

*E*choes of the Company



Spiritual Life - Challenges - News - History

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

2018

No. 6

TABLE OF CONTENTS



50th anniversary of the death of Mother Guillemin

SPIRITUAL LIFE

2018 Advent Letter.....341
Father Tomaž Mavrič, Superior General

Letter of November 27, 2018.....349
Sister Kathleen Appler, Superioress General

VISITATRIXES' INTER-ASSEMBLIES MEETING

Combatting modern forms of slavery

Province of Saint Louise-USA.....353
Combatting human trafficking across
Provincial and national borders
Sister Catherine Mary Norris, Visitatrix

Province of Thailand.....357
Daughters of Charity Program for Safe Migration and
Prevention of Human Trafficking
Sister Consolacion Eata, Visitatrix

Interprovincial missions in places of migration

Province of Portugal.....362
Mission in Rio de Mouro: “A Church that goes forth”
Sister Maria Fatima Verissimo Ferreira, Visitatrix

Province of Ecuador.....365
Interprovincial project: “Builders of life”
Sister Ana Maria Maldonado, Visitatrix

Mission *Ad Gentes*

Province of España-Sur.....372
 Mission *Ad Gentes* in Mauritania
 Sister Teresa Vu Kieu Diem, Daughter of Charity

Province Del Caribe.....379
 Mission *Ad Gentes* in Haiti
 Sister Mónica de Juan, Daughter of Charity

Province of Mozambique.....385
 Mission *Ad Gentes* in Mozambique
 Sister Ana Maria Zuddas, Daughter of Charity

NEWS FROM THE PROVINCES

Designation of Visitatrixes and appointment
 of Provincial Directors.....388

HISTORY OF THE COMPANY

Sister Suzanne Guillemin, a shining figure.....389
 Exhibit produced with the Archives department

INDEX

Index.....396

2018 Advent letter

To all the members of the Vincentian Family

My very dear brothers and sisters!

May the grace and peace of Jesus be always with us!

Two years ago, in my first letter for the feast of Saint Vincent, I wrote to you about Saint Vincent de Paul as a Mystic of Charity. When we reflect on Saint Vincent as a Mystic of Charity and try to follow his example in this regard, we need to remind ourselves that he was not a Mystic in the generally understood sense of the word, the way the Church usually describes a Saint as a Mystic. Vincent de Paul was a Mystic, but a Mystic of Charity. With eyes of faith, he saw, contemplated, and served Christ in the person of the poor. When he touched the wounds of the marginalized, he believed that he was touching Christ’s wounds. When he attended to their deepest needs, he was convinced that he was worshiping his Lord and Master.

This Advent, I want to speak with you about one of the principal founts from which Vincent drank as a Mystic of Charity: **daily meditative prayer, daily meditation**. He urged all the groups that he founded or with which he associated – the lay members of the Confraternities of Charity; the priests and brothers of the Little Company, the Congregation of the Mission; the Daughters of Charity; the Ladies of Charity; the



*Spiritual
Life*

2018 Advent letter

priests of the Tuesday Conferences – to drink deeply from the fount of meditation every day.

One of Saint Vincent's most quoted statements, from a conference given to the members of the Congregation of the Mission, expresses Vincent's attitude eloquently:

*Give me a man of prayer, and he'll be able to do anything: he can say with the holy Apostle, "I can do all things in Him who sustains and comforts me" (Philippians 4:13). The Congregation of the Mission will survive as long as it's faithful to the practice of meditation because meditation is like an impregnable rampart, which will protect the Missioners against all sorts of attacks.*¹

Vincent was speaking of daily meditative prayer, daily meditation. He assured his followers,

*Let's all of us really devote ourselves to the practice of meditation, since through it all good things come to us. If we persevere in our vocation, it's thanks to meditation; if we succeed in our works, it's thanks to meditation; if we don't fall into sin, it's thanks to meditation; if we remain in charity, if we're saved, all that is thanks to God and to meditation. Just as God refuses nothing in meditation, so he grants almost nothing without meditation.*²

To encourage his sons and daughters to meditate, he used many of the metaphors commonly found in the spiritual writers of his day. He told them that what food is for the body, prayer is for the soul.³ It is a "fountain of youth" by which we are invigorated.⁴ It

1. *Vincent de Paul, Correspondence, Conferences, Documents*, translated and edited by Jacqueline Kilar, DC; and Marie Poole, DC; et al; annotated by John W. Carven, CM; New City Press, Brooklyn and Hyde Park, 1985-2014; volume XI, p. 76; Conference 67, "Meditation." Future references to this work will be indicated using the initials *CCD*, followed by the volume number, then the page number, for example, *CCD XI, 76*.

2. *CCD XI, 361*; Conference 168, "Repetition of Prayer," 10 August 1517.

3. *CCD IX, 327*; Conference 37, "Mental Prayer," 31 May 1648.

4. *Ibid.*, 328.

is a mirror in which we see all our blotches and then change our appearance to be more pleasing to God.⁵ It is refreshment in the midst of our difficult daily work in the service of the poor.⁶ It is a sermon, he told the missionaries, that we preach to ourselves.⁷ It is a resource book for the preacher in which he can find eternal truths to share with God's people.⁸ It is a gentle dew that refreshes the soul every morning, he tells the Daughters of Charity.⁹

Vincent urged Saint Louise de Marillac to form the young sisters well in meditating.¹⁰ He gave them many practical conferences on the subject. He assured the sisters that meditating is really quite easy and that it is like having a conversation with God for half an hour. He stated that if others are thrilled to have a chance to talk with the king, we should be delighted to have a chance to talk heart to heart with God every day.¹¹

Meditative prayer, for Vincent, is a conversation with God, with Jesus, in which we express our deepest feelings (he called this affective prayer) and in which we seek to know what God is asking of us each day, especially in our service to the poor. It is characterized by deep gratitude for Jesus's many gifts, especially our vocation to serve the poor. It results in resolutions about how we might serve them better in the day ahead. For some, even many, it moves toward quiet contemplation of Jesus's love for us and for the poor, and it draws us to throw "darts of love" that "pierce the clouds" and touch Our Lord's heart.¹²

For Vincent, the principal subject of prayer was the life and teaching of Jesus. He emphasized that we must focus again

5. *Ibid.*, 327.

6. *CCD IX, 316*; Conference 36, "The Good Use of Instructions," 1 May 1648.

7. *CCD XI, 76*; Conference 68, "Meditation."

8. *Cf.*, *CCD XII, 13*; Conference 181, "Repetition of Prayer," [1518].

9. *CCD IX, 316*; Conference 36, "The Good Use of Instructions," 1 May 1648.

10. *CCD IV, 53*; Letter 1240 to Saint Louise, [Between 1647 and 1511].

11. *CCD IX, 94*; Conference 15, "Explanation of the Regulations," [14 June 1643].

12. *CCD IX, 32*; Conference 5, "Fidelity to Rising and Mental Prayer," 16 August 1640.

2018 Advent letter

and again on the “mysteries” of Jesus’s humanity: his birth, his relationship with Mary and Joseph, the events of his public ministry, his miracles, his preferential love of the poor. He urged us to meditate on what Jesus did and taught in the scriptures.¹³ Among Jesus’s teachings, he called special attention to the Sermon on the Mount.¹⁴ Most of all, he recommended that our prayer focus on the passion and cross of Jesus.¹⁵

The method that Saint Vincent taught was basically that of Saint Francis de Sales.¹⁶ He made only slight modifications. He was more restrained than Francis when speaking about the use of the imagination. While valuing affective prayer highly, he insisted vigorously on the need for practical resolutions. Particularly in his conferences to the Daughters about meditation, there is a lovely mingling of spiritual wisdom and common sense. He cautioned the sisters about cultivating “beautiful thoughts” that lead nowhere. He warned the priests against using prayer as a time for speculative study.

THE METHOD THAT SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL PROPOSED HAD THREE STEPS:

1) PREPARATION

- a. First, we place ourselves in the presence of God. This can be done in a variety of ways: by considering Our Lord present in the Blessed Sacrament, by thinking of God reigning over the universe, by pondering God’s presence within our own hearts.
- b. Then we ask for help to pray well.
- c. Finally, we choose a subject for meditation, such as a mystery in Jesus’s life, a virtue, a reading from scripture, or a feast day.

13. Cf., *Common Rules of the Congregation of the Mission*, I, 1.

14. *CCD XII*, 101; Conference 197, “Gospel Teachings (*Common Rules*, Chapter II, Article 1),” 14 February 1519.

15. *CCD IX*, 42; Conference 7, “The Jubilee,” 15 October 1641.

16. *CCD X*, 471; Conference 105, “Order of Day (Articles 1-7),” 17 November 1518.

2) BODY

- a. We reflect on the subject we have chosen.
- b. If the subject is a virtue, we search for the motives for loving and practicing the virtue. If it is a mystery in Jesus’s life, like the passion, we picture what happened and ponder its meaning.
- c. As we reflect, we express to God what is in our heart (e.g., love of Christ who suffered so much for us, sorrow for sin, gratitude). Basically, Vincent encouraged his followers to:
 - mull over the subject of meditation,
 - identify motives for embracing it,
 - make concrete resolutions to practice it.

3) CONCLUSION

We thank God for this time of meditation and for the graces we received during it. We place before God the resolutions we have made. Then, we ask help in carrying them out.

Daily meditative prayer, daily meditation is an indispensable part of our spirituality. Saint Vincent was utterly convinced of its importance in our life and work for the poor. He saw it as the “soul of our souls”¹⁷ and felt that without it we would be unable to persevere through the difficulties involved in our service to the most abandoned.

In this Advent letter, I want to encourage every member of the Vincentian Family to engage or to keep engaging in daily meditation. Every Congregation of Consecrated life within the Vincentian Family has its own Constitutions and Statutes where the practices of its prayer life, including the time to be dedicated to daily meditation, are outlined. I also would like to encourage the lay branches of the Vincentian Family to engage in meditation daily, even for a short five-to-ten-minute period.

Vincent recognized that there are many ways of meditating and encouraged their use. Some will surely employ methods other

17. *CCD IX*, 327; Conference 37, “Mental Prayer,” 31 May 1648.

2018 Advent letter

than the one that he often taught and that I have described above. Although we may use other methods of meditation, it is important for us to know and keep in mind the method Saint Vincent de Paul left us. In the end, the most important thing is that we engage our minds and our hearts in meditative conversation with Jesus and that we do so daily and perseveringly.

The list of topics for frequent meditation that Saint Vincent de Paul left us is long:

- Jesus's relationship with God as Father
- his deep human love for his friends
- his compassionate and effective love for the marginalized
- the kingdom he preached
- his community with the apostles
- his prayer
- the presence of sin in the world and in ourselves
- Jesus's eagerness to forgive
- his healing power
- his attitude as a servant
- his love of truth/simplicity
- his humility
- his thirst for justice
- his desire to bring peace
- his struggle with temptation
- the cross
- the resurrection
- Jesus's obedience to the Father's will
- Jesus's gentleness/meekness
- mortification
- apostolic zeal
- poverty
- celibacy
- obedience
- Jesus's joy and thanksgiving.

All these topics relate to our mission to the poor. All will help us to follow Vincent as a Mystic of Charity. What a wonderful opportunity we have to revive or deepen, from this Advent

onwards, daily meditation that will remain part of our spiritual life until our departure from this earth into eternity.

May our meditations be always based on the Bible, on the daily liturgical readings. May we not spend the time of meditation reading a spiritual book; that we can leave for our spiritual reading at some other time of the day.

To meditate is to place ourselves before God, Jesus, through His word. It is to place our hearts at Jesus's total disposition, allowing Him to speak to us as we listen. It is to dispose ourselves to listen to what Jesus would like to communicate to us every single day. It is to trust in Providence, battling any temptations to avoid or omit daily meditation. It is simply to be with Jesus every day in the silence of our minds and hearts, even if our minds remain empty and we have the feeling that nothing was accomplished, that we wasted half an hour doing nothing, because Jesus did not communicate any idea, feeling, or message to us. It is simply to believe in Jesus's way of communicating with God His Father. He often spent the whole night in meditation. It is simply to show Jesus our total love for Him, to show it by simply being there with Him, ready whenever and however Providence will think appropriate for Jesus to communicate His message to us. It is simply to be there every day, ready when Jesus will think best, not letting the moment of grace pass, not missing Jesus's visit.

More and more in his final years, Vincent uttered ecstatic words about God's love. They clearly flowed from his meditation. On 30 May 1519, he prayed aloud in a conference to his confreres:

Let's look at the Son of God; what a heart of charity He had; what a fire of love! Please tell us, Jesus, who pulled You away from heaven to come to endure the curse of earth and the many persecutions and torments You suffered? O Savior! Source of love humbled even to our level and to a vile agony, who showed, in that, greater love for the neighbor than You yourself did? You came to lay yourself open to all our misfortunes, to take the form of a sinner, to lead a life of suffering and to undergo a shameful death

for us; is there any love like that? But who else could love in such an outstanding way? Only Our Lord, who was so enamored with the love of creatures as to leave the throne of His Father to come to take a body subject to weaknesses. And why? To establish among us, by His word and example, love of the neighbor. This is the love that crucified Him and brought about that admirable work of our redemption. O ..., if we had only a little of that love, would we stand around with our arms folded? Would we let those we could assist perish? Oh, no! Charity can't remain idle; it impels us to work for the salvation and consolation of others.¹⁸

Few saints have been as active as Saint Vincent, yet his actions flowed from his deep immersion in God, in Jesus. How fortunate we are to have such an extraordinary founder.

Many blessings in these Advent days.

Your brother in Saint Vincent,

Father Tomaž MAVRIČ, CM
Superior General

18. CCD XII, 216; Conference 207, "Charity (*Common Rules*, Chapter II, Article 12)," 30 May 1519.

Letter of November 27, 2018

Dear Sisters,

*"Come to the foot of this altar.
Here graces will be showered
on all who ask for them with confidence and fervor."*

Let us begin our celebration of the Triduum of Community Feasts by recalling this very familiar invitation from the Blessed Virgin to each of us. May we rejoice anew at the assurance that Mary awaits us to present us to her Son, Jesus. Driven by the spiritual experience St. Catherine Labouré has passed on to us, all of us desire to continually deepen our union with Christ through our relationship with Mary. Like Saint Vincent, Saint Louise, and Saint Catherine, who all spontaneously expressed their closeness to the Virgin, we are promised similar intimacy with our Mother in heaven if we consistently bring ourselves before her and her Son. We trust that she wants to share her love for each of us as her children.

Grateful for this mother-child relationship that we experience wherever we are throughout the world, I take the opportunity to describe recent encounters that affirmed for me the Virgin's desire to remain close to us and our desire to remain close to her. Surely, it is true at the Mother House. This past September we once again welcomed Sisters for the Vincentian Session. The spirit among the participants was inclusive, warm, and dynamic. By their words and attitudes, the Sisters shared their appreciation of being together and having the opportunity to personally pray "at the foot of this altar" regularly. They affirmed that they returned home strengthened in their vocation. This international session was followed almost immediately by a unique gathering for the

Letter of November 27, 2018

Provincial Secretaries. This was probably the first time that Provincial Secretaries from almost every Province of the Little Company gathered in one place. The experience was enriching on numerous levels, practical, and appreciated by all of them as well as by the Sisters of the General Secretariat, who were present for most of the sessions. Again, the participants enjoyed the privilege of bringing their concerns to the foot of the altar. I have no doubt that they not only received many graces, but that they will continue to bear fruit in the days ahead here at the Mother House and in their respective Provinces.

The General Councillors and I have also enjoyed the opportunity to see firsthand the realities of the Provinces during the past three months. Since the beginning of September, we have had the privilege of visiting about one-third of our Provinces on almost every continent. In addition, we have also deepened our connections with the Vincentian Family through our presence, in Rome and Salamanca, at the Finding Vince 400 Film Festival, the International Conference of the Famvin Homeless Alliance, and the annual MISEVI meeting. All of us have thoroughly enjoyed our contact with so many of you and with other members of the family. We were blessed to have been able to pray both in intercession and in gratitude to the Virgin Mary with you. We now look forward to our visits still to come. We are confident that your “altars” await us!

At the same time, we are very aware that many of you have experienced much suffering and faced multiple challenges in recent months as a result of numerous natural disasters. The scope of the cyclones, floods, earthquakes, fires, etc. that have scarred your regions and their destruction are stunning. You have also bravely shouldered worries resulting from unstable political situations directly endangering the safety of our Sisters and those whom we serve. Insecurity and disregard for human rights affect persons who are poor daily. Strengthened by our Lord’s unconditional love and Our Lady’s promise to accompany us if we approach her, you have witnessed to me through your communications your courage and the unity of the Company as you reach out to one another and set forth to respond boldly to

the needs of those who are poor. You have done this both within your Provinces and across Provincial boundaries. Our ongoing prayer for each other and international cooperation are signs of our communion. Your actions show that we do not hesitate to bring our needs and the needs of others to the altar.

The General Council is also closely accompanying the discernment of future reconfigurations. You can be sure that we bring this prayer intention before Our Lady daily. Similarly, regarding the matters of the Company, the General Council has been earnestly discerning the spiritual aspects as well as the practical details of the 2019 – 2021 Domestic, Provincial, and General Assemblies. For this ongoing reflection, we humbly ask for your prayer. Please continue to bring us to the foot of the altar, pleading with our Lord and His Mother to offer us the insight we need for this important planning.

Earlier this month at the Mother House, our Sisters who serve in the United Nations’ Geneva and New York offices gave a presentation on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948. As we celebrate the 70th anniversary of this document, the Sisters challenged us to become more educated about it in order to recognize the ways our services already help to assure respect of these rights. I invite you to take the time to study this declaration and to discover means to more fully relieve the suffering of those who are victims of human rights’ violations such as forced migration, human trafficking, domestic abuse, homelessness, etc.

You may be aware that the first International Conference of the Famvin Homeless Alliance is currently taking place in Rome. I am attending this three-day gathering along with several other Daughters of Charity. It brings together experts from all over the world in order to explore homelessness within the context of our Vincentian apostolic and spiritual heritage and ways to best serve those who suffer from this poverty. I ask that you regularly bring your prayers for this endeavor to the foot of the altar so that we allow God to guide our way forward. May our Vincentian

Letter of November 27, 2018

Family receive the graces necessary to commit our unique energy, resources, and expertise to those who await our response.

I also strongly encourage you not to neglect to bring the intentions of Pope Francis to the foot of the altar. The universal Church is suffering deeply at this time, and he is boldly attempting to address the issues that are at the root of so much pain and turmoil. His desire and efforts for communion, transparency, and accountability are heroic. As faithful daughters of the Church, let us daily place his intentions in the hands of our Blessed Mother, imploring her to intercede for the graces Pope Francis needs for the good of the Church and the world.

This letter has emphasized our fidelity to the invitation of the Blessed Virgin and to the example of our Holy Founders to approach God in confidence for the graces we need to live our vocation fully. I would be remiss if I failed to recognize that in addition to bringing our needs before God and the Virgin Mary, we also remember to return to them consistently with our prayers of praise for all of the good they shower upon us. May our lives continue to be filled with explicit thanksgiving for the blessings that God's love and His Mother's care offer us.

Sisters, as we celebrate our Triduum of Feasts, I urge us to never hesitate to *come to the foot of the altar* where graces will be showered upon us. Our close relationship with Christ will support our gift of self and deepen our spirit of gratitude. May the treasure given to St. Catherine Labouré, the maternal protection of our Blessed Mother, and the powerful intercession of our Holy Founders as well as all of the Daughters of Charity who have walked before us lead our boldness of charity for a new missionary momentum forward. *Happy Feasts!*

Affectionately united with you in prayer,

Sister Kathleen APPLER
Daughter of Charity

Province of Saint Louise-USA

Combating human trafficking
across Provincial and national
borders

There isn't a country in the world that is not impacted by human trafficking. This is true in the Northern and Southern hemisphere as well as the East and the West; the scourge of human trafficking is everywhere. It is also true in the United States. There are those who want to believe that it doesn't happen in the United States, but it does happen with great frequency and regularity in many areas of "normal" life: domestic help imported for a price, children coerced into pornography, young girls lured into sex work, agricultural workers exploited and abused, etc. Just last summer there was an incident in San Antonio, a city in southern Texas. A large truck was abandoned in a parking lot, and when the authorities looked in the back of the truck, they found twenty-two men who had been smuggled across the border with the promise of jobs. Ten had died, and the rest were hospitalized in critical condition. Several such trucks were stopped in a six-week period. Over 250 people paid smugglers to bring them to the United States in search of work and a better life for themselves and their families.

Last year Polaris, an organization that works to raise awareness regarding human trafficking and to rescue people from the clutches of traffickers, received over 27,000 calls to its hotline, both reports of incidents or

1

Visitatrixes'
Inter-Assemblies
Meeting

Combatting Modern Forms of Slavery

concerns about someone being trafficked or cries for help from someone caught in the web of trafficking.

This is what we refer to in the United States as good news/bad news. The good news is that people are more aware of the existence of human trafficking as well as the signs for which to watch. The bad news is that there are so many people caught in the web of trafficking in a country that was founded on democracy and freedom.

In response to this growing problem, or more accurately the growing awareness of an old problem, the Company addressed it in the Inter-Assemblies Document (2015-2021) and challenged all of us in our various countries, continents and hemispheres to see what we could do to address the issue of human trafficking and to raise awareness among our Sisters while looking for ways to minister to the victims.

In the Province of Saint Louise-USA, we decided to establish an Office of Migration and Modern Slavery. Sister Michelle was asked to head this office because of her experience with those caught in human trafficking. She had worked for several years at a residence for women who had been rescued from trafficking in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on the East coast of the United States. In her work with victims of trafficking in this large city, she was well aware of the trauma and scars that trafficking inflicted on women caught in the web. She accompanied women on their road to healing, which often included facing their captors in a court of law. This could be intimidating on many levels since the victims and their families had been threatened and intimidated for so long they had a hard time believing they were safe, even in a courtroom.

You may be thinking that all this is very interesting and sad, but it really doesn't impact our lives. Yes, we pray for the victims of human trafficking, but there is nothing else we can do. It is a fact that we can do more together than alone to fight against this scourge wherever it occurs. In August 2017, Sister Michelle participated in a continental meeting in Bogota, Colombia,

organized by CLAR (Confederation of Latin American Religious) with the theme "*Migrants and human trafficking are challenges for the consecrated life*". Among the 100 participants, there were seventeen Daughters of Charity, and the group was facilitated by Father Guillermo Campuzano, CM, the representative for the Congregation of the Mission at the United Nations. Following this gathering, the Daughters of Charity Intercontinental Commission on Modern Slavery met at the Provincial House in Bogota to further the work begun in February 2016 in Mexico in response to the question, "*How can we more effectively coordinate our efforts on behalf of persons victimized by modern forms of slavery and those affected by multiple types of poverty?*" (IAD, p. 7)

The Sisters drafted a document along with programming content across three areas: structure and communication, formation and action and collaboration. Now the work comes back to the various Provinces for discussion, education and implementation.

We all can and should pray for those who are caught up in these forms of modern slavery, and we need to pray for their captors that they may have a change of heart and turn away from these heinous crimes. In the Province, Sister Michelle has also been educating all of us on human trafficking.

- What should we look for?
- The stories behind the victims
- How might our consumer habits indirectly contribute to human trafficking?
- What we can do to address the problem?
- What can we do to accompany victims through the legal system?
- How can we work more closely across Provincial lines to insure the safety and wellbeing of those who have been trafficked?

-

Sister Michelle gave a presentation at our Provincial Formation Days to the Sisters and began to educate all of us on the realities of trafficking and ways to be part of the solution. For many it was new information, and for some it was familiar, but for all of us it raised the issue to a new level of awareness. We continue

Combatting Modern Forms of Slavery

to look for ways to collaborate with our Sisters in Central and South America as they deal with these issues on their side of the border and as the victims cross between countries. Our Sisters along the border see this on a regular basis, but now even those who are not dealing with it day-to-day are more conscious of the problem. The Sisters have been very responsive as they continue to learn about those who are victims of modern slavery.

Sister Michelle continues to work with our Sisters who live on the other side of the border to provide the services and support that are needed for those who have been trafficked and then returned to Mexico, so that they do not fall victim to trafficking again.

In keeping with the directives of the Inter-Assemblies Document, the Sisters of the Americas continue to ask ourselves, *“How can we more efficiently coordinate our efforts on behalf of persons victimized by modern forms of slavery and those affected by multiple types of poverty?”* (IAD, p. 7) We have begun to *“increase networking at all levels – particularly, interprovincial and international – in order to facilitate collaborative service with the Vincentian Family and others for the defense and integration of migrants, refugees and victims of modern forms of slavery”* (IAD, p. 18).

Sister Catherine Mary NORRIS
Visitatrix

Province of Thailand

Daughters of Charity Program for Safe Migration and Prevention of Human Trafficking

Introduction

The world is experiencing life-threatening conditions that destroy the human person at all levels with the unwitting complicity of their families and community. The phenomena of unsafe migration and human trafficking are affecting those who are on the peripheries, especially women and children. During the last two General Assemblies in 2009 and 2015, the Daughters of Charity identified migration and human trafficking as a new priority for the service of those who are poor around the world. The works for migration were integrated in the different apostolic services of the Daughters of Charity in Laos in 1999, Cambodia in 2000 and in Maesot (Thailand), in response to the call of the Diocese of Nakhon Sawan, in 2006. The Sisters in Maesot are involved in pastoral care of the Catholic community at the refugee camp and in early education for children of migrant workers living outside the refugee camp. They provide assistance to victims of human trafficking who worked on Thai fishing boats. In 2014 the Province of Thailand Program for Safe Migration and Prevention of Human Trafficking identified four locations where they were to establish Migration-Human Trafficking Education Centers:

- In Maesot, Thailand, for Myanmar migrants
- In Khon Kaen, Thailand, for Vietnamese migrants
- In Vientiane, Laos, for Laotian migrants

Combatting Modern Forms of Slavery

- In Takeo, Cambodia, as a coordination center for the provinces of Battambang, Siemriep and Kampong Cham for Cambodia migrants.

In each location, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul and the International Association of Charities assist in providing the services, especially in matters related to the government system, legal matters and fundraising.

The following services are offered:

1. Formation of the community in order to become both the agent and the advocate in education about safe migration and ending human trafficking. This is done by organizing the villagers, village leaders, police officers, catechists, secondary school students, etc.;

2. Improvement of people's quality of life by organizing services that deliver formal and alternative education, second-generation education, health assistance including mental health and counseling, rehabilitation and re-integration services, pre-departure training and the opening of small business to generate income (micro-finance).

Those responsible also seek to strengthen the opportunity for the Vincentian Family to share the management of the services with staff and community leaders working in collaboration with the local government or other existing systems in the community including non-governmental organizations and faith-based organizations. We believe that it is good to review the services delivered in the target areas, looking at reality with a critical eye as well as a critical heart, in order to understand both the experiences and the needs of the participants.

Currently, the services in Cambodia are conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education. In Laos, they are part of the pastoral care of the Catholic Church with the support of the local Ordinary. Those services in Maesot operate in close collaboration with the Myanmar local system

as approved by the Thai government, and those for Vietnamese migrant workers in the northeastern region.

The celebration of the 400th anniversary of the Vincentian charism was the opportunity for us to evaluate the entire program and identify its impact on the lives of those who are affected by migration and trafficking in the areas where we minister. We pursued:

A study tour. The Sisters and lay volunteers involved in the program conducted a study tour at the border of Laos and Thailand, and the visit to the Vietnamese migrant workers took place at the market sites in Khon Kaen. They found that resilience and firmness of faith characterize the life stories of the migrant workers.

Testimonies related to the Vincentian charism. Based on the theme: "*I was a stranger and you welcomed me*", the staff from the different MHT Education Centers were invited to share their testimonies explaining how their faith had grown and allowed them to see Christ in the poor and the poor in Christ.

REFLECTION: IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

We learned that:

- Formation of the management team, staff and partners in the Vincentian charism unified the common effort to continue the services with the vulnerable target groups;
- The Migration and Human Trafficking Education Center gained the trust of migrant workers, and recognition from the government and the local Ordinary aided in service delivery;
- Training of local leaders and integration of the program into the local system ensured the continuity of the services in the local community;
- Migrant workers are becoming aware of the necessity of legal documents to ensure their own safety at their workplaces;
- The children and their parents recognized the value of education, and the parents expressed support for pursuing higher education;

Combatting Modern Forms of Slavery

- Migrant volunteers are able to mobilize services to reach out to other migrant workers who are even poorer than themselves;
- We also learned ways to facilitate obtaining services from the Vietnamese consulate in order to access legal documents and advice for other assistance for migrant workers.

GOING FORWARD, WE BELIEVE THAT IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE:

1. Replicate, continue and share our best practices by:

- Continuing regular faith and Vincentian formation of staff with meetings and reflections;
- Preparing drama education, radio spot broadcasts and other educational opportunities;
- Continuing migration and trafficking education in the community at all levels;
- Continuing youth outreach and education of the second generation;
- Teaching the Thai and English languages to migrant workers (in Myanmar migrant schools);
- Updating the information on migration and human trafficking, especially the information concerning embassies;
- Upgrading training materials and training techniques;
- Circulating the latest information on Thai law that affects the life of migrant workers and their families;
- Promoting savings and loan services as an option to generate income and control unsafe migration.

2. Dare courageously to:

- Establish the DC Migration and Human Trafficking Coordinating Office with appropriate structures;
- Coordinate ongoing formation of the DC Migration and Human Trafficking staff;
- Follow up on referrals requested by the DC Migration and Human Trafficking Education Centers;
- Make contacts, form networks, link with the Vincentian Family and the Migration and Human Trafficking Desks of other Asian Provinces,

non-governmental organizations, government organizations and faith-based organizations;

- Assist in the preparation of plans and proposals with surveys, action plans, monitoring and evaluation, as needed;
- Promote and publicize the DC Migration and Human Trafficking Education Center;
- Support the initiatives of the Migration and Human Trafficking Education Centers in Cambodia, Laos and Thailand.

3. Take a deeper interest in our involvement for the sustainability of this project by:

- Reflecting and preparing plans;
- Expanding migration and human trafficking services in other locations in partnership with the local Ordinary and government entities;
- Training Buddhist monks on migration and human trafficking and integrating services in Buddhist temples;
- Establishing Migration and Human Trafficking Desks in Parish Churches / Dioceses;
- Collaborating with government ministries and negotiating for government support;
- Maximizing opportunities to generate income;
- Promoting the DC Migration and Human Trafficking Centers as training centers on these questions, organizing trainings with fees for government organizations, non-governmental organizations and faith-based organizations.

May Mary, the Mother of Mercy, accompany us on our journey as we implore the Holy Spirit to guide our way forward.

Sister Consolacion EATA
Visitatrix

Province of Portugal

Mission in Rio de Mouro (Sintra)
“A Church that goes forth”

The past

“The Company is missionary by nature; it strives to retain the flexibility and mobility needed to respond to the calls of the Church in the face of every form of poverty...” (C. 25a).

We made a decisive response to the calls from 2013 to 2015 of the local Church and the Provincial and General Assemblies. On October 4, 2015, we opened an international local community (one Sister from the Province of Portugal, one from Curitiba [Brazil] and two from Mozambique) in a poor neighborhood of Rio de Mouro, located in Sintra, Portugal. The city of Rio de Mouro is located 15 km from the capital, Lisbon. Three thousand of its fifteen thousand residents attend church. Pope Francis’ call that we become a Church that “goes forth” toward the peripheries has become a reality.

The Sisters began living in an apartment rented by the parish. The local community bears the name of Our Lady of Fatima as a constant reminder to “do whatever He tells you”. The Sisters experience the universality of charity, placing themselves at the service of people in distress, struggling children, elderly persons, people with disabilities, those in need of food, health care, human and Christian dignity... The Sisters, who have for home a rented house, also have for chapel the parish church and for field of action, the streets of Rio de Mouro, religious education classrooms, food distribution centers and the homes of the sick and elderly.

After three years of presence, in October 2017 the Province acquired a larger house with spaces for various pastoral gatherings. The house is a little farther away from the parish, but this allows the Sisters to meet people, get to know them and invite them to different parish activities. Following the example of Jesus who went from village to village to proclaim the Kingdom of God, the Sisters rejoice to see how “those who are poor evangelize us”. They approach the Sisters with an open mind and simply share their deep thirst for God. Community life consists of prayer, sisterly relationships and sharing. At the beginning of 2017, the Sister from the Province of Curitiba had to leave, but another Sister joined the local community toward the end of that year.

Involved in the parish, the Sisters pray Lauds in the community chapel but have Vespers, daily Eucharist and other prayer services in the parish. The parishioners’ participation is a real encouragement for them. The Sisters receive families, visit elderly and sick people in their homes, providing spiritual, psychological and social support, teach catechism for children and young adults, offer formation for teachers and catechists, coordinate liturgical decoration, participate in food and clothing distribution and join in literacy instruction... A group of Vincentian Marian Youth (VMY) and a conference of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (SSVP) came to be with the support of the pastor and the deacon, who also have a strong Vincentian spirit. As Saint Vincent would say, “Blessed be God, Sisters... *you must do what the Son of God did when He was on earth*” (cf. CCD IX, 14. Conference of July 5, 1640). The Local Community Plan is adapted to the demands of the mission so that we might put into practice the Spiritual Testament of Saint Louise: *“Take good care of the service of the poor. Above all, live together in great union and cordiality, loving one another in imitation of the union and life of Our Lord. Pray earnestly to the Blessed Virgin, that she may be your only Mother”* (Spiritual Writings, p. 835).

This new mission has encouraged the missionary momentum of the Province.

Some Sisters in the Province had difficulty accepting this way of life because the Sisters were not paid. Little by little, this simple lifestyle, closer to those who are most poor, was embraced, and the entire Province developed deeper convictions: living more fully from a faith perspective because this mission came from God, living the charism through a witness of radicality in the service of those who are poor, opening ourselves to today's youth, seeking to understand other cultures, participating in parish activities...

This new experience of missionary life led to the opening of a new mission in the city of Peniche, one of the largest traditional fishing ports in the country. It also raised greater awareness among the Sisters of the need to return to the origins of the Company, revitalize the charism and live in greater communion with the Church. In addition, it helped the priests of the parish and the parishioners better understand the importance of consecrated life.

It further helped the whole Province to feel greater solidarity with the different missions, better understand the need for collaboration with lay people, be more obviously close to those who are poor, be more open to young people and seek to awaken new vocations.

Conclusion

God is the witness of the Sisters' immense joy in serving and living with those who are most poor. The Sisters wish to be the instrument of God's love in Rio de Mouro, to do good, weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice! However, they are too few to reach all poor persons of the neighborhoods of Rio de Mouro. *"The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest"* (Mt 9:37-38). Yes, more boldness and creativity are needed to respond to the missionary call because persons who are poor have so many needs. The hope that drives us comes from the new vocations that could be born for the Province!

Sister Maria Fátima VERÍSSIMO FERREIRA
Visitatrix

Province of Ecuador

**Interprovincial project:
"Builders of life"**

*For a society without modern forms of slavery
or human trafficking*

Introduction

In 2017, the first phase of the "Where is your brother?" project began in San Lorenzo, located in the northwest of Ecuador on the border with Colombia.

The objective of this project is to support and assist those who are most poor and vulnerable, suffering from new forms of poverty such as forced displacement and human trafficking (care for victims, speaking out on their behalf, prevention, formation, training and establishment of local and national support networks). The Provinces of Ecuador and the two Provinces of Colombia (Calí and La Milagrosa Bogotá-Venezuela) are involved in this project.

The Province of Ecuador has had a local community in San Lorenzo since 1988, serving in a sponsored hospital, "Divina Providencia." Beginning in 2017, with the "Where is your brother?" project, the Province called on the entire community's involvement in serving the population. A Provincial Councillor has responsibility for its overall coordination.

The Province of La Milagrosa Bogotá-Venezuela, with the Kausay Defenders of Life Network, helps to identify and evaluate the problem of human trafficking in the city of San Lorenzo by providing advice, training and financial support.

Interprovincial Missions in Places of Immigration

The Province of Cali has appointed a Sister to support the work of awareness-raising and prevention. Currently, she is the local coordinator for the project.

Inspiration for this project

The Gospel and the Vincentian charism inspire us to respond to all forms of poverty and to go out toward those who are the most abandoned. The option for those who are most poor is here and now; no form of poverty should leave us indifferent.

At the end of its 2014 Provincial Assembly, the Province of Ecuador committed to “**continue the revision of works and be in the poorest places, responding to new demands**”, and we reflected on the types of poverty that we wanted to prioritize. Soon after that, the Province of La Milagrosa Bogotá-Venezuela offered to send a Sister to reflect with the members of the Council on the scourge of modern forms of slavery (cf. the commitment put forward in the Inter-Assemblies Document 2015-2021). The idea of designing an Interprovincial project against trafficking was thus born. Since then, we see a little more clearly what God is asking of us. Different working meetings, sharing of experiences with local stakeholders, observation visits in different border locations, discussions with other consecrated people within the country and meetings of the three Provincial Councils involved in the project took place.

Ultimately, we understood that God was urging us, through the voice of the Church and the Inter-Assemblies Document 2015-2021, to go out to the peripheries and act immediately.

We chose to begin the first phase of the project in the county of San Lorenzo since the Company already had worked there for thirty years in health care, home visits and parish catechism. Moreover, this region, where Ecuador and Colombia share a border, is strategic. Following four decades of tension between the countries, both sides of the border confront problems of extreme poverty and violence, causing movements of peoples.

The project named “Where is your brother?” (Genesis 4:9) soon began in the outlying neighborhoods of San Lorenzo in order to analyze the situation and offer services to position ourselves on the side of human life, rights and dignity.

ECUADORIAN COUNTY OF SAN LORENZO: ANALYSIS OF ITS CONTEXT

The Ecuadorian county of San Lorenzo, located in the northwest region of the country, belongs to Esmeraldas Province and borders the Department of Nariño, Colombia. It covers an area of about 305,000 hectares and consists of a county seat and twelve rural ‘parishes’.

Spanish colonists arrived around 1526 on the coasts of Ecuador and dropped anchor in Esmeraldas. The majority of the population is of African descent. There are many people of mixed race (Indian and Spanish) and indigenous people from the Awa and Chachi ethnic groups, which makes the region multicultural.

The total population of San Lorenzo is about 50,000, with a high growth rate due to migration across the border. The result of the arrival of refugees and large-scale movement is that 35% of the population now is not native to the county.

One of the problems facing the residents who come from Colombia to Ecuador is their lack of identity papers. The poverty statistics for the city are much higher than the national average, with 82.7% unable to meet their basic needs, the highest percentage in the whole province and above the national average of 61.3%. Insufficient public service infrastructure and housing conditions result in people living in situations of economic insecurity and poverty.

The public water supply does not reach half of the population. Sewage treatment takes the form of septic tanks.

Interprovincial Missions in Places of Immigration

In terms of education, there is a high percentage of illiteracy and school dropouts. Economic activity is tied to agriculture, ranching, hunting, fishing and forestry as well as illegal drug crops, which involves both men and women.

The economic vitality of the port of San Lorenzo, located 18 kilometers from the border with Colombia, is also strongly influenced by economic activity connected to illegal cultivation of drugs on the Colombian side. Drug sales generate income that comes to San Lorenzo through the purchase of shipments of food and basic commodities.

The population of San Lorenzo is excluded and isolated from the central government. The proximity with Colombia and the absence of attention from the government make San Lorenzo a strategic place for large-scale drug trade on a national and international level. The population must live with this trafficking and remain silent in order to survive. Fear is part of daily life as people fear possible reprisals since armed criminal groups control the territory and drug traffickers go about sowing terror.

While this border region continues to struggle to overcome the lasting effects of slavery, discrimination and exclusion, significant socio-economic deficiencies are notable.

The cultural expressions of the Afro-Ecuadorian population are found in their suffering, rejection due to the color of their skin and, at the same time, their struggle and pride as they have sustained their culture, especially through their music and sports. The 2006 World Cup national football team consisted primarily of Afro-Ecuadorian players.

Concerning religion, the Church in recent years did not offer sufficient formation and accompaniment to promote growth in the Christian faith. In the countryside, only the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, the Daughters of Charity and diocesan priests remained. A resulting increase in sects causes confusion and indifference among Christians.

THE “WHERE IS YOUR BROTHER?” PROJECT

The strategy of the “Where is your brother?” project consists in working in five areas: prevention and awareness-raising, political impact, collaboration, care for victims and human promotion.

1. Prevention and awareness-raising

- Offer workshops for all the Sisters of the Province and many of our collaborators on themes that are developed with the help of the Daughters of Charity, public and private institutions (Hope Foundation, International Organization for Migration-OIM).
- “What is human trafficking?” by a Sister from the Province of La Milagrosa Bogotá-Venezuela;
- “Types of human trafficking” by the Hope Foundation;
- “Human trafficking and illegal trafficking of migrants as defined by law” by the OIM.
- Offer workshops for catechists, parish apostolic groups, leaders, social service leaders and Sisters of the local community.
- Present a reflection process in educational establishments to create a culture of social stigma regarding this crime that imperils fundamental rights and claims many victims among children and adolescents.
- Hold meetings with formators and young women in initial formation.
- Support families in neighborhoods at Christmas time and reflect on the topic “Concept and types of human trafficking”.
- Establish groups of boys and girls, aged 7 to 12, called “Sowers of Peace”, in the eleven outlying neighborhoods.
- Invite the families of “Sowers of Peace” children to take part in the formation workshops.
- Bring all the groups together monthly for the purpose of strengthening positive relationships.
- Establish and form neighborhood leaders on human rights.
- Provide formation for the branches of the Vincentian Family (VMY, SSVP, AMM and NAVYL: Young friends of Vincent and Louise).

2. Political impact

Participate regularly in Sustainable Solutions Round Tables (participating public, private and religious organizations contribute ideas to solve pressing problems).

- Gender and formation in diversity
- Protection (identity documents and schooling)
- Accompaniment that is attentive to their real needs
- Impact San Lorenzo (holistic care – work with the family)

3. Collaboration

- Public prosecutor
- Protection Board
- City Council (lawyers)
- Hebrew Organization for Assistance to Immigrants and Refugees (HAIS)
- Ministry for Economic and Social Inclusion (MIESS)
- Interior Ministry (MI)

4. Care for the Victims

- Identify and provide for children and women who are victims of domestic violence and human trafficking (labor and sexual exploitation).
- Outreach with ongoing care through a listening ministry.

5. Human promotion

Women suffer from significant marginalization. They are at risk of discrimination, exclusion, abuse and violence. For example, the “shell-collecting” mothers’ lives center around the swamps. Every day, in order to sustain their families, they collect shells that they then sell for a derisory price that never matches the sacrifice made.

- One initiative involves accompanying a group of “positive women”:
- offering them a holistic (human and Christian) formation;
- providing them with recycled materials so that they can

produce handicrafts;

- supporting them financially so that they can obtain a sewing machine;
- participating in income-generating activities, etc.
- Another initiative involves accompanying vulnerable children and adolescents whose parents and entourage expose them to various constant acts of violence. Many of them leave home and school and migrate to other cities.

The “Where is your brother?” project is gradually taking concrete form with various activities ranging from prevention to human promotion. Based on the Vincentian charism, we use these means creatively for the evangelization of those who are poor and collaboration with the local Church so that our vulnerable brothers and sisters are recognized in their dignity as children of God. Our respectful closeness helps open the way for us to accompany them in their desire for liberation, but we do not want to fall into excessive activism. For this disadvantaged population, the Vincentian charism is and will always be Good News; for the Vincentian Family, it is an ongoing challenge that impels us to address the structural causes of poverty and promote holistic development of those who are poor.

Sister Ana Maria MALDONADO
Visitatrix

Province of España-Sur

Mission *Ad Gentes* in Mauritania

1

Originally from the Province of Vietnam, I was sent on mission *Ad Gentes* in Mauritania, where I have been for six years now. I thus belong to the Province of España-Sur. Mauritania is an Islamic Republic with a 100% Muslim population. This country is part of the Western Sahara Desert called the Sahel.

Visitatrices'
Inter-Assemblies Meeting

THE MISSIONARY LOCATION

Context of the mission

There are two local communities of Daughters of Charity in Mauritania: one in the capital, Nouakchott, and the other in Atar, 453 kilometers away, deep into the desert, where I live. There are four of us, two Spanish and two Vietnamese Sisters. Atar is a city in west-central Mauritania in the region of Adrar. With its highly appreciated tourist sites, it was the most visited region of the country. However, for several years now, terrorist threats have decimated tourism and commercial activity in the city and surrounding areas, to the detriment of families in the region.

The population numbers 32,000 with several ethnic groups. The dominant ethnic group is the white Berber Moors. There are also the Haratin (freed slaves). Atar is rich thanks to farming of dates and vegetables, such as carrots and eggplants, in the oasis. People raise cattle as well as donkeys because they

serve as a means of transportation. The climate is extreme and varied, typical of deserts: very hot seasons with temperatures up to 50 degrees Celsius (120 degrees Fahrenheit) and very cold from November to early March. The language spoken is a dialect of Hassanya. Schools teach French and English, but the level is very low. Some people speak French but are unable to write in it.

THE PRESENCE OF THE CHURCH AND OUR MISSION

Thanks to the presence of missionaries who arrived in 1961, the Church is well known and appreciated by Mauritians. All of Mauritania is a single diocese. On December 9, 2016, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania established diplomatic relationships with the Vatican. In the mission of Atar, there are two diocesan priests and four Daughters of Charity.

Our different ministries

Education

We find great joy in working with handicapped children, age 6 to 18, all abandoned, neglected and excluded from society and school systems. We also have a group of deaf-mute girls and boys who do not have access to specialized schools because of lack of resources as well as adolescents from the streets accustomed to begging. Today, these children and youth are agents of their own promotion. Our goal is to get them back on their feet. They help with chores at the center in a spirit of solidarity and responsibility for each other. We hold "open house" Thursdays and Fridays in the courtyard of our house to offer time for relaxation, sports and other educational activities to the children in the neighborhood who wish to come. Activities coordinators work with them. One Sister works at the public kindergarten and trains the staff and new caregivers who wish to open small kindergartens and build the country's future.

Social services

We also go to the prison. Once a week, we bring prisoners a substantial hot meal and try to relieve their suffering and improve their living conditions in terms of their hygiene, leisure activities and clothing.

Health

The Outpatient Severe Malnutrition Treatment Center (CRENAS) has the mission of caring for those afflicted by acute malnutrition; malnourished babies and their mothers come there daily and are received by a team of which I am a part. Following a UNICEF protocol, they receive appropriate care to overcome malnutrition. Most of the mothers come from deep in the desert and are desperate and exhausted. At home in this peaceful, welcoming place, they feel that we listen to them. It is a good opportunity for establishing stronger bonds of trust and helping them assume their responsibility as mothers. A listening office is open to support families in economic hardship and ease their difficulties while they contribute through small-scale services in a spirit of solidarity. Some well-off women are involved as well.

THE JOYS AND DIFFICULTIES

Today, I dare say like Saint Vincent, *“Oh Sauveur! How happy I am in this mission!”* Why am I happy? What is the source of this joy when I am in a foreign, unknown, arid, desert, harsh land with nomads who cry out, “Allah”?

The secret to my joy is Jesus, who lives in me, replenishes me in days of aridity, consoles me in times of temptation, accompanies me in my solitude, shapes and fashions my prideful resistances and makes forgiveness spring forth in me. He is the one who educates me and makes me missionary.

We have a privileged place in our community that we call the “place of encounter”. Our mission blossoms and bears fruit thanks to this real oasis in the middle of the desert for times of

prayer, adoration, contemplation, sharing and communion. My Sister Servant and the Sisters of the local community enrich me and help me to grow day after day by trusting me to serve our Lords and Masters. I really feel “at home”. It is true: *“love is inventive to infinity,”* and the mission makes me a new person with a transformed mentality, a more open heart and a broader and more mature perspective... My thoughts are no longer the same. *Yes, I am no longer the same! Yes, I have greatly changed.* The other source of my joy is persons who are poor themselves. Because they grew up in a nomadic lifestyle surrounded by tourists, they had grown accustomed to being helped. At the beginning, when they would see us, adults and children alike would ask us for “gifts”. It was like a refrain in this desert place that was hard to bear. Today, with time, they recognize us as one of them. Our joy is thus great to see that they have understood that we are equal in dignity.

Speaking of our joys does not mean that we do not have difficulties. Yes, we have many difficulties, for the cross is the daily bread of missionaries.

My greatest difficulty is solitude. Being sent in the middle of Muslims demands deep humility to serve without expecting anything in return; we must accept the lowest place in a foreign country that does not know Jesus of Nazareth and be ready to simply welcome our status of “Ms.”, sometimes poorly considered, little appreciated, ignored... In their own way, the children from Koran schools express a fundamentalist doctrine that makes them distant and distrustful. Their aggressive actions, sometimes shown by throwing stones at us, are hard to take... However, He who sent me impels me to speak about Him, encouraging me to do so day after day. All this keeps us in a process of conversion and mercy that purifies us and heals any trace of pride in us. *“Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, He emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave”* (Phil 2:6-7).

It is difficult to “die” and mature in this Muslim environment, knowing that they did not ask for us and that we are not really

Mission Ad Gentes

part of their lives although we serve them. We do not attend their mosques and rarely participate in their celebrations; however, these people see us each day suffering like them from the climate, sand storms, illnesses and fatigue. People welcome us kindly, but there is always a distance and prejudices, and we feel alone. Why are we not like them?

“*Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!*” (1 Cor 9:16b). How can we proclaim the Good News in this 100% Muslim country? If there are not any Christians, with whom can we share our faith? If Jesus is only a prophet for them, will our mission remain sterile? I listen to Saint Vincent: “*...be convinced that God asks of you only that you cast your nets into the sea, and not that you catch the fish, because it is up to Him to make them go into the nets. Have no doubt that He will do so... To this work and patience, you must join humility, prayer, and good example...*” (CCD VII, 358). Another difficulty is living in an international local community. It is hard for me to let go of my personal ideas to welcome those of others because I am impulsive and stubborn... So many times, I have witnessed the quiet tears of my companions before the Blessed Sacrament... and mine as well. Yes, He alone knows my sense of incompetence, my sufferings, my misunderstandings, my struggles against my ego that repeatedly overtakes me. Just as Good Friday opens to Easter, the mystery of an international local community requires that I die to self in order to be born again, allowing myself to be shaped as a stone rubbed down by a spring.

BEFORE LEAVING FOR THE MISSION, WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT POINTS TO PREPARE ONESELF FOR MISSION?

When I entered the Seminary, my band or vocation group had the name “*Ad Gentes*”. Through instructions on Constitutions 25a and d, the Directress enkindled in our hearts the desire to go out to the whole world to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel. Little by little, this call grew in me and matured in the depths of my heart. Each day, I handed over my whole poor self to the Lord so that I might do His will.

All of the local communities where I lived were schools of missionary formation that prepared me for today: prayer life, sisterly love, boldness for service of persons who are poor and especially the life witness of the older Sisters.

I first had the opportunity to live outside of my country after my vows for the first time. I spent three years at the Mother House where I suffered from loneliness and much more: separation from family, community life, learning the language... The worse my loneliness, the more I clung to Jesus in prayer. He showed His presence in my life. Yes, “*God is in events.*” I further found people who helped me to be patient to discern my missionary vocation and allow it to mature. Sister Evelyne advised me at nine years vocation to return to my country in order to verify the authenticity of this call to the mission *Ad Gentes*.

The Mission Center was very important for living internationality and preparing myself in all areas: theology, missiology, Islamic studies, tropical medicine as a nurse, and – once I knew to which country I was being sent – learning the local language and becoming familiar with the culture. The very rich atmosphere of the Mother House helps return to the source of our Vincentian spirituality. The witness of faith and devotion to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal offered by all those who come to pray in the Chapel also contributes to preparation for the mission.

UPON ARRIVAL ON THE MISSION: WHAT HELPED ME TO ADAPT

Upon arrival, what most helped me was the *regularity of prayer and sharing among us*. In our Local Community Plan, which we wrote after experimentation, we chose as a priority for our spiritual life that “*each day, the Lord would be the first served and the last met.*” The Holy Spirit is always there at the beginning. He goes before us to prepare the way. He is the author and the heart of the mission.

Another support is the love of the community shown by building it day after day, the love for those who are poor and for the mission and the desire for conversion and growth in unity and

Mission Ad Gentes

mutual respect. I knew nothing and felt completely worthless, so I asked my Sister Servant to help me, and I let the community and collaborators guide me. I have really become a desert nomad by trial and error and observation. Yes, I adapted well thanks to the local community.

It is also very important to learn the local language in order to discover its culture, customs and beliefs... It is a means for closer relationships and trust and an additional step for us not to be thought of as strangers... Learning the language opens the door to the country that welcomes me. Little by little, I have become one of them, and this helps a lot in my daily life, at the market or on public transportation. *“So, you speak Hassanya... you are from our land, that’s good!”* I realize how much a people feels understood and valued when you appreciate its language.

To better adapt in this Muslim desert country, the Lord asks of me a big, deep change of perspective, attitude and habits and an interior training for conversion to greater humility.

Before arriving in a Muslim country, it would be helpful to have more knowledge of the Islamic religion and its culture, take enough time to learn the local language and not attempt to begin service right away. As the bishop of Mauritania has often said to us, *“The Daughters of Charity who arrived today already started working yesterday.”* It is important to let the receiving missionary community guide you and to be ready, as a former missionary has said, to turn your head 180 degrees, in other words, you should realize that you have everything to learn.

The mission *Ad Gentes* is no longer a matter of converting or evangelizing others but of allowing the Lord, present in the people, to evangelize me. Thank you for praying for me, and I ask you to continue so that I might be a little pinch of yeast for the Lord’s harvest.

Sister Teresa VU KIEU DIEM
Daughter of Charity

Province del Caribe

Mission Ad Gentes in Haiti

Originally from Spain and the Province of Madrid-San Vicente, I was sent to Haiti by the General Council in 2011. I am now 22 years vocation.

When I arrived, I was missioned to Our Lady of Divine Providence local community in the impoverished neighborhood of the capital called Cité Soleil. For the last seven years, I have provided different services there, including these last six years as Sister Servant of the local community.

Cité Soleil is one of the poorest neighborhoods in the world. Covering five square kilometers, it has an estimated population of 450,000 divided into 34 sections. Cité Soleil is characterized by the lack of infrastructure and a dense concentration of housing with extremely unhealthy conditions that cause illnesses such as malaria, cholera, typhoid fever, intestinal illnesses and skin diseases. Violence and lack of security reign there as organized crime and drug trafficking are run by gangs.

Our services

The Daughters of Charity have been here since 1975 to accompany the residents of the Cité, improve their health, socio-economic, nutritional and educational conditions and be a sign of God’s presence.

- Marguerite Naseau Pre-school for children 3 to 6 years old, with more than 300 students.
- Saint Louise de Marillac Primary School, with 470 students from 1st to 6th grade. Most of them come from extremely poor

families.

- Rosalie Rendu Mother-Child Nutrition and Health Center, which serves about 250 children daily for doctor's appointments, vaccinations and weight check-ups. There are nearly 100 daily appointments for pregnant mothers. This center has an out-patient malnutrition treatment and follow-up program for children 6 months to 3 years old suffering from severe malnutrition.

MY JOYS AND DIFFICULTIES

The Lord has asked me to live my life of a Daughter of Charity as a missionary for seven years, and I can proclaim with the psalmist, "*The Lord has done great things for us; oh, how happy we were!*" (Ps 126). In this difficult context, even if my mission as Sister Servant has not always been easy, these have been years of grace for me that have helped me grow in my vocation and in human and spiritual maturity.

This international local community consists of seven Sisters of four nationalities – Brazilian, Haitian, Salvadoran and Spanish – united with one heart. I have felt loved, welcomed and accepted with our differences since we all have the same goal: the service of those who are most poor. The community is a place where we truly come together as Sisters to restore our strength, support each other and share our faith life, the good moments and the difficulties of the mission.

One joy of this mission is direct contact with persons living in poverty, being able to live close to them, listen to them, welcome them and recognize that they are "*our teachers*" who "*evangelize us by their mere presence.*" They have helped me to grow in faith and taught me to consider, look at and understand life, the world and others in a different way.

The Haitian people have a simple but strong faith. For these men and women, God is truly present in their daily life, He loves them and they receive everything as a gift from God, which is

why they are so thankful. I have learned from them to value the simple things in life and thank God for each new day, for health, the sun, water, freedom, in short, for each event, including those that seem negative.

However, the mission also has its difficulties. The first was language. Not knowing how to express yourself and not understanding those who approach you make you feel like a baby who knows nothing. Fortunately, with the grace of God and the desire to learn, gradually it becomes possible to acquire the knowledge and skills needed. In this, persons who are poor, once again, helped me greatly. They often ask me, "*Sister, where did you learn to speak Creole?*" I answer them, "*With the best teachers and in the best school: with you on the streets.*"

I think that the main difficulty on mission is the risk of discouragement because you feel so helpless before so much pain, injustice and suffering. Humanly, there is nothing you can do to help them to get out of their situation or improve it; they return time and again to the same situation. It is discouraging to see that the conditions of the country and the people do not improve year to year but rather worsen day by day.

However, in the midst of all the problems, times of suffering, struggle and weakness, the Lord is there and gives us the strength and the wisdom to act according to His will. This is why it is so important to tend to our prayer life and have a balanced life. This is essential for all Daughters of Charity, but even more so on the missions. This is what I most appreciate about the community: despite the immensity of the work to do, community time - relaxation and spiritual life - is sacred and vital in order to continue day to day on the mission.

WHAT HELPED ME TO PREPARE FOR THE MISSION? WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED?

I believe that the best preparation for the mission, starting in the Province of origin, is to live daily life faithfully with commitment and a great desire to give oneself fully. Sometimes we can have

Mission Ad Gentes

a romantic image of the mission *Ad Gentes* or think of it as an adventure, but it is important to have a realistic image. We do not go the mission *Ad Gentes* to do or to help but to accompany and walk with the people of God, to be at their side so that they discover the presence of a God who loves them. This is the primary objective of the mission.

Therefore, I believe it is important to help cultivate **three fundamental attitudes** in Sisters who wish to go to the missions in order to make this desire reality:

Humility in order to be ready to touch the depths of their own poverty. Accepting weaknesses and limitations requires human and psychological maturity to prepare for the unknown and the inability to speak or understand.

Simplicity in order to dare to ask questions, accept help and listen without judgement.

Patience, first with themselves, when they know and can do nothing, and patience with others, with their Sisters in community and with those who are poor.

Just as on a material level to pack our suitcase we must see what we have to bring, what we have to leave behind and what we will need, in order to adapt to the mission, we must also consider what we have to leave behind, what we have to give up, and do it!

I think that adaptation to mission is complicated by comparing the reality of the country to which we have come with our countries of origin. Upon arrival in the mission country and throughout life, it is essential never to make any comparisons.

I am not saying that we should reject or forget our culture, our mentality and our values, but we should not look at everything through our filters... We have to know and love the reality that we find, as it is... Each place has its particularities as well as its specific history that determines its traditions, way of living, thinking, seeing and acting

in life. It is very important to always look at the reality to which we come with the eyes of God who loves each person and helps us discover the values and positive elements in each place.

- Look at what from our experience, values and abilities is useful for the mission. Look for what we could bring.
- Look at what we might need for the mission that we are about to begin so that our service will have a better human and spiritual quality.

In this desire to help the Sisters newly arrived on the mission, I find it vital to accompany and support them closely. Sometimes we can run the risk of throwing Sisters into ministry and community life, forgetting that they just arrived, that they just left their homeland, their people and their culture and that there are many things they do not understand. Even though the Sisters did so with great joy and desire, we must not forget that, on a human level, the process of assimilation and inner acceptance of the reality takes time. This is why they need good accompaniment by their Sister Servants and the leaders of the new Province and Province of origin. The Sisters should feel that they can approach us and share their experience during their initial time in the mission.

I give thanks to the Lord because He placed on my path over these years the appropriate means and people so that I feel at home on the mission.

In 2015, my parents and my sister came to visit me in Haiti, celebrate Christmas and New Year with us and share our reality. As is customary, we had organized some parties for the elderly of the area, for mothers and women with HIV or with malnourished children, etc. At one of these parties, I was asked as the Sister Servant to say a few words to the guests. I told them that it was a great joy to be able to gather each year to celebrate Christmas together but that this year was an even greater joy for me because I had my blood family and my Haitian family with me. I think

Mission Ad Gentes

that this experience is the goal of our missionary life: to bring together in our heart what we are and what we have – our origins – with the wealth of the place that welcomes us.

Beginning in initial formation, the Company should support, encourage and form the Sisters for the mission *Ad Gentes*. From the earliest years after the foundation, Saint Vincent and Saint Louise wanted us to be women who go forth, here and there, bearing the compassion and the mercy of God to all places.

Let us ask the Lord to always bless our steps so that we are happy, with ever-renewed enthusiasm and creativity.

Sister Mónica DE JUAN
Daughter of Charity

Province of Mozambique

Mission *Ad Gentes* in Mozambique

I am on mission *Ad Gentes* in Mozambique. Mozambique is a sub-Saharan African country on the Indian Ocean with a total area of 801,590 km² and an estimated population of 26 million. According to statistics, 55% of the population is under 25, thus a young country, which is more than 50% female. The literacy rate is still low: just 45% of the population can read and write.

For about 500 years, the country was a Portuguese colony; it declared independence on June 25, 1975. Over its 43 years of independence, the country experienced wars including one lasting 16 years. After a time of peace, we have experienced sporadic military and political tension for the last two years, which hinders rebuilding the country and its development.

Mozambique is rich in fertile arable land, natural resources, fish, forests, minerals, natural gas, coal and precious stones. It currently exports coal, natural gas, high quality wood, sugar, seafood, etc. Despite all this wealth, public policies are disastrous and leave the people behind in terms of real development. The cities have at least basic infrastructure whereas the outskirts and countryside lack the bare minimum such as medical facilities, schools, drinking water, etc. This situation causes the increasing exodus of young people from villages to cities. As a result, the cities become crowded places where all the social problems are concentrated: crime, hunger, destitution, drugs, prostitution, etc. The local policies do not help these young people in their hometowns, that is, towns and villages.

Mission Ad Gentes

As far as religious practice, the people of Mozambique are open to the question of God. The majority practice African Traditional Religion, 30% are Christians, 10% are Muslim, but other religions are emerging. The number of sects appearing and attracting people with misleading promises and miracles is impressive. All this also creates obstacles to development.

The population's poverty is evident in poor housing. Their houses are so flimsy that catastrophes occur in the rainy season. For example, the day I wrote this, a garbage dump collapsed, killing seventeen people. The population is always at the mercy of the rainy season and bad weather as they try to sustain their families. The only inheritance of those who are poor is endemic illnesses: malaria, tuberculosis, AIDS and malnutrition.

THE JOYS AND CHALLENGES

One of the greatest joys for me is being able to serve those who are most poor. When I arrived in Mozambique in 1995, I was struck by the witness of an elderly Sister because, despite her age, she had a special gift for finding the poorest and most destitute people. As the country was coming out of a sixteen-year long war, I accompanied her several times to take soup to patients without any family, abandoned at the central hospital in Maputo. The patients were on beds without mattresses, sometimes even lying on the floor, lacking even minimal hygiene and medical care. This Sister brought soup and fed all those who were in this situation. For me, it represented celebrating a sacrament, for Jesus Himself was present there. *"I was sick, alone, hungry, cold... and you came to serve me!"* (cf. Mt 25). What a living Gospel! These patients evangelized me for eight months.

The joy of the mission in the countryside is being with children longing to learn and with desperate women who found in the Daughters of Charity a listening ear and a reason to hope and believe. For our local community, education was the key for helping them out of extreme poverty and giving them the opportunity to be protagonists for their present and future. There is the joy of restoring hope and life to poor persons, the joy of

loving Jesus passionately and always finding Him in the brothers and sisters whom we serve.

I have not had many difficulties in my missionary life except learning the language. While Portuguese makes communication possible, Mozambique is a cultural mosaic with more than 250 local languages; fortunately, everyone understands the language of **love**.

BEFORE LEAVING FOR THE MISSION

I had to prepare my heart to open myself to differences, to learn from those who arrived before me, but also to learn from the people and especially from people who are poor. That meant accepting leaving behind my own culture to welcome the culture of the other; I had to learn a little about the culture of the country and let the people to whom I had been sent win me over. I also had to remind myself that the proclamation of Jesus Christ happens mostly through my life and attitude and that it is always offered and never imposed. I thus had to avoid presenting myself as someone who knew everything.

ONCE I ARRIVED IN MY PLACE OF MISSION

When I arrived in Mozambique, what really helped me to adapt was a short learning period, in other words, spending time with the other Sisters, seeing what they did and asking questions to discover the reasons behind their attitudes and ways of being. It is important to improve assimilation programs, giving time to integrate into the culture and learn the language, and not rush into assigning a Sister a ministry right away.

Sister Ana Maria ZUDDAS
Daughter of Charity

Designation of Visitatrixes and Appointment of Provincial Directors

N

DESIGNATION OF VISITATRIXES

PROVINCE OF SLOVENIA/REGION OF ALBANIA:

Sister Elizabëte SALIQUNAJ was re-designated Regional Superior for three years on July 4, 2018.

*News
from the
Provinces*

PROVINCE OF SAN VINCENZO-ITALIA (erected on July 18, 2018): Sister Beatrice PRIORI was designated Visitatrix on February 20, 2018.

PROVINCE OF SLOVAKIA: Sister Damiana PAGACOVA was re-designated Visitatrix for three years on August 1, 2018.

PROVINCE OF CURITIBA: Sister Dirce Edi KOTTWITZ was designated Visitatrix on October 17, 2018.

APPOINTMENT OF PROVINCIAL DIRECTORS

PROVINCE OF CALI: Father Carlos Arley CARDONA SALAZAR was appointed Provincial Director on July 19, 2018.

PROVINCE OF PERU: Father Ruben Pedro BORDA MONTES was re-appointed Provincial Director for three years on October 10, 2018.

PROVINCE OF RIO DE JANEIRO: Father Vandeir Barbosa DE OLIVEIRA was appointed Provincial Director on November 12, 2018.

Sister Suzanne Guillemín, a shining figure

*EXHIBIT PRODUCED AT THE MOTHER HOUSE
IN HONOR OF THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE DEATH OF SISTER SUZANNE GUILLEMIN.*

H

*History of
the Company*



Superioress General of the Company from 1962 to 1968, Sister Suzanne is recognized in the Church not only because of her position at the head of the Company, but also because of her outstanding personality, which made her the symbol of women's promotion within the Church.

She was one of the leading female auditors at Vatican II, one of the foremost women of the Roman Curia.

She left the entire Church an extraordinary shining and courageous message, "prophetic" in nature, that we still need to hear today.

FIRST STEPS IN LIFE...

Sister Suzanne was born on October 16, 1906, in Bétheniville (Marne).



“She was always a charming, obedient, very studious girl... which did not keep her from fighting with Pierre, her eldest brother” (her mother).

“A sturdy character and a very assertive personality, as early as 16 or 17 years old, she had exceptional self-control and a constant desire for perfection” (her brother Jean).

... IN THE COMPANY

1927: Seminary in Paris, 140 rue du Bac

1928: After habit-taking, she was received at the **community of Saint-Bernard de la Chapelle in the 18th district of Paris**. There, she visited the sick and provided catechism and recreational activities for youth. There, too, in 1932, she made vows for the first time.

1948: Sister Servant of the community of Tourcoing and Visitatrix of the houses of Northern France.

“She was able to pass on her enthusiasm to the residents of Tourcoing. She interested many people of good will in the renovation of her charitable work for children, offering them the opportunity to practice charity. She left a big mark on the region” (a Lady of Charity).

“Sister Suzanne spent twenty years of her life at Saint-Bernard de la Chapelle. There, at the hard school of a difficult-to-manage house, of a poor and disadvantaged neighborhood, my sister’s excellent qualities were forged, preparing her for her future duties” (her brother Jean).

GOD IS ALL, GOD IS IN EVENTS

1955 – A new call: the “Centrale” in Paris

As the Sister Servant of the “Centrale”, she was soon appointed to administrative bodies of the UNCAHS (National Union of Congregations involved in Health Care and Social Work), of which she became the national president, and the UREP (Union of Parish Education Sisters).

To the extent possible, Sister Guillemin sought to respond to every organization of the Church, State, public or private sectors.

“It remains for us to humanize technology and to make of it the instrument of the tenderness of Christ.”

BE IN A STATE OF CONSTANT OPENNESS TO THE SPIRIT

1962 – Elected Superioress General of the Company on June 11

“My overriding feeling is the certainty that I am only an instrument of God’s action and of the leadership of the Virgin Mary, our only Mother and true Superioress General.”

“All together before God, we assume the responsibility of keeping the Company on the path of holiness, of making it a receptive instrument in His hands, ready to respond to His plans, in fidelity to its vocation in the Church.”



OUR VOCATION: GO TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH...

“When I find myself before my work, I am torn between two desires. The first is the urgent need to know all the countries, all the Provinces, all the Daughters of Charity... in order to work better for them; the second is to never leave the rue du Bac and remain there perpetually in prayer, thought, reflection and seeking in order to work and discern what the good Lord wants.”

“The place where we live out our religious life is in the world, and we are oppressed by it like all our contemporaries.”



“To live in charity is not only to deliver oneself to the invisible God, it is also to deliver oneself to His brothers, to the God who is visible and deformed who begs unceasingly for our love.”

GIVE OURSELVES TO GOD TO STRIP OURSELVES OF ALL ATTACHMENTS...

“To enter actively into the procedure of the Church and adapt ourselves to the world today; these are questions of life or death for the Community, and, what is still more serious, of fidelity to our vocation or of its betrayal.”

“Tomorrow, without the help of the cornette, everyone should still recognize the Daughters of Charity: simple and authentic, unaffected and humble, attentive to each person, available, truly a product of the love of God in order to give that love to all.”

“If our little Communities are not all havens of peace, it is because some refuse to live according to the Gospel.”

OUR SPIRITUALITY: ATTACHMENT TO AND CONVERSION TO CHRIST

“We must build the Company of the 20th century on the rock of the Gospel and our tradition and raise up a generation of Daughters of Charity after the heart of God and Saint Vincent, ready to respond to the call of Christ in His poor.”

“The Company of the Daughters of Charity should be in the Church a community of Sisters who pray. On this condition only will the Company preserve its special grace, which is to live close to the world of the poor, understanding well their needs and their problems.”

“Christ has particular designs upon each member of His Mystical Body. For us, Daughters of Charity, He has a precise and determined will; and our life in the Church will only be justified and maintained if we remain faithful to this design of God upon us.”

ENTER INTO THE PROCESS OF EVANGELICAL RENEWAL...

“The evangelical renewal of our epoch brings us back to our Vincentian sources... The Community [must] refresh, renew, and purify itself in order to appear in the form that those who founded it three centuries ago would have given it today.”



“The renewal of each member of the Community will produce the renewal of the Community as a whole... The renewal will be affected less by a change in the exterior form of the laws, than - thanks to the attitude taken in the interior of souls - a real change of heart.”

Sister Suzanne Guillemin, a shining figure

THE CHURCH GRANTED THE COMPANY THE UNIQUE HONOR OF CALLING HER TO THE COUNCIL.

Pope Paul VI convoked Mother Guillemin to the Council as an auditor; she belonged to the Justice and Peace Commission, the Congregation of Religious and the International Union of Major Superiors. She joined the Council on September 29, 1964, at the opening of the third Session.



“It’s already something of the celestial city; in any case, it’s the Church!”

“Along with all the other members of the Church, the Company is called to enter fully into the work of the Council, to participate, in what regards it,

in this great meeting of the life of the Church, in this magisterial reflection on apostolic life.”

THE GRACE OF A NEW PENTECOST WILL COVER THE WORLD AND US...

“The grace of the Council will be received in humble and simple hearts and souls burning with charity and bear fruit through them in the Church.”

“Based on the foundations of the Gospel and the specific charism of the Institute, be in a state of constant openness to the Spirit that makes itself known in the Church, in the people among whom we are inserted and in the Institute itself: the renewal of our Congregation depends on this ongoing effort of conversion.”

**AS THE CHURCH MOVED FORWARD,
MOTHER GUILLEMIN OPENED
PATHWAYS OF RENEWAL**

“If she wants to be faithful to the world, to Christ and to the Church, and consequently to her founders, the religious woman today is invited to go from:

- a position of possession to a position of insertion,*
 - a complex of human inferiority to a genuine participation in life,*
 - a position of authority to a position of collaboration,*
 - a preoccupation with moral conversion to a concern for mission,*
 - a complex of religious superiority to a sense of fraternity.*
- Religious life can only survive if it is connected to the Church, effectively desired by it.”*

(Conference of Mother Guillemin to the Bishops of France, October 26, 1964)

“She was an absolute success with the Bishops since her presentation was so lucid, so courageous and so admirably brought out the essential” (Msgr. Huygue, Bishop of Arras).

“Who then will guide and sustain us along this rough way of faith if not Mary?”

“Mary is the purest, the simplest, the most beautiful model for the life of every Daughter of Charity. Looking to her is enough to find the light, but we must look to her!”

“May the Virgin Mary who was poor and who served her Son, poor among the poor, keep the Little Company faithful to Saint Louise’s last recommendation on her deathbed: Take great care to serve the poor faithfully” (Circular letter of February 2, 1968).

Index 2018

LIFE OF THE CHURCH

- “Mary, Mother of the Church” will be celebrated on the Monday after Pentecost
The new decree from the Congregation for Divine Worship.....March-April 58

SPIRITUAL LIFE

SUPERIORS GENERAL

Father Tomaž MAVRIČ

Letters and conferences

- Letter of January 25
For the closing of the 400th anniversary of the Vincentian charism.....Jan.-Feb. 29
- Lent 2018
Mary, a preeminent model who shows us the road to Jesus.....Jan.-Feb. 42
- Conference given at the Mother House
for the feast of the Annunciation and the Renovation of vows.....March-April 73
- Visitatrixes’ Inter-Assemblies Meeting
Missionary Momentum – mission Ad Gentes.....July-August 210
- Letter of September 3 for the feast of Saint Vincent de Paul.....Sept.-Oct. 271
- 2018 Advent Letter.....Nov.-Dec. 341

Sister Kathleen APPLER

Letters and conferences

- Closing of the Seminarium.....Jan.-Feb. 14
- Letter of January 1, 2018.....Jan.-Feb. 26
- Letter of February 2, 2018.....Jan.-Feb. 34
- Letter of April 9, 2018.....March-April 69
- Letter of May 8, 2018.....May-June 116
- Letter of August 15, 2018.....July-August 182
- Opening of the Visitatrixes’ Inter-Assemblies Meeting.....July-August 185
- Closing of the Visitatrixes’ Inter-Assemblies Meeting.....July-August 262
- Letter of November 27, 2018.....Nov.-Dec. 349

Father Bernard SCHOEPFER

Conferences

- 2017 End of the year retreat.....Jan.-Feb. 18
- Retreat in preparation for Renovation
Christ, when He came into the world, said, “Behold, I come to do your will, O God.”.....March-April 61
- “Let us go forward, living by the Holy Spirit”
The fruit of the Spirit is generosity!.....Sept.-Oct. 275
- “All these devoted themselves with one accord to prayer”.....Sept.-Oct. 285

SEMINARIUM

- Being authentic servants in the 21st century in humility, simplicity and charity
Sisters Anastasie Mukarugabira and Raymonde Nahimana.....Jan.-Feb. 2
- Closing of the Seminarium
Sister Kathleen Appler, Superioress General.....Jan.-Feb. 14

Presentations

- Opening of the Meeting
Sister Kathleen Appler, Superioress General.....July-August 185
- Discerning, Accompanying
Father Henri Aubert, SJ.....July-August 194
- Missionary Momentum – mission Ad Gentes
Father Tomaž Mavrič, Superior General.....July-August 210
- Fostering a culture of encounter
Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle,
Archbishop of Manilla.....July-August 217
- Reflections on the administration of goods
in Institutes of Consecrated Life and
Societies of Apostolic Life according to canon law
Brother Jean-Paul Marsaud, Son of Charity.....July-August 229
- Closing of the Meeting
Sister Kathleen Appler, Superioress General.....July-August 262

Sisters' Testimonies

Combatting modern forms of slavery

- Province of Saint Louise-USA
Combatting human trafficking
across Provincial and national borders
Sister Catherine Mary Norris, Visitatrix.....Nov.-Dec. 353
- Province of Thailand
Daughters of Charity Program for Safe Migration and
Prevention of Human Trafficking
Sister Consolacion Eata, Visitatrix.....Nov.-Dec. 357

Interprovincial missions in places of migration

- Province of Portugal
Mission in Rio de Mouro: “A Church that goes forth”
Sister Maria Fatima Verissimo Ferreira, Visitatrix.....Nov.-Dec. 362

- Province of Ecuador
Interprovincial project: “Builders of life”
Sister Ana Maria Maldonado, Visitatrix.....Nov.-Dec. 365

Mission Ad Gentes

- Province of España-Sur
Mission *Ad Gentes* in Mauritania
Sister Teresa Vu Kieu Diem, Daughter of Charity.....Nov.-Dec. 372
- Province Del Caribe
Mission *Ad Gentes* in Haiti
Sister Mónica de Juan, Daughter of Charity.....Nov.-Dec. 379
- Province of Mozambique
Mission *Ad Gentes* in Mozambique
Sister Ana Maria Zuddas, Daughter of Charity.....Nov.-Dec. 385

OTHER SPEAKERS

- “Coming and going” today
Father Corpus Delgado, CM.....May-June 119
- Christ is the Rule of the Daughters of Charity and
Mary is the Mother of the Company
Sister Anne Prévost, Daughter of Charity.....May-June 128
- Humanizing connections
Andrew McKnight, Director of Depaul France.....March-April 85

NEWS FROM THE PROVINCES

DESIGNATION OF VISITATRIXES AND APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTORS

Visitatrices

- Fortaleza.....May-June 151
- Recife.....May-June 151
- Warsaw.....May-June 151
- North India.....May-June 151
- Vietnam.....May-June 151
- Sardinia.....May-June 151
- Rio de Janeiro.....May-June 151

Index

- Cali..... May-June 151
- Central America..... May-June 152
- Slovenia/Region of Albania..... Nov.-Dec. 388
- San Vincenzo-Italia..... Nov.-Dec. 388
- Slovakia..... Nov.-Dec. 388
- Curitiba..... Nov.-Dec. 388

Directors

- Krakow..... May-June 152
- Congo..... May-June 152
- Cologne-Netherlands..... May-June 152
- San Vincenzo-Italia..... May-June 152
- South India..... May-June 152
- Sardinia..... May-June 152
- Slovakia..... May-June 152
- Madrid San Vicente..... May-June 152
- Cali..... Nov.-Dec. 388
- Peru..... Nov.-Dec. 388
- Rio de Janeiro..... Nov.-Dec. 388

LIFE OF THE PROVINCES

AFRICA

Central Africa

- Being authentic servants in the 21st century in humility, simplicity and charity
Sisters Anastasie Mukarugabira and
Raymonde Nahimana..... Jan.-Feb. 2
- An extraordinary year of reconciliation
Sister Désirée Nibogora and a team..... May-June 157

Congo

- Reappointment of the Provincial Director..... May-June 152

Mozambique

- Mission *Ad Gentes* in Mozambique
Sister Ana Maria Zuddas, Daughter of Charity..... Nov.-Dec. 385

ASIA

North India

- Designation of the Visitatrix..... May-June 151

South India

- Appointment of the Provincial Director..... May-June 152

St. Louise de Marillac-Asia

- Serving in a public university in Manilla
Sister Adelia Acuna Bautista, Daughter of Charity..... Sept.-Oct. 296

Thailand

- Daughters of Charity Program for Safe Migration and
Prevention of Human Trafficking
Sister Consolacion Eata, Visitatrix..... Nov.-Dec. 357

Vietnam

- Designation of the Visitatrix..... May-June 151
- Mission with HIV/AIDS patients
Sister Thiên An Nguyen Thi Kim Chau,
Daughter of Charity..... Sept.-Oct. 294

EUROPE

Belgium-France-Switzerland

- Together with Mary
The local community of Louvranges..... May-June 153

Cologne-Netherlands

- Reappointment of the Provincial Sub-Director..... May-June 152

Italy

San Vincenzo-Italia

- Appointment of the Provincial Director..... May-June 152
- Designation of the Visitatrix..... Nov.-Dec. 388

Index

Sardinia

- Reappointment of the Provincial Director.....May-June 152
- Re-designation of the Visitatrix.....May-June 151

Poland

Krakow

- Appointment of the Provincial Director.....May-June 152

Warsaw

- Designation of the Visitatrix.....May-June 151

Portugal

- Mission in Rio de Mouro: “A Church that goes forth”
Sister Maria Fatima Verissimo Ferreira, Visitatrix.....Nov.-Dec. 362

Slovakia

- Reappointment of the Provincial Director.....May-June 152
- Re-designation of the Visitatrix.....Nov.-Dec. 388

Slovenia/Region of Albania

- Re-designation of the Regional Superior.....Nov.-Dec. 388

Spain

España Norte

- San Miguel School “Foundation of the widow Elizarán”
The local community at Elizarán School.....March-April 81

España Sur

- Mission *Ad Gentes* in Mauritania
Sister Teresa Vu Kieu Diem, Daughter of Charity.....Nov.-Dec. 372

Madrid San Vicente

- Appointment of the Provincial Director.....May-June 152

LATIN AMERICA

Brazil

Curitiba

- Designation of the Visitatrix.....Nov.-Dec. 388

Fortaleza

- Re-designation of the Visitatrix.....May-June 151

Recife

- Designation of the Visitatrix.....May-June 151

Rio de Janeiro

- Re-designation of the Visitatrix.....May-June 151
- Appointment of the Provincial Director.....Nov.-Dec. 388

Central America

- Designation of the Visitatrix.....May-June 152

Colombia

Cali

- Re-designation of the Visitatrix.....May-June 151
- Appointment of the Provincial Director.....Nov.-Dec. 388

Del Caribe

- Ministry experience in a camp of Haitian displaced persons
The Sisters who participated in this
emergency mission.....March-April 78
- Mission *Ad Gentes* in Haiti
Sister Mónica de Juan, Daughter of Charity.....Nov.-Dec. 379

Ecuador

- Interprovincial project: “Builders of life”
Sister Ana Maria Maldonado, Visitatrix.....Nov.-Dec. 365

Peru

- Reappointment of the Provincial Director.....Nov.-Dec. 388

Saint Louise-USA

- At the service of elderly homeless women
Sister Migdalia Flores, Daughter of Charity.....Sept.-Oct. 298
- Combatting human trafficking
across Provincial and national borders
Sister Catherine Mary Norris, Visitatrix.....Nov.-Dec. 353

BEATIFICATIONS

- Beatification in Madrid of 60 Vincentian martyrs
“Witnesses of faith to the charism”
Sister Maria Angeles Infante, Daughter of Charity.....Jan.-Feb. 47
- Towards the process of beatification
Sister Maria-Josepha Léopoldine de Brandis
Sister Cveta Jost, Daughter of Charity.....Jan.-Feb. 53

HISTORY OF THE COMPANY

- “Coming and going” from a historical perspective
The Daughters of Charity begin
Father Corpus Delgado, CM.....March-April 97
- The habit of the Daughters of Charity
Sister Maria Angeles Infante, Daughter of Charity.....May-June 169
- Listening to Mother Guillemin
Seeking the essential
Sister Rosa Maria Miro Miro, Daughter of Charity.....Sept.-Oct. 302
- Michel Antoine Le Gras
The ups and downs of an only son
Father Robert Maloney, CM.....Sept.-Oct. 324
- Sister Suzanne Guillemin, a shining figure
Exhibit produced with the Archives department.....Nov.-Dec. 396

**Jubilee year at
Our Lady of La Vang in Vietnam**

On August 14-15, 2018, thousands of Christians gathered at the shrine of Our Lady of La Vang to celebrate the Assumption of the Virgin Mary and the 30th anniversary of the canonization of the Vietnamese martyrs.

Monsignor Pierre Nguyen Van De, Bishop of Thai Binh, told the assembly that the Virgin Mary and their ancestors experienced Divine Mercy and put it into action. “The martyrs of Vietnam courageously bore witness to Divine Mercy at the expense of their own lives so that we might have eternal life.”

Nearly 300,000 Catholics suffered and were killed because of their faith between the 17th and 19th centuries. Pope Saint John Paul II canonized 117 of these martyrs on June 19, 1988. The 2018 jubilee year concluded November 24, the feast day of the martyrs of Vietnam. “We should not keep eternal life for ourselves but bring it to others because this is the mission Christ entrusted to us.”

The Church in Vietnam numbers 7 million Catholics out of a population of 95 million.

