer but with no electricity we did not have signals on our mobile phones. As a group of women, it was the first time we had experienced such strong wind and rain.

The children kept themselves busy with their school modules, and papers. By 8pm that night, the typhoon intensified, and it was really a super typhoon. We heard coconut trees and other trees falling down. The sound of the sea waves made us feel we were being carried by them. We stayed in one room and prayed the Rosary. All of us were trembling. The drops of rain with the salty sea waves washed our faces. As we were wondering and thinking about the possibility of a tidal wave part of the roof of the house was blown off. This experience was very scary and my prayer was "Lord



please forgive us our wrongdoing and our sinful ways. Lord, look on us with Mercy, Love and Compassion. Whilst looking at the sky I kept repeating the prayer “Lord have mercy on us.” Each person was uttering, very loudly, their own prayer. After around 15 minutes the typhoon stopped and we continued with our prayer. However, the typhoon again became stronger and the remaining part of our roof disappeared. With many trees near the house, we were fearful of them falling and causing more damage. Again

after 15 minutes the typhoon became calmer and we called the neighbours asking if we could transfer to their house which was made of concrete cement. There were already four families in this house, but they allowed us to join them.

We remained there until 4,00am when we returned to our place, which was washed out like so many others in the neighbourhood. Many other houses some distance from us were affected as was the whole island of Pitogo. All our things were gone like cooking pots and the place was full of mud, sand and big stones. Later I went to the store to buy a pot for cooking and heard many stories about people from distant places who were homeless and of others who had died from fallen trees and other kinds of accidents.

Recalling these frightening and traumatic scenarios leaves me with goose bumps. As I reflected on Saint Emilie’s words from the Account of her Interior Life which refers to “*Finding God in difficult moments*” I was comforted and reassured that God always forgives and loves his people. Listening to other people’s experiences during those difficult moments made me realize the importance of communal prayer asking God for his love and forgiveness.

Thank you for allowing me to share my experiences and the difficult moments which leads me to find God. GOD bless us All.

Shared by: Sister Thea C.Palatan SJA

These pictures were taken after the super typhoon where we see Sisters Esperanza, Rose Juliet and Ruth Garda distributing relief goods and purified drinking water.

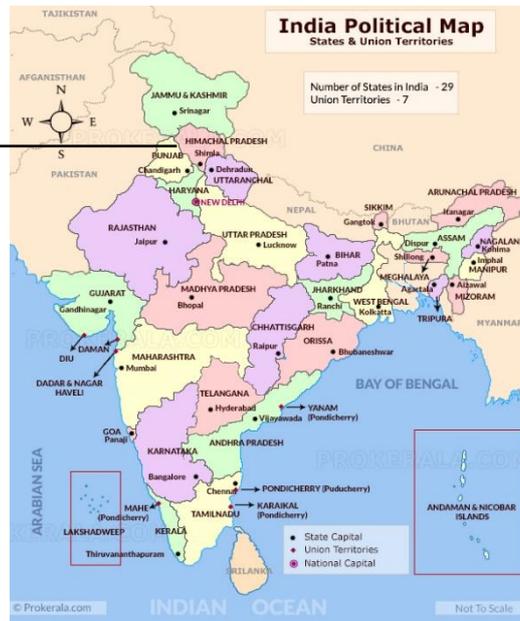




Inauguration of the New Community in Bahu Akbarpur, Rothak, Haryana, India.

The Province of India/Haiti had the joy of extending our mission to the State of Haryana in the north of India in the Archdiocese of Delhi

Haryana
New Mission



This is a mission where we will work in collaboration with the Archdiocese of Delhi. It is 45 kilometers from the Capital City of India, to the interior, in a very poor area. It is a Social Work Wing of the diocese called Chetanalaya where there are many different social, health care and educational activities for the people of that area.

Our Mission is:

- ❖ Pastoral work in the Parish - with family visits, creating BCC and SCC groups etc.
- ❖ Work among the youth in the Parish.
- ❖ Care of the Home for the elderly people. This has already begun with a few inmates and a counselling center.
- ❖ Care of people who are physically and mentally handicapped.
- ❖ Two Sisters will teach in the CBSC Board school run by the Archdiocese.
- ❖ Care of the dispensary for the sick.

A community of four Sisters was installed with the inauguration taking place on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord on the 2nd February. Rev. Anil J. Couto, the Archbishop of Delhi, along with many other priests of the diocese concelebrated the Mass and warmly welcomed the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition to the Archdiocese of Delhi. In her

introduction, Sr. Thaddeus gave an outline of the history of the Congregation. The newly built Chapel was blessed and the Blessed Sacrament was installed.

The Community members were introduced to all those who were present. We as a SJA family committed ourselves to this mission and of working in collaboration with other priests and lay people in this Centre. A Center which welcomes and reaches out to all in need.

As daughters of St. Emilie, whose presence we could feel throughout this celebration, we gathered in prayer thanking the Lord for all his love and goodness to us. We sang a hymn to St. Emilie and confided the protection and care of the Sisters and the Centre to St. Joseph our Patron. We place the pioneers of this new community Sr. Jyothi Samad, Sr. Marita Hembrom, Sr. Neelima Ekka, Sr. Arockia Mary and Sr. Madhuri Xalxo under the patronage of St. Joseph and pray for them through the intercession of St. Emilie our mother. May they be blessed by the Lord in abundance to be His faithful witnesses and fruitful missionaries.







Mission in Panama

*Let us keep in our hearts the sole desire of working
for God's greater glory.*

Our presence in these lands of Panama is the fruit of a longing for openness and acceptance of the Will of God. In the year 1993, Father Andrés J. Weller cap., addressed our Congregation with these words, "I invite you, in the name of our Archbishop Magrath, to come and collaborate in the construction of the Kingdom of God in this part of the world." After a journey of discernment and in tune with St Emilie, we gave a generous 'Yes'.

Full of joy and with trust in God, we wish to share our missionary experience in the midst of this town. At the moment we are accompanying families with catechesis, the delegates of the Word of God and leaders of the communities.

"Family life, the privileged place to receive faith" The main objective of family catechesis is to build a Christian community, and at the same time accompany children on the journey of faith in preparation for their first communion. In this process, the parents become their children's catechist and are accompanied by a guide couple whom they meet with weekly. Similarly, the children, after receiving catechism from their parents, meet their animator to celebrate and reinforce their experience of faith.

These meetings take place in the families' house. This experience brings us closer to the reality that surrounds us, allowing us to know, touch and feel the various situations in which the family live. However, due to the pandemic situation at this time, these meetings are taking place in the chapels. As sisters, we seek to be a living and close presence. Our context shows us a reality of family fragmentation, making us feel and believe that it is worth continuing to work with these families.

We walk with great hope as we visit the most distant and those communities which are difficult to access. We travel by car, horse, boat or sometimes on foot. As we are welcomed by the families, we perceive a joy and interest in what we share with them. They are grateful people and our visit and accompaniment are meaningful for them, especially because they recognize that reaching their communities is not easy.

"We will be able to tell them by their fruits! In the same way, a sound tree produces good fruit."

We can say that we are witnesses of a process filled with hope and where each family is able to deepen their faith journey. In turn the family becomes an evangelizer for other families. By giving, they receive, by announcing they listen and by teaching, they learn.

A Coordinator couple shared with us:

"Through this journey we have increased our faith and overcome many difficulties that have made us recognize the goodness and mercy of God placing him in the centre of our home"

A committed laywoman said:

"Family catechesis has helped me to learn more about the Word of God, sharing with the family, reading the Bible to continue growing in faith, sharing in family union"

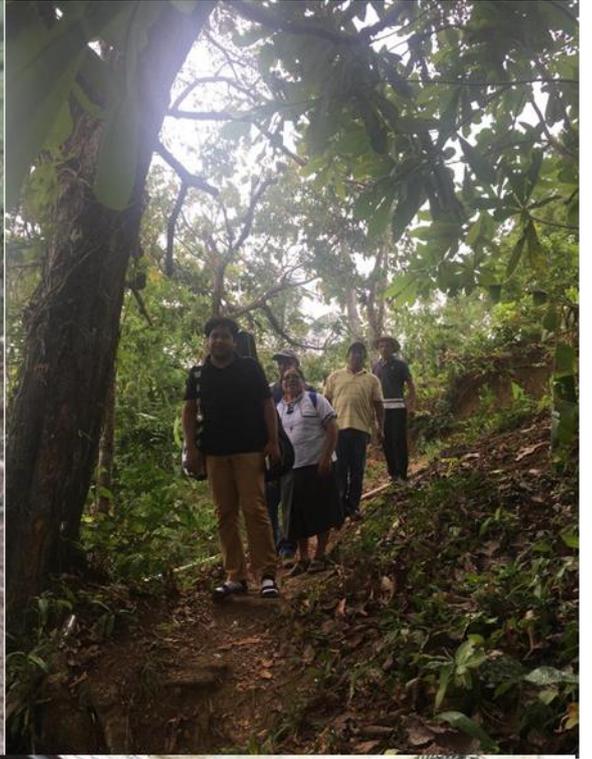
Synodality fundamentally expresses "the nature of the Church, its shape, its style and its mission".

Keeping in mind the invitation of Pope Francis to participate in the Synod of Synodality, this year we have started the formation and accompaniment of the leaders. These leaders and Delegates of the Word from different sectors in the Parish work under the motto: "We walk together towards communion to live as Jesus among us".

We are conducting various meetings to motivate the communities, especially those that are discouraged. We feel committed to being witnesses of God's love from a testimony of life and dedication. In the various sectors, we see the desire to learn, serve and above all listen to the voice of God. For us, these years of service and dedication are marked by a profound experience of faith and God's faithfulness in granting us the opportunity to work closely by accompany families. Visiting the different sectors has also enriched our faith and invites us, to be ever more grateful to Him.

Sisters Maritza and María Delfina in the mission of the Parish of San Cristóbal Chepo, Las Margaritas, Panama.





SJA. Mission in Thailand

I am Sr. Maria Naruemon Lapho and would like to share with you about my first mission at Holy Redeemer Church in Bangkok. In the midst of the pandemic, where social distancing is one of the best ways of protecting oneself and others, I decided to ride to work every day. I observed other people rushing to work in the traffic and this helped me understand more about the life of the people.

In my mission I have met many different kinds of people and situations. At first, I found it hard to communicate with them and needed to make sure I understood what they were asking of me. I learnt to trust God and allow him to form me in this place and to listen to the voice of God who had called me to this work. The work is varied and involves meeting people and helping them prepare for funerals and weddings. I am required to give suggestions and information and am responsible for preparing the necessary certificates required by the Church.

There is one experience which moved my heart very much. On hearing about a funeral of a young boy who had committed suicide I saw how it brought sadness to his family, especially his mother. He was the only boy in the family. No one knew why the boy had acted in this way. As I listened to the story, I learned that the week before his death he appeared happy and was enjoying life. He often visited his aunty and the previous week had returned from such a visit. The aunty said there were some questions being raised, but nothing specific. For a few days I felt a sadness and could not find a reason for the situation. I had not known the family before and I prayed for his soul and for the family.



In this work I realize things are not always smooth and at times can be rough, but my role is to accompany them as best I can. I also realized that I needed to build up my confidence to do this work. I come in contact with people experiencing a variety of difficult situations so I need to be courageous and call on the energy which moves my heart to continue to step forward. I believe as **St. Emilie has said "God always assist those who take some step to assists themselves"** and Jesus' words which said **"I am with you till the end of time"** This has been my experience in life with those I work with, my community members,



sisters and those around me.

Our Student Sisters from Philippines speak

Experiences of Living with Another Congregation



I am **Sr. Martha Zin Mar** and studying nursing at St. Paul's University in Manila and living with the St Paul of Chartres Sisters. Living with these sisters has provided me with many new experiences, especially in relation to prayer and community life. Even though they have a lot of work, they give time to prayer with the community and their community life is lively and happy. The good thing about them is that they always appreciate when someone has accomplished something. For example, every month a group is assigned to prepare for the time of recollection, especially the Holy Hour. I have noticed that afterwards the superior congratulates the group on what and how they prepared for it.

They appreciate others, even in small ways. I really admire their good habits because for me, it is often difficult to show appreciation easily. I do not belong to their congregation but they treat me as if I am one of their sisters. Even though we are not the same congregation, we are all consecrated persons. We pray, eat and share our experiences. During this time of difficulties in our country, I share this experience with them and they offer the Mass for our country. They are in solidarity with us even though we are not the same congregation but they pray for our country. So, I am learning many new good things from them, especially how to appreciate others. It is a good chance for me.

I am **Sr. Cecilia Myue Hlii**, studying nursing and allied health sciences at St. Paul's University Manila. For two years I have lived in community with the Sisters of St Paul of Chartres. I am happy here even though I find my studies tiring. All the sisters of SPC are very warm, loving, and take care of each other and us, even though we are not the same congregation. They try to take time for prayer, community life and relaxation for all the sisters. Every second Sunday, they give us a free day, so we can go somewhere or stay in our room and rest. They give their Srs the right to rest completely. When they distribute pocket money they give us the same amount, even though we are foreign sisters. If one of the sisters goes somewhere, when she comes back, she gives a gift to each sister. All the sisters are happy even if the gifts are small. The sister just shares what she has and shows her love for others in the community.



I am sharing this for I realize that the sisters of our congregation, especially in Myanmar are busy with our mission and we have lost the happiness of being in community. In my opinion we need to give time for relaxation in community and free days for the physical and emotional wellbeing of the sisters. We need to show our love among our community without gossip and so be happier and more fruitful in our mission activities. Happiness in community flows from the love we have for each other. Love must come from the community, and we need to show our love to our community members.



I am **Sr. Lucy Hoi Nei Lhing** currently studying for a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, at St. Paul's University Manila, Philippines. It is my first experience of living with another Congregation here at St. Paul's University Manila. I have many stories that I would like to briefly share about my experience here. It is my third year staying with this Congregation and during this time I have learned many different things and had a variety of experiences. Firstly, I have a kind of feeling that I am in my formation house again because I have to follow what their Congregation teaches. Here I have to obey the superior without excuse, like blind obedience. Even though I am from a different Congregation they are still thinking of me as one of their own Sisters. Whatever I need there is no need to worry about

anything, but I just need to inform the superior and she will take care of everything. I am feeling at home staying with them. As I am a student, sometimes I have many assignments to accomplish, but at the same time, I cannot miss my participation in community life. I feel that I am lucky because we celebrate birthdays and feast days for each person. During these celebrations we are always given something to use or to eat, so I do not need to worry about buying snacks for my busy days. During vacation time I have been to many new places which are interesting and good to visit.

I think staying here in St. Paul University community gives me a very harmonious religious life. As a religious and a foreigner, I am able to actively participate in all events which are memorable and valuable for my life. The last important thing that I would like to include is, I have the opportunity to go to confession once a month and I can include my personal intentions in the Mass without paying. These two things are what I like and need as a vulnerable human person and a religious. Thank you, so much dear Sisters, for allowing me to explore with you some of my experiences of living with the Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres.

I am **Sr. Genevieve Theingi Myint**, and in my 8th year of Religious Life and my 3rd year as a nursing student in St Paul University. Living with the Sister of St Paul of Chartres provides me with a lot of experiences to share. What I most admire about their community life and prayer life is what I wish to put into practice in my Religious Life. We live in a big community of 24 members. At first, I was worried and nervous about living in another Congregation but because of their care my worries and fears soon disappeared. For them community life is very alive and active and lived out in many different ways. Watching movies together and playing games helps all release the stress of work and study. Our Superior and School President supports and cares for the needs of each Sister. I have deeply felt maternal love and a feeling of being at home with the SPC Sisters.



Most of the Sisters in the community work in the Hospital or in the School for the whole day. Community life is alive and they never miss prayer time together. We have Mass every day, monthly confession and a day of recollection. They are good at arranging things and support the spiritual needs of the sisters. Throughout the year there is a monthly recollection paper for each sister. The Divine Office is prayed very solemnly, and they give one hour to the Lord along with Evening Prayer and Rosary. Prayer Life is most significant for us as a Religious. According to my experiences without

prayer and God' grace, I can do nothing. By living with them, I am encouraged to live happily with God amidst hardships, stresses and works. I will try to improve my prayer life and to be an authentic religious person.





Belene, Bulgaria: a Sunday of PEACE coloured with ...smiles

February 24, 2022 will remain a nightmare for our generation: the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. For us here in Europe it was a shock and how much pain and suffering in our hearts to watch these images of the destruction of a country and thousands of

people fleeing war. But, in the midst of this tragedy, we have seen many gestures of solidarity from many European countries and beyond and from people of good will. After a few days, hundreds of people started arriving in Bulgaria, mostly mothers with children, looking for shelter and security for themselves and their children. A small group of Ukrainians, temporarily accommodated in a hotel, had also arrived in our small town, Belene, waiting for more suitable accommodation. We, as a community of sisters, wanted very much to be able to do something for them and after visiting them, we understood their most urgent needs: basic necessities, games for children and the need for meet the locals. So, we thought of organizing an afternoon of meeting and animation in our parish with our children from catechesis and the Ukrainian children, accompanied by their mothers. We have asked for the collaboration of some friends, who have committed themselves wholeheartedly to the preparation and animation of Sunday March 20th. Here are some testimonials from our friends who helped us to live a different afternoon, of joy and fraternity.





Anita Kondrova, a young mother from Belene

“23.02.2022! A great day for our family. Our little girl is 16 years old. Wonderful day! Like any teenager, she gets angry and says to me: "Mom, imagine waking up tomorrow and the world has become an event that will be significant for the whole world!"

24.02.2022, 5:30 a.m. My husband is going to Sofia airport to accompany Lucia, our eldest daughter who is studying in the Netherlands. I turn on the TV and I make coffee. I hear sirens, I see images of destroyed buildings and the word WAR in Ukraine! My whole body went numb, I felt fear and shock until now! Shock, horror!!! What's going on? Is it true? I cried helplessly... Lord, how is this possible?! Understand the world!

20.03.2022! The very dear Sisters of St. Joseph in our parish are having a little party for Ukrainian mothers and children fleeing the war.... Yes, the war..... These suffering mothers have found refuge in our city, small but warm. Our people sympathize with the pain of these mothers and children, these separated families who run...run...live today, not daring to think of tomorrow.

We decorated our room in a bright, colourful way, on the theme of Spring - Hope! Parish grandmothers baked cakes and pies, sweets, children prepared songs and dances, toys and balloons, and all showed wide smiles and open arms for the suffering Ukrainian people! But our soul hurt, we suffer with them, but we tried to bring warmth and trust, a little smile in them! We wanted, we longed for their smile. Eh Oh ... miracle ... The faces of Ukrainian children shone ... to breathe air without bombs, or fear. The mothers... ah the mothers... I understand their fear and their pain. On their faces was written... sadness, joy and gratitude! They cried in secret, safe from the children... All that I experienced that terrible morning was nothing... nothing compared to their horror. My soul does not accept it, what these people are going through is the most terrible... fear, pain... infinitely deep pain... Lord, give us all strength and love! I believe in the love of God and that he will find ways to help us. We are human beings, so sinful, but he loves us and he guides us.... Listen to his love!

TAKE CARE OF THE WORLD, WAKE UP PEOPLE! GOD LOVES YOU !!!!!”



Ekaterina Lazarova, mother, grandmother and great singer

“If you open your heart, love will come. And love gives birth to good and only good. And from there we can recognize it unequivocally. I love people, especially children. And I'm lucky to have children and grandchildren. And I raised them with a lot of love, dedication, hard work and deprivation, understanding and trust. They became good people by creating their nests not far from us.

War in Ukraine!!! A terrible, destructive and devastating war. And the young mothers with their children had to leave suddenly, to find a place to survive, to save their children and themselves. They left their loved ones, their husbands, their home without knowing what awaited them elsewhere...

They had to leave with the hope and the faith that God is merciful and will not abandon them and that they will find shelter, food and good people, friends. They also arrived in Belene, where they received shelter, care, food. And when the dear sisters of our parish asked me to collaborate in the organization of an afternoon of animation for Ukrainian children and those in catechism, I accepted with great pleasure. It was a chance to make them almost forget their anxiety and insecurity, and to help them smile again. And we said to ourselves: let's make this day unforgettable! At first, they were shy, then more confident and then we became friends. They trusted us and we saw that they were happy and the mothers thanked us with all their hearts. We prepared games, songs, dances, surprises, a raffle and... we ended up with a good pizza. I had prepared small gifts for them. A true celebration of joy and friendship!!!

We greeted each other with the promise of exciting new encounters and experiences and a prayer that this war would end as soon as possible, so that they could return to their home countries and this terrible nightmare would never happen again.”



Mario Petrov, scout and parish animator

“I would say it was an unforgettable experience, because meeting foreigners was more difficult then, but it will be easier in the future. Last Saturday I had met one of the girls from Ukraine, we met and talked. After that, Sister Ramona asked me if I could prepare games for an animation with the Bulgarian and Ukrainian children and I accepted. For 5 days, I thought about games, looked for children's songs and thought about what I could do to

make the day unforgettable for them. So, the Sunday in question came, I went to church before the Mass to be able to prepare myself a little more and I was ready. Then the magic began. Even though I had only slept 4 hours during the night, so seeing the children and hearing the noise they were making, I was charged with energy and positive emotions. We played sea chess, bowling and musical chairs, then we made a banner with the inscription "**Peace**" in Bulgarian and "**Peace**" in Ukrainian, then each of us put his handprint on the

paint. I learned a lot about the emotions that children experience. I reaffirmed my belief that everyone should be accepted, regardless of skin colour, gender or religion. I also learned what is interesting for children of this age nowadays.”

Thank you!

The sisters of the community of Belene, Bulgaria

Let there be peace in the world!



How is the synodal process received in the local church?



The Catholic Church in Australia began this synodal process towards the Plenary Council in May 2018. Every Catholic, whether they had any affiliation to any church/parish or agency were invited to participate in the process towards the Plenary Council with the question: *‘What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?’*

In our local parish, people from different ministries met together and answered this question. This was the first Listening and Dialogue Phase. The answers were collated and submitted to the appropriate office for the second Discernment Phase. This tedious process involved collating all the answers and discerning the information to be arranged into thematic themes. These Themes formed the agenda for further conversations and dialogue by the delegates in the Plenary Council Journey beginning in the year 2021. After the Second Assembly, to be held in July 2022, the preparation to enact the decisions voted upon at the Plenary Council will begin in August 2022.

I guess the synodal process in the church in Australia began with heeding to the call of Pope Francis to renew the church. To enable a more engaging church to respond in faith and to be on this sacred journey with the people. Every person, young and senior members of the church community have a voice in this process. The process or journey towards the Plenary Council is to help each one to listen to God by listening to one another.

Lilian Bong SJA

We will hear the echoes from other countries in the following issues of the bulletins



Experience in Australia

I am **Sr. Sureeporn Meesri**, originally from Thailand. I was professed as a Sister of St Joseph of the Apparition in mid-2017. My first mission was in Thailand and at present I am assigned to the Kardinya Community in Australia. I have been in Australia for over three years where my first task was to learn English. In Thailand I learned some English and had a few ideas about the language, but it was very inadequate. The English College I attended provided me with a wonderful opportunity to advance my language skills, to meet other students and learn about the local culture.

I gradually became involved in St Thomas Moore Parish where I did floral arrangements for the Church, set up for Mass, joined the parish choir, attended Youth Ministry gatherings and some other charitable works. It was a huge challenge for me to undertake these various works and to keep improving my skills all the time. I tried to do my best to learn and speak English in my day-to-day encounters.



While continuing with my studies I had an opportunity to volunteer with an organization called “Caboots.” This organization works with children who have Autism. As a support worker it gives me an opportunity to work with vulnerable people. From these experiences I feel very comfortable and competent working with people from different backgrounds and dealing with people who have disabilities. Another volunteering group called “Cana Communities” gave me the opportunity to work with homeless people and visit prisoners. I am still volunteering with both of these organizations while pursuing a Bachelor Degree at Murdoch University focused on Community and International Development.

I am very aware that I am on mission for the Church, within our Congregation. I take turns regularly in caring for our Sisters in the Samson Community. I am very grateful to God for everything He has given me through the support of my SJA Sisters in Australia. I know everything is possible with God’s grace. He motivates me to continue His Mission. I believe He never leaves me alone.



Celebrating Consecrated Life

The Archdioceses of Perth celebrated Consecrated Life on the 2nd February 2022. This was in conjunction with the 25th anniversary of the inaugural World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life introduced by St John Paul 11. The Archbishop of Perth, Timothy Costelloe, with a number of Priests and Religious from different Congregations celebrated the Eucharist in St Michael's Chapel at the Catholic Education Centre.

We had very appropriate music, and the Scriptural Readings were proclaimed by the Religious. During Mass, the Priests and Religious renewed their vows. The Archbishop, who is a member of the Salesian Congregation, gave a homily with some insights into his own vocation. I will share some of these insights with you and I'm sure some of us can resonate with how Religious Life was lived in former times.

When he entered Religious Life forty-four years ago it made him realize that this life in its simplicity was very sustaining. He admitted that every day had a similar pattern - you got up, went to chapel for prayer with the community, then meditation followed by Mass. After breakfast it was off to your study or whatever was your apostolate. Your day was timetabled to the last degree. A monthly day of Recollection was also 'on the cards'. Making comparisons with his present day engagements as Archbishop he said that it has taken him a long time to adapt to a different rhythm of prayer and ministry. He confesses that it never occurred to him to consider diocesan priesthood. Many of us present certainly resonated with the early morning rising, community prayer together followed by meditation, breakfast and apostolate. This was how we lived our religious life then, while today it is somewhat different.



Archbishop Timothy went on to say that "If we can get in touch once more with the original impulse that led us into Religious life we can quite simply and with confidence commit the future trustingly into God's Hands." We were also reminded to be Living Sacraments, and by reason of our Baptism, individually and especially together, to respond to the needs of those we serve by our witness and encouragement.

One of our Sister's present, Sr. Lilian, described the celebration as "as a joyful renewal of the commitment which we consecrated women and men made- more fully reminding us daily of our service towards humanity, in our ministry through our various Institutes".

A social gathering was held after the Eucharist at which there was a great sense of solidarity and hope for the future besides delicious food.

Sr. Bernadette Casey



The Impact of St Joseph God's tender loving care

On the 16th December 2021 here in the Philippines we experienced a very strong typhoon. 'Odette', as it was known was extremely different from what we had previously experienced. It caused a great calamity in the country. During this time our devotion to St Joseph had a big impact on us.

Each evening the community prays Evening prayer in front St. Joseph's statue which is located in front of the school hallway adjacent to the covered court. Every day, parents of our school children touch St. Joseph's statue and make the Sign of the Cross as they come in and out of the compound.

The typhoon in the Visayas region and Bohol was categorized as a number four strength and was a nightmare experience causing a terrible calamity. Aunt Ester with her daughter Josephine the nurse and one of our school teachers sheltered with us at our convent. No one was able to sleep as there were loud sounds in the roof of the school and convent. We thought we would lose the roof due to the strong winds and heavy rains. There were big and small branches of trees and debris falling and flying outside. Our water and electricity had been cut off.

We received a call from the disaster brigade unit asking if we could open our school for shelter for those whom they had rescued from houses in-front of the sea. We replied that our compound is open and they can just push the gate and come-in.

Worried and fearful we raised our voice to God. With high tide there was the possibility of sea waves flooding our place. We discussed how to save important documents in the school and the statue of St Joseph. It was not until around 2am to 3am when the strong surge slowed down. St Joseph had protected us. Around his shrine the plants looked as if nothing had happened. We really believe that our prayers and St Joseph had taken care of everything.

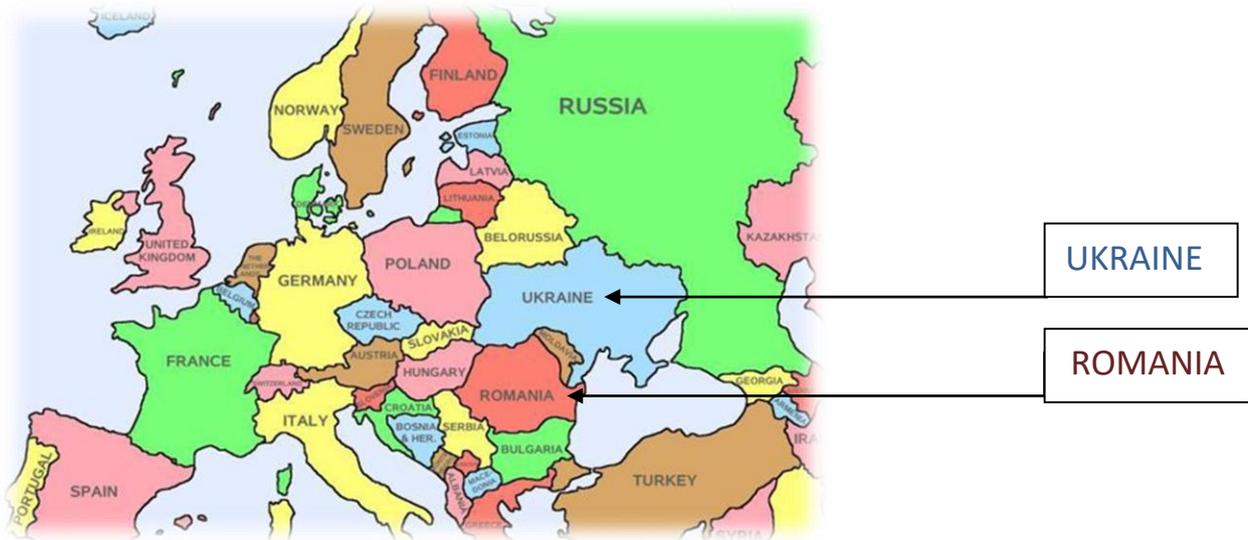
There was some damage to the gutters of the school roofing and our kitchen lost part of its roof. The ground was littered with wet leaves and small branches of trees. Most of the covered court area had lost its roof and many lamp posts on the road were bent or cut off. Small native houses were blown away and many big trees were uprooted. The market place and some residences were filled with mud.

We were several weeks without electricity, internet and water. The people of the neighborhood helped us. Their help was unlimited. Divine Providence was watching over us as each day we reserved our energies to clean up, fetch water for drinking and everyday use. We helped wash clothes for ourselves and our neighbor's.

We are so grateful to God and for each one's patience. In spite of unusual situations, we realized that everything is possible supported by countless acts of faith and belief in God's tender loving care.



St. Joseph of the Apparition, pray for us. SJA community Valencia Bohol,



WE SUPPORT UKRAINE!

From the title above we can see that this is the current situation in the world, that is, the war between Russia and Ukraine. We must stand in solidarity with them; given that we can help the Ukrainians fleeing the war.

Children of the Holy Trinity Parish from Negresti-Oas, Romania!



We are the group from the Holy Trinity Parish from Negresti-Oas. We are group of 7 children from this city. We want to show that we can help no matter what. We are a relatively short distance from Ukraine, so we are very exposed to this danger. We have the border right here to the north, where I, my colleagues, our friends, the sisters in our Parish, and our priests live with their loved ones. It is very true that we are scared of this war, but we have managed in large numbers to mobilize and help our neighbors in Ukraine. Churches, schools, kindergartens and various cultural centers

have helped to raise food and host some children and mothers, or people with disabilities. Even in the Gymnasium School No. 3, food was collected by students and teachers, and in the kindergarten No. 7 children from Ukraine were integrated. As in Negresti-Oas, it happens in the village of Certeze, in the vicinity of Negresti-Oas, where Ukrainain teachers were brought especially for children housed in the kindergarten there.



We are talking about tens of tons of food collected from Ukrainians. A large number of people help and bring food but also hygiene products, or donate money to those on the front.

Before concluding the presentation, I want to introduce you like the little ones they are in solidarity with their peers!



("Don't be scared, because we Romanians are here to help you! We love you!")



Thank you for your attention to the presentation. Praise be to Jesus!

Children of the Holy Trinity Parish from Negresti-Oas

[Prayer for Ukraine](#)

My God, I pray to you with all my heart, watch over all the Ukrainian people. Take care of him and guide him because only you can help and save us. Enlighten our minds on what to do and how to proceed and enlighten the minds of all the leaders of the peoples to lead us towards justice and peace. Amen.



*The visit of our Holy Father, Pope Francis,
to our islands - Malta and Gozo.*

The long-awaited visit of Pope Francis for the inhabitants of the Islands of Malta and Gozo had finally arrived. This was His 36th voyage and the 56th place he visited. The theme of this visit was 'They showed us unusual kindness' Acts 28:2. Pope Francis' visit was from the 2nd to the 3rd of April. Before arriving he spoke at the General audience on Wed 30th March and he said: 'I will go to Malta. In that luminous land, I shall be a pilgrim in the footsteps of the Apostle Paul, who was welcomed there with great humanity after being shipwrecked at sea on his way to Rome. This Apostolic journey will therefore be an opportunity to go to the well springs of the proclamation of the Gospel, to know at first hand a Christian community with a lively history stretching back thousands of years, and to meet the inhabitants.....' How beautiful!!!

Pope Francis arrived in Malta at 10am and was greeted with a welcome ceremony at the Malta International Airport. From there the Pope paid a courtesy visit to the President of the Republic Dr. George Vella, to the Prime Minister Dr. Robert Abela and the Authorities of the Diplomatic Corps. These met the Holy Father respectively in different chambers of the Grand Master's Palace in Valletta.

In the afternoon the Pope left Rabat, where he was staying, for the Grand Harbour where there was a "Celebration" watching Pope Francis board the Catamaran for Gozo. The Catamaran travelled close to the shore so that the Pope could greet the people. For this celebration three sisters from Blata were present, Sr. Mary Fenech, Sr. Kalpna Tirkey and Sr. Intisar Charam. In Gozo Pope Francis prayed at the shrine of Our Lady of Ta' Pinu. Here he gave the image of Our Lady and St John at the foot of the Cross. The Pope encouraged the faithful to receive one another as St John received Mary our mother. He also presented a flower of gold to Our Lady.

Sunday 3rd the big day! Pope Francis had a very busy schedule. At 7.45am he had a private meeting with the members of the Society of Jesus at the Apostolic Nunciature in Rabat where he was staying. From there he went to pay a visit to the Grotto of St Paul at the Basilica in Rabat. This is a historical place and has always been visited by the Popes who have come to Malta. In Rabat the Holy Father met a lot of disabled and vulnerable people. On his way from Rabat to Floriana His Holiness Pope Francis stopped at a small chapel dedicated to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal but where St George Preca is buried. He is the first canonized Saint of the Island. This chapel is in our vicinity where a number of our sisters assist at Mass daily. The Holy Father changed his private car here for the Pope Mobile to continue his journey to Floriana. Mass was

celebrated at the Granaries in Floriana. The message here was very strong. Amongst others he addressed the youth and told them 'Dear young friends, I want to share with you the most beautiful thing in life. Do you know what it is? It is the joy of giving ourselves completely in love, which makes us free. The joy has a name: it is Jesus...' He also told the Maltese people that in these small Islands peace is felt; so continue being like that. Twelve thousand chairs were prepared for the faithful though it was noted that twenty thousand people were present. Amongst them there was Sr. Denise Vassallo Delegate for Malta representing the Sisters of St Joseph. Sr. Denise had the wonderful opportunity to shake hands with Pope Francis. There was also Sr. Kalpna Tirkey and Sr. Intisar Charam. The latter left the convent at 6am in order to get the best places possible!!

Another highlight of Pope Francis' visit to Malta was the immigrants at the John XXIII Peace Lab, Centre for migrants in Hal Far. This visit was to highlight the plight of the migrants who cross the Mediterranean Sea for Europe, and to be a source of encouragement for new evangelization in the island nation. The message here was that since he knew he was coming to Malta the first people he thought of were the immigrants, who are very much in his mind and heart. They are vulnerable people who stand at the periphery of society. He said that he had a dream, that the immigrants would not remain strangers but become one of us. Here he seemed not to be in a hurry so much so that he was about three quarters of an hour late in leaving for Rome.

Finally, the visit of Pope Francis came to an end with a farewell ceremony that took place at Malta International Airport from where he departed for Rome.

Thanks Pope Francis for being with us for these two days. You left us many valuable messages and for coming among us as a pilgrim in the footsteps of the Apostle St Paul. We are so grateful that you took the time and came to say Hello to us. We promise you our prayers and may God continue to bless you as you continue to lead your flock.

By Sr. Mary Fenech

Some photos that can accompany the article.

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|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. At the Grotto of Saint Paul in Rabat | 6 Pope with the Immigrants |
| 2. Pope Francis with the disabled | 7 Pope Francis |
| 3. Pope Francis on the catamaran | 8 Sr. Denise with Pope Francis |
| 4. Pope Francis with vulnerable people | |
| 5. Pope Francis with an immigrant | |







In memory of Sr. Rose Xuereb – from the Zabbar Community



In such circumstances, it is very hard to write about someone with whom we have lived for so many years and who has been very close to us. After her Juniorate in Liverpool (1959 – 1960) Sr. Rose was sent on mission to Israel where she worked as a teacher in Ramle and Jaffa. In 1968 she came to Malta and worked in Paola for a year as a teacher.

Her next mission was that of a housemother with the children in care at our Home in Cospicua. Later she was transferred to Zabbar where she served as housemother and Superior of Dar Sagra Familja. Sr. Rose never forgot this mission, or any of us, and was always happy to see us or receive news about one or other. It was a mission she cherished, until 2011 when she retired to the Rabat Community.

Sr. Rose always had a smile on her face and was known for her gentle ways with everybody she met. Her care and guidance of the children whom she watched grow up was appreciated. She was like a mother to them, and believed that this was the best way for her to give witness to the girls and boys that grew up with us until they settled in life. The presence of some of these girls (present here with us today) are a clear proof of Sr. Rose's love and care for them.

Last night as we were all talking about Sr. Rose, one of us found a testimony of two of these girls on Facebook. One wrote:

"Sr. Rose, I have a lot of childhood memories of you. You were a strong dedicated woman who loved us so much. Due to Covid 19 I did not manage to see you for a while, but my last visit to you was a memory I will never forget. Thank you for being there for me throughout my childhood. You will never be forgotten for the kind of woman you were. Rest in peace now with your loved ones in heaven. Till we meet again. Say 'Hi' to my dad for me."

The other girl said:

"Sr. Rose, rest in peace. Now you can see your dear ones among whom is my Mum as you always loved her too. You always respected me. You raised me as your own child since I was a little baby. You were a real mother figure sent from heaven above, like all the other Sisters at Dar Sagra Familja whom I love so much. Sr. Rose, you will be really missed; until we meet again pray for us from heaven for, I know for sure that the Lord has already wrapped you in his arms. My only regret is that I could not see you at least one more time. Rest in peace Sr. Rose. I love you."

We heartily share our condolences with our sisters in Rabat, with Sr. Rose's family, and in a special way with her dear and only brother, Fr Alfred who has always been very close to our Congregation. Our condolences are also extended to all those who loved her during her life, especially those who are here and those who took care of her in the last years of her life on earth. Sr. Rose Rest in peace and intercede for us.

*“Well done, good and faithful servant.” Matthew 25 :21
A Pioneer. Sr. Antonia John.*

Dear Sr. Antonia John you are well remembered and we wish you Adieu. With grateful hearts we remember all you have done as a SJA in and for the Congregation in Myanmar, India and Cyprus.



Having crossed the border into India after the nationalization in Myanmar in the 1960s, you were faced with many obstacles and difficulties. You did not remain still, but kept searching for the will of God at this moment in history. You, with your other companions became a foundress with St. Emilie in founding the Congregation in India and gathered the first vocations to continue the mission the Lord entrusted to you.

In India, Sr. Antonia worked in the missions in Mosaboni, Ranchi and Chennai. She was the superior of the community, helper in the formation house, a good cook and a very friendly and approachable person. In the 1980s she was sent to the mission in Cyprus and opted to remain in this mission until her death.

Thank you, Sr. Antonia, for all you have been to us. You are the last of the pioneers of India who arrived from Myanmar in 1968. May you enjoy eternal rest and peace in the arms of the Lord whom you loved and served all your life. Adieu Sr. Antonia, till we meet again.



In the Footsteps of Mary

Israel/Palestine

This was the title of an encounter held on the 25th March, the feast of the Annunciation this year. It is when Mary gave an absolute “Yes” without hesitation to God who had waited for so long to be able to come back and be with us. On this feast, 19 young girls from our different pastoral works responded “Yes” to our initiative of a two-day retreat in Nazareth to renew their relationship with God and re-discover the joy of the spiritual life, in view of working for vocations.

To achieve these objectives, we, a group of SJA from different communities gathered together in Nazareth on the 25th and 26th of March, accompanied by our newly elected provincial sister Valentina Sala. An intense menu awaited the girls; we started by participating in the solemn Mass of the Patriarch in the Basilica of the Annunciation this was a great blessing for each one of them but mostly for those coming from the Palestinian Territory as they had never been there due to restrictions of movement in the country.

This two-day program included a lecture on “Women’s vocations in the Bible and Mary’s vocation” followed by group work and discussions. Presentations of two young Saints in the Catholic Church besides an interesting presentation of Saint Emilie’s life were given. We included different prayers and the summit was the hour of Adoration, where they experienced the profound silence and met the Lord in the depths of their hearts.

The group of “Friends of Saint Emilie” participated with us, and they offered and prepared food for all. One of them shared her spiritual experience and presented their group and activities.

Fun and joyful moments were present too in our program; we had games, a Biblical competition, and songs besides doing crafts performed by our talented sisters. Also a tour in the city was welcomed happily by all.

Let us join all together in prayer more than before asking our beloved Saint Emily and our Holy Patron Saint Joseph to bestow their blessings on the Congregation with numerous and holy vocations.

Sister Vicky GIACAMAN





BRING ME BACK TO LIFE

*Resurrect me. Make me part of the victorious impulse
That suddenly raised you full of new life,
Sovereignly free, above the grave.*

*Make me rise again, from what dies in me, from all that declines,
From all that grows old, from all that fades away,
From all that wearies and quenches its ardor.*

*Resurrect me, by making me get up each morning fresher,
More determined to live, with new zest,
You offer me the day in all its beauty.*

*Resurrect me from the shadows, from the melancholy
From heavy disappointments, from depressing thoughts,
From all that keeps my feet on the ground.*

*Resurrect me with the gush of a superior joy
from all the pains, with a strong and abundant joy
That brings me to fervent and generous action.*



Sr Martha Bou Rjaili

FIESOLE-ITALY

Pages of the history of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition of the communities of Saint Joseph and Saint Emilie.

1. The beginning of the house

Our presence in Fiesole began in 1935 with the purchase of the villa called LA QUERCE, owned by Mr. Giotto Dainelli, an academic professor from Italy. The sale contract was agreed on 6th November, 1935 and the villa took the name of "Casa San Giuseppe".

On 7 November, 15 elderly or sick nuns, accompanied by mother Franceschina Cinti, took up residence in the new house, surrounded by a hilly countryside. They were welcomed by Bishop Giovanni Fossà. In 1950, Casa San Giuseppe was renovated and the chapel was built. The house has a dual purpose:



- to restore to health the sick sisters who returned from the missions
- to offer the elderly nuns a healthy and serene place where they could exercise those services suited to their abilities.

In a particular way, St. Joseph's became a "house of prayer and gift" in an atmosphere of serenity and peace and a "watchful sentinel" to the needs of the brothers and sisters from Fiesole and elsewhere. The chapel adjacent to the entrance (once a place of worship for the villa's employees) was

transformed into an oratory. Children were welcomed for catechesis and after school classes. Special attention was given to the poor. Some sisters collaborated with the parish bringing the Eucharist to the sick and elderly; through various crochet and knitting objects handmade and sold, even those who are far away were helped because the missionary spirit has always been present and alive.

Casa San Giuseppe was also a “*house for rest*”, a place of recovery for the community of Florence. On holidays, the nuns went up the hill and spent the afternoon outdoors, surrounded by greenery and the scent of flowers. During the summer, the sisters of other communities in need of rest and fresh air were welcomed here with fraternal love. In 1956 near Casa San Giuseppe, Casa Santa Emilia was built for the formation of aspirants and young professed nuns. Casa Santa Emilia later became the seat of the Provincial Council.

2. Important events experienced over the years

In 1951, for the canonization of St. Emilie great celebrations were held. The people of Fiesole participated with enthusiasm. In the cathedral, a large and bright banner of Emilie in glory was hung.

At the beginning of 1957, the bishop Mons. Antonio Bagnoli (Tonino for Sister Agnesina who had been his kindergarten teacher) consecrated the altar of the chapel of Casa Santa Emilia accompanied by many priests and seminarians.



To commemorate the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the Congregation, an oratory, financed by the various communities of Tuscany was set up, with an oil lamp constantly burning in front of the relic of St. Emilie. A pilgrimage to Gaillac, where the Congregation was founded, was also organized.

Some sisters served the diocesan Caritas and Misericordia Association. In the house, especially in Casa Santa Emilia, single people and foreign families found accommodation, whilst looking not only for work,

but also for permanent accommodation. An Albanian family lived in the former chapel at the entrance to Casa San Giuseppe for several months. At the request of the Caritas in Via Gioberti, Florence, a very young couple who slept in the car in the middle of winter, was welcomed during the Christmas period. At Casa San Giuseppe some sick people relatives of some priests were welcomed with love and remained until their death.



At Casa Santa Emilia, a special welcome was offered to a group of young people in search of their own vocation. For a few years we also welcomed some girls who were victims of trafficking, who had managed to free themselves with the help of the *Arcobaleno* Association in Florence.

4. People who helped us

The seminary of Fiesole has always been a source of spiritual help, starting with the precious presence of the bishop and the rectors of the seminary. We were enlightened and guided by good and faithful priests, such as Msgr. Beni, Msgr. Morini, Fr. Dino Tozzi our chaplain for more than 40 years, Fr. Nuti, Fr. Falai, Fr. Cirigniani, Fr. Diego, Fr. Fabio, Fr. Roberto - our parish priest who has been very generous to us and always ready for our sudden reminders, and our chaplain Fr. Zibi. Other priests and monks have helped us with their wise contributions: Fr. Turollo, Fr. Giovanni Vanucci, Fr. Ernesto Balducci, Fr. Enzo Bianchi, etc.

5. Reasons to thank the Lord

- ✚ For the time that the Lord has given us to live in these two houses which have been oasis of peace, joy and rebirth;
- ✚ For the fruits of this land: the precious oil, edible herbs, abundant fruit trees ... for the twirling of the birds and their song, for the splendid panorama;
- ✚ For the spiritual help received from so many holy priests, the daily Mass, the sacraments, the days of monthly and annual retreats;
- ✚ For the training and recreational meetings that have taken place here:
- ✚ For the days of celebrations, on the significant anniversaries of our Congregation, religious professions, jubilees of consecrated life etc.;
- ✚ For the many nuns who have lived in these houses and who are now waiting for us in paradise.

6. What now?

The page of our history of presence in Fiesole closes. The sickest Sisters were sent to Cavallasca - Como, where they will receive adequate attention and care. One group has been sent to Montecatini, another to Castiglioncello and one to Prato. The buildings have been rented to the "Il Girasole" Cooperative which will continue with projects in favour of those in need. It is natural for us to feel nostalgia and suffering, but we wish that the same abandonment to the Will of God, which marked the path of our foundress and above all the path of Jesus to redeem us, prevail.



Sr. Francesca, Sr. Lilia and Sr. Fausta

The Joy of Being Together

Because life throws countless challenges at us on a daily basis, it is important that we find time in our daily lives to relax and be happy because each and every day is a blessing from God.

Our Lady of the Ark of the Covenant usually welcomes us for retreats, Provincial Assemblies, or conferences. This year, on Easter Monday, the 18th of April 2022 many SJA sisters were gathered to have an enjoyable encounter. After the delicious barbecue lunch and the irresistible desserts, we visited the Saxum center. It is a multimedia resource center that helped us deepen our knowledge of the Holy Land in an interactive way. We enjoyed a tour through the main events of sacred history, where the historical, geographical, and biblical contexts are brought together. The experience covers the heritage of the Holy Land from Abraham to the present day, going through the holy places across multiple historical periods. We were immersed in the living story through various resources such as a timeline, maps, interactive screens, 3D reconstructions, a model of Jerusalem, and a 360-degree movie screen.

Then the sisters joined the pilgrims and the local community at Emmaus Nicopolis, in the ruins of the Crusader church. It is an ancient Byzantine Roman city founded in the 3rd century, home to the Community of the Beatitudes. Mass was celebrated by Mgr. William Shomali, Vicar General for Jerusalem and Palestine, accompanied by Mgr. Boulos Marcuzo.

Admiring the beauty of Nature and the world around us today, indeed, we rise with Christ; we are new people, for a new world, and the world is all renewed by the Resurrection of Christ. Alleluia.

Sister Vicky GIACAMAN





