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CONGREGATION LEADERSHIP TEAM REPORT 2014 – 2020

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism...
Ephesians 4:4

The past six years have been a privileged period in our life as we carried out the ministry of leadership in the congregation. Coming to the end of our mandate, we recall with gratitude the many graced moments along this journey, and we are pleased to share with you some of our experiences, learning and insights. Visiting you in your homes and countries helped us understand your particular reality more clearly. Thank you for trusting us to be part of your hopes, joys, struggles and questions as you live your RNDM call to be contemplative missionaries, bearing witness to communion in your everyday life.

This report contains a summary of our reflections as well as some questions and recommendations that may be useful for the congregation to consider at this time. What is said of the provinces applies also to regions and new foundations.

The theme of Congregation Chapter 2014 “I Am Doing Something New” invited us to be present to and participate in the “new” that God is doing in our lives and in the universe. The congregation now invites us to a moment of **Seeing Anew One Body One Mission**. “It is with the eyes of the heart that one sees more clearly...”¹ Seeing anew involves the heart-space and helps us recognize that we are indeed One Body. All of creation lives in the heart of our God Trinity. It is in contemplating this cosmic oneness that we understand more fully what it means to “...have one heart and one mind and to share one mission, witnessing to the unity and harmony that existed in the heart of the first Christian community”². This consciousness awakens in us a new response to the One Mission that God calls us to participate in.

Contemplation



On our journey along the RNDM “Silk route”,³ we pause to review our religious missionary life, to listen to the promptings of the Spirit and to refocus our vision which will carry us into the future. How can we be more attentive to God’s life-flow within, among and around us? How can we allow our heart to be transformed in this awareness and engender a “revolution of tenderness”⁴ that moves us closer towards one another in hope, joy and inclusivity? What will the new vision look like for us at this moment in the story of our congregation?

¹The Little Prince, Antoine de Saint-Exupery

² Constitution 5

³ CLT Report 2014, p.6

⁴ TED Talk - Pope Francis 25 April 2017

Communion

In our encounters with sisters in communities and provinces, we sense a deep desire for oneness and wholeness. We yearn for genuine communion which requires time, energy and a commitment to sharing and being together. There is greater awareness that everything and everyone is inter-connected. While we are learning the new creation story and deepening our understanding of its implications for living our charism more fully, we still have much to do to make this a reality.



The 2014 Chapter Document recommended that the CLT, in collaboration with leadership teams form a resource group to support reflections and rituals for reconciliation. We have not formed a resource group but during our visitation to many of the provinces, reconciliation was a theme for prayer and community gatherings, particularly in 2015, when the whole Church celebrated the Jubilee Year of Mercy. We are aware that some provinces have found ways to have rituals and times of reconciliation among members.

There is a growing awareness of cultural diversity in our congregation. Our ability to live well together has the potential to be a prophetic witness in a world, which sees diversity as something to be feared. Sister Sharlet Wagner CSC⁵ speaks of the growing cultural diversity within religious life and the need to grow more proficient in intercultural as well as intergenerational living. The congregation chapter 2020 will explore the gifts and challenges of intercultural living today and how we can continue to enhance our skills of intercultural competence.

Mission

We know we are called to go forth with the courage of trust and the humility of abandonment to God as Jesus did. When everything is said and done, our RNDM call is rooted in our experience of God's love and tenderness. This is what propels us on in our missionary journey. "In silence and solitude we experience the mystery of God's infinite love and hear the cry of the poor, which impels us to continue the mission of Jesus in our time"⁶.

The Context of Time



When we look at the world in which we live, we may be disheartened by the corruption and materialism that cares least for the poor and the powerless. Daily news bring us images of the thousands who languish at the political borders of our world as they try to escape war, starvation or natural calamities. On the other hand, our hearts and senses may get 'accustomed' to the reality of refugees risking their lives across the Atlantic Ocean or to the sight of container vans becoming moving morgues of trafficked persons across Europe and the Americas. Whole sections of humanity are hungry and hurting in this chaotic world. The acronym

⁵ Divinest Sense at the Heart of Religious Life, Sr Sharlet Wagner CSC, LCWR Assembly 13-16 August 2019.

⁶ Constitution 33

VUCA⁷ - volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous - seems an accurate description of the present day as we look at our politics, economics, society and the degradation of the natural world.

VUCA within the Church is a reality that needs to be taken into account as we consider our call to mission in today's world. The abuse crisis is one of the terrible outcomes of a patriarchal clericalism where the priest has been allowed to be the all-powerful. Systems have allowed cover up and some leaders have not done due diligence. We hope this present crisis in our Church will force a deep cleansing and healing for all. The charismatic and Gospel-centered leadership of Pope Francis is a light in the darkness.

VUCA is very much a reality in the environmental crises and calamities that we are experiencing in the present time. More extraordinary climatic events are being experienced than we have known before. Scientists would talk about 100 year floods but these seem to be much more frequent. Greed for more luxury and material wealth seems to have turned everything in nature as 'resource' for the humans.

A recent report, documents that North American bird populations have decreased by 29% since 1970.

This amounts to three billion birds. This is bad news for birds. And it's bad news for people. Why? Because the vitality of birds indicates ecological health, and in turn this foretells our future.

That is, an environment unable to support birds, will be unable to support people.

No birds. No people.

When we ask how this could happen, we find a deeper warning:

We cannot continue creating the type of history that has filled our past.

Simply, greed and exploitation are not sustainable. So we need to change.

*We need to change now because these statistics are an important warning.*⁸



John C. Sivalon, former superior general of the Maryknoll Fathers, in reflecting on current realities talks about the **uncertainty** that is prevalent in every sphere of postmodern society, particularly in our encounters as missionaries in the present day world. He calls uncertainty a **gift**. "The gift of uncertainty initiates the gifts of contemplation and discernment. The gift of uncertainty births the gifts of imagination and creativity. The gift of uncertainty generates the gift of change and growth. And most important, the gift of uncertainty grounds our mission within the Mission of God".⁹ These are profound statements for us to ponder as we move towards our Congregation Chapter in contemplation to discern where God is calling us into the future.



⁷ vuca.world.org

⁸ <https://www.stevekaye.com>

⁹ God's Mission and Postmodern Culture – The Gift of Uncertainty, 2012

PART 2: A REVIEW OF THE CONGREGATION CHAPTER MANDATE 2014

A) LEADERSHIP

“Our strong desire to live into oneness and wholeness impels us to move into a form of leadership modelled on Jesus the servant. Those called to leadership work as teams in a relational and interconnected way to open up new boundaries to unify the whole Congregation”.¹⁰

A recommendation to the CLT was to explore ways that allow for significant time together. We have tried to do this as well as we can. It is a delicate balance to give time to visitation of the provinces and also to give sufficient time to the administration of the congregation. We participated in an International Leadership Development Program held in Rome for General Councils in 2015. This was a very useful series of five modules.

1. Enlarged General Councils and Leaders’ Meeting

There were three meetings of leaders in the last six years. The EGC of 2015 developed the Congregation Mission Plan (CMP) and approved the revised Congregation Handbooks. While the EGC was in session, the province bursars had a basic training in QuickBooks and other matters related to financial administration. The Leaders’ meeting in St Rambert in 2016 was a time for leaders to bond with one another and to share their experience of governance. They had an opportunity to interact with the Congregation Advisory Board (CAB) at this meeting. This meeting also updated the CMP, and received an update on the Finance Management System (FMS) project that was well under way. The EGC 2018 held at St Rambert focused mainly on the preparations for Congregation Chapter 2020.



2. Consultation and Training for New Leadership

“We recommend that PLT/RLT in dialogue with the CLT have a policy in their directory regarding a suitable consultation and discernment process for the appointment of their leadership teams.”¹¹

In the appointment of new leadership teams, we consulted with each province leadership to determine the most suitable process. We have tried our best to listen attentively to the voice of the whole province and combine this with our own discernment. We have encouraged sisters to allow themselves to remain open to the ministry of leadership. Often we encountered the reluctance in many to take up this ministry. On the other hand, we had some instances when individuals challenged us about the integrity of the process in appointing a new team as the outcome did not correspond to their expectations.

While no formal sessions were organized for training of new leaders, we have worked with several new leadership teams as they began their ministry and helped them become familiar with their roles

¹⁰ I Am Doing Something New, 2014, p.9

¹¹ Ibid p. 10

and how to work in a collaborative and organized way for the good of the province. These ‘hands-on’ works were very valuable both for the new teams and for us.

There is a need to train more sisters for leadership whether it is as community animators, principals of schools, directors of institutions and province leadership. No one has all the skills necessary for leadership in today’s world. We need to be open to work with professionals who can offer us their expertise. We hope the new CLT will make it a priority to organize skills development for younger members to prepare them to take up these roles with more confidence.

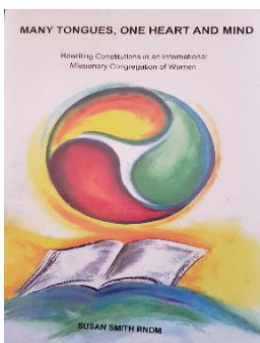
There are many challenges and opportunities for leadership in a globalized world. One of the demands of leadership in our current reality is to have a capacity to embrace and thrive in diversity. “We are called to be a contemplative presence in the world, discerning how to respond to changing landscapes; telling one another what is happening wherever we find ourselves, how we feel called to respond and inviting support from one another.”¹² These words ring true for us as we consider the kind of leadership needed in our congregation at this time.

Recently we employed Helen Harrington, a professional consultant, to carry out a Demographic Study on the congregation and this information with statistical detail and summary comments is in Part Three of this report. The statistical projections in the Demographic Study have many implications for future leadership and structures required.

3. New Constitutions

After the Congregation Chapter 2014, the new Constitutions and Directives were submitted to the Holy See for approval. More documentation was needed to satisfy the requirements of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL). We received the Decree of approval from CICLSAL on 8 December 2014. It took considerable time to prepare the Constitutions and Directives to be ready for publication. There was great joy when we could hold the new copies in our hands in November 2016.

We celebrated 2017 as the Year of the Constitutions and sisters from across the Congregation shared reflections, powerpoints, poems and other materials, which were published on our website. Several sisters offered retreats based on the Constitutions and facilitated province assemblies in different provinces. We are grateful to those who have offered their time and expertise to sisters across the congregation.



In this connection, we would like to thank Susan Smith RNDM for her work in publishing the book - *Many Tongues, One Heart and Mind*. Maureen McBride (RIP) had been working on a manuscript as part of her doctoral thesis. After Maureen’s unexpected death, Susan Smith volunteered to collaborate with Nijmegen Institute for Mission Studies, at Radboud University, Netherlands, with a view to publish the manuscript. The book was published in the beginning of 2019. It discusses the processes used and the insights gained in rewriting the Constitutions, honouring in a special way our multi-linguistic, cultural realities in the congregation. This book is a wonderful resource that can help us reflect

¹² Imagining Leadership in a Global Community, Sr Patricia Murray IBVM, UISG Ex. Sec, address to LCWR Assembly Aug 2019

on our international/intercultural realities and how we can enrich one another through our openness and sharing.

4. The Generalate Community

We are grateful to the generalate community in helping us carry out our role and responsibilities in the past six years. They welcome us warmly when we return from visitations and provide hospitality to those who come to the generalate for meetings or visits. We would not have been able to do what we needed to without their generous support and understanding.

Joyce Peter from India South province has carried out the responsibilities of the general secretary for the last six years. She has been very generous in attending to many tasks involved in this important role. Being present for Minutes taking at CLT meetings, preparing draft Minutes, managing the secretariat, communicating with the congregation and with CICALSAL for all official matters are some of the duties that Joyce has shouldered in her role. We are grateful to Joyce for all her timely assistance in the administration.



Carmel Eberius from the province of Australia has been the general archivist for the past twelve years. She has been able to visit many of the provinces in recent years to offer workshops to leaderships and archivists. Carmel is also our Postulator for the Cause of Euphrasie Barbier and we are pleased that the process is moving along, albeit slowly! An update on the process of beatification is part of this report. We thank Carmel for her commitment to the role of archivist and postulator and for all the valuable contribution that she is making.

Smitha Thomas from India Central has been part of the generalate from 2015 and she was appointed as the Director of Projects in 2017 in the International Mission Development Office (IMDO). Smitha has visited many of our missions to help the sisters and mission promoters in project planning and management. Through her dedication and hard work, the mission promotion and fund raising activities have been strengthened in recent years. We are grateful to Smitha for her contribution to Mission development in the congregation.



Maria Nguyen Thi Phan Yen from Vietnam has joined the generalate finance office as junior accountant since the beginning of 2019. She has been well initiated into the tasks of the office by the finance team. Phan Yen is growing in her understanding of the congregation's accounts and finances. She also assists the province bursars who need help with QuickBooks work. We are grateful to Phan Yen for the contribution she makes.

B) INITIAL FORMATION

1. Introduction

As a congregation, we are blessed to continue having vocations. In general, the young women show their interest and enthusiasm to the RNDM way of life. Many are touched and inspired by the witness and mission of the RNDMs. We are very grateful to the formators for their commitment and enthusiasm in journeying with the young women.

It is becoming more common in our society that some young people grow up in dysfunctional family environments. This may result in some emotional, behavioral and social issues that need healing before they can fully respond to the tasks of formation. This challenges us to have competent formators to accompany these young women. It is fortunate that most provinces have access to a number of professionals who are trained in spiritual direction and counselling but there are a few provinces which have limited possibilities.

There has been communications and collaboration between CLT and formators. Ongoing support is given to formators regularly and when needed. The CLT liaison visited all formation houses and met with formators and those in initial formation. Where and when possible she offered input.

2. Vocation Promotion - Aspirants/Pre-Postulants

Pope Francis advises religious men and women that we must overcome the easy temptation which leads us to think that in some environments, it is no longer possible to generate vocations. For God “nothing is impossible” because the Spirit blows where it wants¹³. Vocation promotion is a responsibility of every RNDM. Most provinces have named vocation promoters to organize activities to make the congregation known. Vocation promotion has strengthened and the number of candidates has increased.

Vocation promotion has mostly been with high school students. How can we make the congregation known more among university students, young professionals and parish youth groups?

Vocation is God’s gift. The projections in the Demographic Study present us with a hopeful picture of the future but it is dependent on our efforts to intentionally connect with young people and share our life and mission.

In some places, during aspirancy the candidates complete their tertiary education, while others complete it during their TP years.

There are provinces that organise an annual meeting with parents of candidates to build connection between candidates’ families and the congregation. It has been a positive experience and valued by the parents. In Vietnam, the aspirants have found creative ways such as tutoring students, teaching music, preparing and selling snacks and producing handcrafts to generate income and have been financially self-sufficient.

| Candidates in 2019 | |
|--------------------|------------|
| INC | 21 |
| INE | 14 |
| INS | 8 |
| KEN | 2 |
| MYN | 4 |
| VNM | 58 |
| TOTAL | 107 |

¹³ Pope Francis: International Conference “Vocation Ministry & Consecrated Life: Prospects & Hope,” Rome 1-3 Dec 2017

3. Postulants

From 2014 to 2019, we welcomed 159 young women into postulancy and 130 of them have continued into novitiate.

| Year | Number of Postulants | |
|------|----------------------|------|
| | Joined | Left |
| 2014 | 27 | 5 |
| 2015 | 34 | 8 |
| 2016 | 23 | 5 |
| 2017 | 20 | 8 |
| 2018 | 31 | 1 |
| 2019 | 24 | 2 |

Each stage of formation involves discernment of one's vocation. Naturally, some will discontinue. It is important for us to understand why these young women leave. What quality of guidance, accompaniment, discernment, life witness and formative milieu is offered to them in our communities?

There are instances when young women remain in formation even though there are serious doubts about their suitability. At times, we seem to lack courage and honesty to discern and make decisions which are

necessary for the individuals and for the congregation.

Directive 63 states that at the time of applying for postulancy, the applicant usually be at least twenty years of age and not over thirty five years of age. We discovered that some applicants were admitted to postulancy at the age of 18 or 19 and even 17 years of age (one case). What is the reason for this way of "rushing" a person through the early stages of formation?



Directive 62 gives flexibility for the period of postulancy of between 6 months to two years. Some formators are challenged by the weak faith formation of some postulants and the complex family realities that they come from. These young women need time to resolve personal issues before proceeding to the novitiate. However, we realized that a number of postulants were accepted into the novitiate without giving sufficient time for this. We recommend that good consultation takes place between the postulant director and the leadership in discerning the postulant's readiness for novitiate.

4. Novices

"It is absolutely necessary that you make a sincere novitiate. You must be well instructed in the duties of the Religious life so as to make them your rule of conduct, not merely in theory, but constantly in practical manner, in your inner conviction as well as your exterior life and in the good works that you will have to undertake"¹⁴.

We have accepted 110 young women into the novitiate during the last 6 years and 104 of them have made their temporary profession.

The three-month community and mission experience after the first year of novitiate is appreciated and valued. Their zeal for mission is nourished and strengthened. Novices often talk about their mission experience with passion and enthusiasm.

¹⁴Euphrasie Barbier, Letter from Wellington to the Novitiate Sisters in Lyon, 17 September 1873

“Since our formation programs are designed to prepare women as religious missionaries, stages of initial formation for an individual may take place in different parts of the congregation.”¹⁵ During the EGC in France in October 2018, leaders responded positively to the CLT’s proposal about the possibility of providing novices with an opportunity for community and mission experience beyond their province. How could this be implemented?

5. Novitiates

At present, we have five novitiates: India, Bangladesh, Kenya, Myanmar and Vietnam.

The novitiates in India and Vietnam generally have a larger number of novices while in Bangladesh, Kenya, Myanmar and the Philippines there are fewer. In 2015, the novice from the Philippines was sent to Kenya for her canonical year and it was a positive experience for all concerned.

We see the benefit of reducing the number of novitiates not only for the best use of trained personnel but also for quality formation. Looking at the reality, how many novitiates do we need at this time? Is it time to explore again the possibility of a combined novitiate? Where could this be? What would this involve?



6. Temporary Professed Sisters (TPs)

In the last six years, the number of temporary professed sisters has ranged from 116 to 135. At present, we have 121 TPs.

| Year | No. TPs | Left |
|------|---------|------|
| 2014 | 129 | 7 |
| 2015 | 135 | 5 |
| 2016 | 124 | 7 |
| 2017 | 116 | 2 |
| 2018 | 117 | 2 |
| 2019 | 121 | 1 |

The sisters have opportunities and accompaniment to continue their personal growth, spiritual transformation and mission experience. Most TPs have finished their university degree or professional qualifications as well as some theological and spiritual studies before perpetual profession. Some sisters also had the opportunities to study beyond their home provinces for Clinical Pastoral Education and Spirituality courses in the Philippines and Kenya. Two TPs from Myanmar completed their teacher training in Kolkata, India Central. Three TPs were sent to

international mission (to France, Philippines and Senegal) for a period of 1-3 years.

English Language studies: Over the past six years, 9 TPs from Myanmar and 36 TPs from Vietnam have studied English language prior to joining the Davao program. We appreciate the hospitality, accompaniment and support given to these sisters by the provinces of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the Philippines and United Kingdom and Ireland. It is a mutually enriching experience for all as RNDM life and mission are shared.

English is the congregation’s official language. For the last two decades, consistent efforts have been made and considerable finance has been invested in this language study. How can we ensure that English language skills continue to be strengthened and used in our provinces?

¹⁵ Constitution 68

“The PLT together with the TP director plan a six-year program for each sister taking into account her potential and the missionary needs of the congregation. This includes mission experience, professional training as well as studies in Scripture, Theology, Missiology, Human Development and an Integrated Approach to Vows.”¹⁶ The plan is updated annually. We realise that sisters are mostly trained in education, sociology and nursing. It would be helpful to have more sisters trained in other fields e.g. Canon Law, Civil Law, Environmental Studies, Missiology, Psychology, Scripture, Sciences and Technology.



An annual TPs’ gathering is an important aspect of the TP formation program. It provides opportunities to share with their peers as well as to deepen their understanding of RNDM charism and spirit, vowed life, current issues in Church and society which challenge and inspire them to respond to their missionary call. There have been difficulties and tension between time given to the annual gathering and the needs of mission or the demands of academic study. It is important that communities and leaders support the

formators in organizing a quality program.

7. International Formation Centre, Davao

We appreciate the generous service and commitment of sisters who have been part of the Davao formation teams. Over the six years, Davao has welcomed 111 TPs for the preparation program. Considering the needs of mission worldwide, 24 were missioned to Canada, Davao, France, Kenya, Latin America, Philippines, Senegal, Taiwan and United Kingdom & Ireland while the others were missioned to their home provinces.

| YEAR | NUMBER | PROVINCES |
|------|--------|--|
| 2014 | 21 | BAN, INC, INE, INS, LAM, MYN, VNM |
| 2015 | 19 | BAN, INC, INE, INS, KEN, MYN, SEN, VNM |
| 2016 | 18 | INC, INE, INS, LAM, PHI, MYN, VNM |
| 2017 | 19 | BAN, INC, INS, KEN, MYN, VNM |
| 2018 | 18 | BAN, INC, INE, INS, PHI, VNM |
| 2019 | 16 | INE, INS, KEN, MYN, PHI, VNM |

We thank leaders and sisters across the congregation who are generously supporting the Davao program by sharing resource personnel. Many of the sisters who have been available as resource persons are no longer able to do this. There is a need to have more sisters trained in Congregational Studies, Constitutions, Missiology, Spiritual Direction, Intercultural Competence etc. to ensure the continuity of this formation program.

We value the financial contribution to Davao from Bangladesh, the three provinces of India and Vietnam, which usually covers half of the cost of the program. With the help of IMDO, we have been

¹⁶ Congregation Handbook on Initial Formation, p.21.

able to access grants from funding agencies. A contribution from UK & I province has gone towards the installation of solar panels on the property which has reduced the cost of electricity and it supports efforts to be more environmentally sustainable.

The TPs greatly appreciate the congregational preparation program which strengthens their sense of belonging to the congregation and broadens their knowledge and understanding of what it means to be RNDM missionaries. The interaction and exposure to the people, Church and culture of the Philippines enriches their lives. It is important that TPs have some time to share with their leadership team something of their experience and insights on their return. Unfortunately, there have been situations where this has not happened.



Generally, the awareness of our international religious missionary identity has been strengthened and TPs are more ready to be sent anywhere on mission. However, there have been cases where sisters have struggled to accept international missioning and have refused. It is the formators' responsibility to ensure that the candidate understands "that she would be entering a missionary congregation with international membership and be willing to live inter-culturally and be sent anywhere."¹⁷

8. Formation Programs

"The vitality of the congregation and fidelity to its religious missionary identity depend on the quality of formation throughout the congregation."¹⁸

Provinces have revised and updated their Formation Directories, in accordance with the new Constitutions and the Congregation Handbooks, taking into consideration the reality of their cultural and social context. Having good enough self-understanding is necessary for vocation discernment and for a better development of one's own potential. Along with faith formation, subjects like enneagram, Myers-Briggs, human development, integrated human sexuality are included in the formation programs. However, introducing these subjects to those in initial formation is not enough. It is necessary to follow up the process of deepening and integrating what a person has learnt into her growth and transformation. Across the congregation, more effort is needed in this aspect as well as strengthening one's faith life at the early stages of formation. We see it is necessary to include in the formation program input and practical skills development for stewardship, transparency, accountability and care of congregation resources.

Pope Francis emphasizes the importance of the "encounter" among the younger and older persons. The elders have a wealth of experience and the youth are encouraged to learn from them. On the other hand, the younger generations have their gifts to offer. "We need to make more room for the

¹⁷ Directive 63

¹⁸ Constitution 62

voices of young people to be heard”¹⁹. Given that the composition of many of our communities is diverse in age and experience, how can we use this reality as a resource for formation? How can this encounter of wisdom of the elders and energy of the younger members provide for the flourishing of life and mission?

9. Formation Personnel

“Formators must be RNDM women who radiate the joy of the Gospel, who are women of prayer and spiritual wisdom and intuition, who have a passion for mission... and who enjoy being with young people.”²⁰

We have a significant number of young women interested in joining us and hopefully this will continue. Having a pool of well-trained formation personnel is vital. Leadership teams were reminded about identifying sisters with potential for the formation ministry and providing them with training opportunities. Unfortunately, some provinces have not considered this seriously. There were situations when we had to appoint formation directors who had little or no proper training for formation. Some of them were able to do some training while carrying out their responsibilities. This is not ideal.

Over the past six years, fourteen sisters have participated in formation training programs either in their country or beyond. Of these, eight are involved in the formation ministry, two are continuing their study and four are no longer in this ministry. A concern for us is that some provinces do not have enough trained formators. How can we ensure that we have qualified formators and quality formation?

10. Ongoing Formation for Formators

Most formators have had opportunities to attend short courses, workshops, seminars within their countries. These were good occasions for updating with current issues related to religious life as well as exchanging experiences. In 2018, one novice director was sponsored to attend the SEDOS residential seminar in Rome as the theme was “Youth and Mission”.

In 2016, a Formators’ Gathering took place in St. Rambert, France with the theme “Formation of the Heart for Mission”. The program included:

input on the formation ministry; study of the new Constitutions and Directives and developing an integrated approach for teaching Constitutions to those in initial formation; reports on initial formation from provinces and study of the Handbooks. There was emphasis on providing honest evaluations. Quality time was given for discussion and sharing. A pilgrimage to the congregation’s heritage sites was part of the gathering. Formators appreciated this opportunity and were pleased to be able to share together and clarify issues related to formation.



¹⁹ Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation to Young People: Christ is Alive, #38

²⁰ Handbook on Initial and Ongoing Formation p.2

There was great enthusiasm for networking and supporting each other among the formators at the gathering but this has not been sustained. We see the benefit of networking among formators and the importance of learning best practices from one another.

Articles related to formation, spirituality and ecology were sent regularly to formators for reading and reflection. They were also encouraged to participate in webinar programs organized by UISG on topics such as:

1. Accompanying the Younger Generation in their Vocation Discernment
2. Living Mission Interculturally
3. The Vow of Poverty in a Global-Macro Economy
4. Everyday Discernment: Heeding God's Daily Invitation to Grow
5. Screening Candidates – (organized by the National Association of Vocation and Formation Directors (NAVFD) in Canada).

We recognize these learning opportunities are useful to develop skills and provide a forum for sharing experiences. However, it has not always been possible for many of the formators to avail of these opportunities due to time differences, commitments or lack of interest.

11. Challenges

1. In some places, it can be difficult to ensure that TP sisters have good enough mission experience before they complete six years of temporary profession as their professional training can take 4-5 years.
2. Fear of misusing media and technology has led to limited access in developing skills of using technology. Some TPs feel inadequate especially when meeting or working with young people. Technology and social media bring many benefits and competence in mission but it is necessary to help sisters be responsible in their use and be wise in what is shared through social media. It is also necessary to develop critical thinking and discerning skills in determining what is real and what is false. Technology can affect community life negatively when individuals choose to isolate themselves and give too much time to social media.
3. Some formators struggle to manage time between their responsibilities in formation and other ministries that they are called to take up.

12. Questions:

- How can we simplify our structure to make best use of formation personnel and to ensure quality formation? How many novitiates do we need at this time?
- At the EGC 2018, there was an openness for providing novices with an opportunity for community and mission experience beyond their province. How can this become a reality?
- What is the best way to provide opportunities for academic qualifications for sisters for international missioning?

C) ONGOING FORMATION

“The relationship between personal call and response continues throughout life. Ongoing formation is primarily the responsibility of the sister, who avails herself of opportunities for her personal growth. The province leadership team is responsible for planning ongoing formation to enable each sister to live her life to the full and to carry out the mission of the congregation.”²¹

During the last six years, we have encouraged sisters to avail themselves of opportunities for ongoing formation either in their countries or elsewhere each according to their needs. In provinces, there have been ongoing formation programs for Jubilarians, different age groups and common retreats.

1. RNDM Renewal Sessions



We have facilitated four RNDM renewals for the sisters who have been in mission for a good duration of time. Priority was given to those who had not yet had a chance for a pilgrimage to our roots. The participants’ age ranged between forties and early eighties. These programs were hosted in St Rambert in France, a unique, quiet and beautiful setting, which provides a good space for relaxation, reflection and prayer.

The sessions included input on Euphrasie Barbier and pilgrimage to the places important in her life – Caen her birthplace, Lyon the cradle of our Congregation, London where she spent the first years of religious life, Deal the first RNDM mission she opened in England and Sturry her final resting place. There were also inputs on women in scripture and RNDM mission today, care of creation, study and retreat on the constitutions, liturgy and RNDM spirituality, RNDM mission and intercultural competence. This time together was treasured as it provided opportunities for intercultural, intergenerational exchanges, learning from one another and sharing stories of mission. There were opportunities for other visits to Geneva, Taize, Ars and Buckingham Palace. The programs concluded with a pilgrimage in the footsteps of Euphrasie, a visit to the RNDM archives and some of the historical places in Rome.

| Time | Theme | No. of Srs | Provinces |
|-------------------|---|------------|---|
| March - May 2016 | Come and Rest a while | 17 | BNG, FRA, INC, INE, INS, KEN, MYN, UK & I, VNM |
| Sept - Nov 2017 | Rekindle the Gift of God that is within you | 20 | BNG, FRA, INC, INE, INS, KEN, LAM, MYN, PHIL, UK & I, VNM |
| April - June 2018 | A pilgrimage to our Roots | 21 | ANZ&S, BNG, INC, INE, INS, KEN, SS, LAM, MYN, UK & I, VNM |
| April - June 2019 | A pilgrimage to our Roots | 18 | AUS, BNG, FRA, INC, INE, INS, MYN, SS, VNM |

²¹ Constitution 87

2. Euphrasie Barbier Studies in Canada



Claire Himbeault and her supporting team hosted two sessions on Euphrasie Barbier studies in 2017 and 2018.

The intention of the program was to create a pool of resource persons who would share their learning in formation contexts.

Nine sisters participated in the programs. They were from Bangladesh, the three provinces of India, Kenya, Myanmar and Vietnam.

3. Ongoing Professional Studies

Professional studies are necessary to be more effective in our ministries. Provinces have provided sisters with opportunities for ongoing professional study. We are aware that many have completed basic training in different fields. A significant number of sisters have graduated or are in the process of acquiring postgraduate qualifications.

Postgraduate Studies 2014-2019

| No. of sisters | Field of study | Country of study | Graduation Year |
|--|---|--|-----------------|
| 6 | MA in Pastoral Theology, English Literature, Education and an MTH | AUS, BANG, India, KEN | 2014 |
| 10 | MA – Scripture, Business Admin, Education, Ed. Leadership & Management, English in Literature, Sociology, Social Work | BANG, India PHIL | 2015 |
| 8 | MSc - Counselling & Psychology, MA - Ed. Leadership, Education, Leadership, Sociology, Inter Religious Dialogue & Ecumenism(License) | India, PHIL, Rome | 2016 |
| 5 | MA- Education, Social Work | India | 2017 |
| 10 | MA - Economics & English, Education, Ed. Leadership & Management, English in Literature, Sociology M. Ed | England, BANG, India, PHIL | 2018 |
| 11 | MA- Applied Christian Spirituality, Business Admin, Education, Sociology, Social Work, Women & Religions | India, Ireland PHIL | 2019 |
| Continuing with Post Graduate Studies | | | |
| 24 | MA – Education, Ed. Leadership, Ed. Management, English, History, Pastoral Theology, Psychology & Counselling, Religious Studies, Social Work Ph. D in Education Doctor of Ministry | India, Kenya Philippines, Vietnam Canada | |



It is important to acknowledge that many of these sisters who are doing graduate studies, are also carrying out full time ministries, particularly in Bangladesh and India.

Sisters from Myanmar (2), India Centre (1) and Bangladesh (2) have gone to Australia or New Zealand for a time of practical experience in the colleges or schools to enhance their skills in the education ministry. The two sisters from Myanmar who did their Teacher Training in India also had some practical exposure in Queen of the Missions School, Park Circus, Kolkata.

4. RNDM Participation in SEDOS Residential Seminars

SEDOS (**S**ervice of **D**ocumentation and **S**tudy on Global Mission) is a forum open to Institutes of Consecrated Life, which commit themselves to deepening their understanding of global mission²².

RNDMs have had a strong commitment to SEDOS and this has continued during the last six years. We have attended the annual residential programs and have invited sisters from different parts of the congregation for some of the seminars. The experience of the international group of women and men religious committed to mission has enriched and challenged us. The themes of the seminars were:

2014 - Sent by the God of Surprises. New Ways of Being Missionary. Five CLT members participated.

2015 - Open the Door, Let Him Out. One CLT member and the general secretary participated.

2016 - Intercultural Living and Mission. Four CLT members, one sister from Kenya, and one from Myanmar participated.

2017 - Economy at the Service of Mission. Five CLT members, the region bursar of Latin America and province bursar of Bangladesh participated.

2018 - Youth and Mission. Two CLT members and novice director of India participated.

2019 - Mission in a Pluralistic World. One CLT member and IMDO project director participated.

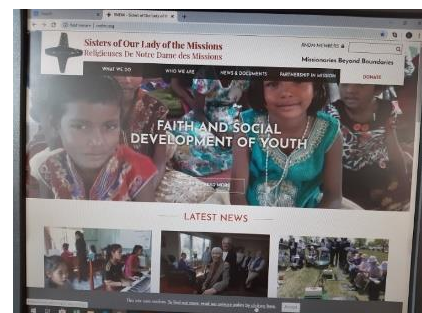
5. Questions:

- We are meant to be lifelong learners and responsible for our ongoing formation. What priority do I give to my own ongoing formation and how do I foster it?
- What ideas can be offered to the next CLT to facilitate better ongoing formation programs?

D) TECHNOLOGY

“We value mass media and social networking as important tools that strengthen communication among us and about us. They also serve to keep us informed about local and global issues, empowering our acts of justice for our suffering world and endangered planet.”²³

The RNDM website was redesigned in 2015 and it has been kept up to date with new stories and photos. The website has two

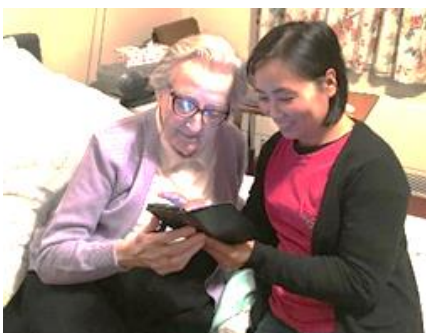


²² <https://sedosmission.org>

²³ Constitution 56

sections, one is open to the public and the other for RNDMs only. Joyce Peter, the general secretary collaborates with Vo Thi Thuy Linh from the United Kingdom and Ireland province, who has expertise in information technology, to keep the website and the Facebook account updated. Sixty-four stories have been shared on the web page since the end of 2015. We have been able to share stories of our mission and celebrations with our mission partners. More people have come to know us through the website. We hope you find the website attractive and are inspired by the powerful stories.

The donate page was also updated and now donations can be made in various currencies. Donors can choose the amount they would like to donate and whether it is one-off, monthly, quarterly or annually. Many people have been touched by the inspirational stories on the website and they have donated. In total up to 30 September 2019, we have received €6,563 from across the world. With Thuy Linh's expertise, in the last two years, we have been able to minimize the cost of designing the annual Christmas Catalogue.



In order to keep our website alive and interesting, we rely on information and stories from all parts of the congregation. It has not always been easy to get the stories even with many reminders.

The world of technology is changing rapidly. Many of our communities have internet connections. We are able to keep connected with each other and can access daily news on mobile phones or tablets. While this is a positive improvement in our world, it can have an adverse effect on our community living if we

do not use technology responsibly.

Challenges:

- How is technology affecting and enriching our life and mission?
- How do we use technology responsibly balancing the time spent on media, time with each other and our ministry involvements and other activities?
- In some provinces, sisters do not have consistent access to materials on the website due to poor internet connections or lack of skills in using technology. What can leaderships do to ensure that everyone has access to information shared?

E) MISSION

“As a religious missionary congregation, we are called to live the gift of consecration for mission. We participate in the Divine Missions, God’s universal gift of love manifested in creation, in the life, death and resurrection of the Incarnate Word, and in the mission of the Holy Spirit outpoured at Pentecost”.²⁴

“We need to continue developing our understanding of Mission: What is mission for us RNDMs? Is it about doing ministry? Is it about international mission? For RNDMs, Mission is much deeper than ministry. It is larger than international mission, it is about a deep life in the Trinity from where we catch the fire of love for the world and go!”²⁵ We continue to ask the same questions.

²⁴ Constitution 32

²⁵ CLT Report 2008-2014, p.57

“Our priority as RNDMs is to be present to and work with those who are vulnerable and neglected, those marginalised in our world today, with particular regard to women, children, youth, indigenous peoples, migrants and victims of human trafficking”²⁶. We have witnessed a genuine response to these priorities in different parts of the congregation, which has made a significant impact in the lives of people and society. The ministry of prayer and hospitality that our older and frail sisters carry out is a vital part of our RNDM mission.



Given below is data gathered from across the congregation on our RNDM involvements in ministries:

| RNDM Ministries based on CMP 2018 | Approx. no. of people we serve |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Education (Preschool to College) | 60,090 |
| Clinics & Health Services | 97,542 |
| Pastoral ministry, Faith Formation & Youth | 158,757 |
| Social inclusion-Women and Girls | 30,320 |
| Spiritual Direction/Facilitation/Counselling | 1,055 |
| Residential students & orphans | 1,937 |
| Migrants, refugees, internally displaced | 12,036 |
| Partners in Mission/Associates | 1,010 |
| Total | 362, 747 |

1. Congregation Mission Plan (CMP)

A major recommendation of the 2014 Congregation Chapter was to develop a Congregation Mission Plan for 2014-2020. This came to fruition during the EGC in 2015 in Bangalore, India, when the CMP was finalised and approved. It is a useful tool, which helps provinces in the formation of strategic plans and provides for ongoing monitoring and evaluation. The CMP was reviewed and updated during the Leaders’ Meeting in 2016 and at the EGC 2018 in St. Rambert, France.

The CMP gives us a comprehensive picture of the whole congregation’s ministries, major building projects and social development activities. Every province plan for the next 5-10 years is included in this. Most of the new mission priorities in various provinces that were approved by the EGC have been implemented, a few are still pending, while other projects require adaptations as mission needs change.



²⁶ | Am Doing Something New 2014, p.12

The overall experience of creating the CMP has been positive. It is a useful channel of information and discussion between provinces and CLT in terms of mission priorities, ongoing ministries and building plans. On the other hand, some leadership teams continue to open new missions or purchase properties or undertake building projects without following congregation procedures as outlined in the Handbooks and in some cases, our efforts to dialogue have been frustrating. We have tried our best to support the initiatives in all parts of the congregation provided they are part of the province mission plan.

We can have many ambitions for buildings and institutions but this must be balanced by thorough analysis of the needs of the people and the feasibility of personnel and financial support. The work of the CMP has enabled the provinces to research and examine new mission initiatives and whether they are possible and viable considering the need for personnel at home and beyond.

We recognize that there are different kinds of fragility across the congregation. We have tried to strengthen these areas by missioning more personnel or investing finance and helping them develop ministries that will contribute towards greater self-sustainability. Generally, the number of personnel has not increased as some sisters have returned to their home provinces. There can be great desire to develop mission and ministry but government structures and the obtaining of permissions can be a long drawn out process which is frustrating.



In the last six years, we have not opened new missions in a new country. Some provinces have expanded their missionary outreach to other areas of their country and some are at the stage of exploration.

After dialogue with Archbishop Tomash Peta, we withdrew the two sisters from the mission in Kazakhstan in 2015. They had given their best in the mission, however, it became evident that the initial vision for this new mission could not be implemented.

2. International Missioning 2014 – 2019

In dialogue with the leaderships and individual sisters, we have been able to keep alive the missionary movement across the congregation responding to various needs. Given below is a table of international missioning and returned missionaries in the last six years.

| Year | No. of Sisters | Missioned from | Missioned to |
|--|----------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 2014 | 3 | INS, INE | Rome, INS, PHIL |
| 2015 | 5 | INC, Rome, VNM | CAN, FRA, LAM, PHIL, Rome |
| 2016 | 13 | ANZS, INC, INS, MYN, UK & I, VNM | CAN, Davao, FRA, KEN, PHIL, Rome, Taiwan, UK & I |
| 2017 | 6 | INC, INE, PHIL, VNM | CAN, Davao, INS, SEN |
| 2018 | 12 | BANG, INE, INS, MYN, PHIL, SEN, VNM | CAN, Davao, FRA, INC, PHIL, Rome, SEN, UK & I |
| 2019 | 3 | BANG, INC, MYN | Davao, FRA, PHIL |
| Total number missioned = 42 Sisters | | | |
| Some TPs will be missioned internationally at perpetual vows later this year | | | |

Returned Missionaries 2014 – 2019

| Year | No. of Sisters | Missioned from | Missioned to |
|---|----------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 2014 | 10 | Rome, South Sudan | ANZS, BAN, INC, KEN, MYN, UK & I, VNM |
| 2015 | 2 | Davao, PHIL | BANG, MYN |
| 2016 | 7 | Davao, FRA, KEN, PHIL, SEN | ANZS, AUS, INE, PHIL, UK & I, VNM |
| 2017 | 7 | AUS, Davao, FRA, KEN, LAM, PHIL, SEN | ANZS, BANG, CAN, INC, INS, UK & I, VNM |
| 2018 | 3 | Davao, FRA, SEN | PHIL, VNM |
| 2019 | 8 | Davao, FRA, KEN, PHIL, UK & I | ANZS, BANG, INS, MYN, UK & I, VNM |
| Total number returned to their home provinces = 38 | | | |

3. Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

The JPIC promoters and animators in Rome include religious women and men from different congregations. They are active in current social realities and Church issues in the spirit of *Laudato Si*. The members participate in various working groups. Two CLT members participated in the JPIC promoters training workshop and attend meetings and activities as time allows. Materials from JPIC are frequently shared with the congregation by email.



Social Justice, human rights and care of our common home are priorities for Pope Francis' vision of mission. "The central issue is how to reconcile the right to development, both social and cultural, with the protection of the particular characteristics of indigenous peoples and their territories".²⁷ His methodology is to engage as many people as possible in consultation about the issues facing the Church and the world. In the most recent Amazon Synod, the Pope said in his opening remarks: "Synod is to walk together under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit ... who is the main actor of the synod."²⁸ This Synod highlights for us the urgency of action required in addressing environmental degradation, economic injustice and the spiritual crisis in the world.

In recent years, a movement called *Fridays For Future*, begun by Greta Thunberg and thousands of young people across the world caught our attention and imagination. We are challenged to find ways in our local context to make a more active and realistic response to the climate crisis.

²⁷ Forum of the Indigenous Peoples, February 15, 2017

²⁸ <https://catholicherald.co.uk/news/2019/10/07/>

For us JPIC is more than social activism. It is a framework which must encompass all our life and mission. It is in our listening to the Spirit that we hear “the cry of the poor which impels us to continue the mission of Jesus in our time.”²⁹ All that we do is our commitment to bring about justice, peace and integrity of creation. How can we develop a holistic approach to our mission regardless of the particular missionary activity that we are involved in?



4. Mission Support Centre

The HBC and the Chapter Document 2014 recommended that we establish a “Mission Support Centre as a resource for RNDM and lay missionary programs”.³⁰ We recognize that this idea needs further exploration. Initially, it was seen as a separate Office but we see this as being part of the IMDO. As the IMDO continues to evolve it could possibly incorporate new programs, services and resources.

5. Exploration of Mission in USA

“We recommend the CLT explore the possibility of opening a mission in the USA primarily to meet social needs, as per our mission priorities and to provide access to funding opportunities”³¹ The exploration of USA mission is continuing. We are keen to collaborate with the SMSM sisters in the ministry of Mary’s Guest House which works with trafficked women. Two visits were made to Chula Vista in San Diego and good meetings were held with the sisters. While the SMSM sisters are open to partnership with us in this project, they are not able to sponsor our entry into the US. We are still trying to get the Bishop of San Diego to sponsor us for the immigration process.

6. Challenges

- One of the concerns expressed in the EGC 2018, was a lack of passion or fire for mission in some of our members. How do we engender and maintain our zeal and passion for mission?
- It is important to continue developing and deepening an RNDM Missiology. How can we do this effectively?
- In many provinces, we have a strong emphasis on education – how do we balance the mission of these institutions and respond to the cry of the poor through other ministries?

F) RNDM INTERNATIONAL MISSION DEVELOPMENT OFFICE (IMDO)

1. Introduction

“We affirm

- that the International Mission Development Office is central to the functioning and development of mission promotion throughout the Congregation



²⁹ Constitution 33

³⁰ I Am Doing Something New 2014, p.15

³¹ Ibid p.13

- that mission promotion is the responsibility of every RNDM
- the role of mission promoters in every province/region – working as a team, and where possible including lay partnerships.”³²

The IMDO has been able to secure financial resources necessary to continue the mission of the Congregation. It provides training in project management, coordination of project applications and reporting to funding agencies. Some of the other activities are to provide support to mission promoters, coordinating partnerships with schools, parishes, child sponsorships, overseas volunteers, solidarity applications and allocations, Christmas Catalogue, preparation and publishing of newsletters.

2. Transfer of IMDO to Rome

The Office was based in Australia from 2010 until 2015 with Catherine Brabender as the director and Maureen Dwan joined the office later. Catherine and Maureen worked hard in establishing good relationships with funding agencies, mission partners and donors in promoting the mission of the congregation. At the Mission Promoters’ workshop in Davao in 2014, Catherine said, “promoting the RNDM Mission is not asking for money, but rather telling the stories of the fantastic work of the sisters worldwide. It is through this sharing that our passion for mission is the inspiration which encourages and invites others to join with us in partnership in mission”.³³

Following the succession plan of the previous CLT, Smitha Thomas from India Central and Helen O’Sullivan from New Zealand were prepared for the ministry of IMDO. As part of the transition process both Smitha and Helen had the opportunity to spend time with Catherine and Maureen in Australia. In 2016, the Office was moved to Rome. Crescencia Sun was appointed the Director of IMDO in July 2017, to work with Smitha and Helen. Unfortunately, Helen resigned on account of health reasons. The IMDO continues to evolve, Smitha is the Director of Projects and she is the contact person with funding agencies and donors. In Rome, there is a new development with the appointment of Silvia Mazzenga as the mission promoter for Italy. The Christmas Catalogue and newsletters are translated into Italian and are being promoted more widely in Italy.

3. Workshops for Mission Promoters



Three capacity building workshops were conducted by IMDO over the last six years. Two workshops took place in Davao and one in Bangalore. A total of 47 participants attended. They were enriched with new learning and practical experience of aspects of the Project Management Cycle and making

strategic plans. Some of the mission promoters have developed good skills in project writing, evaluation and reporting and collaborate well with their leadership teams. They keep communication with the IMDO and are able to get funding for their projects.

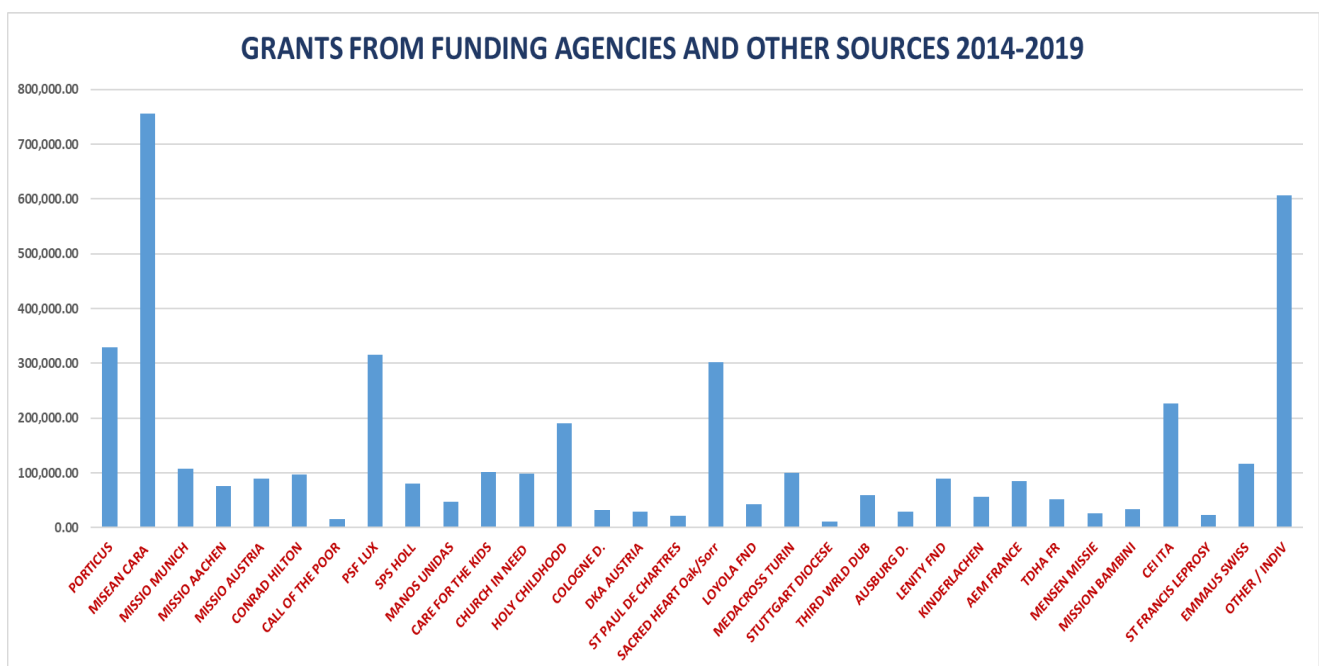
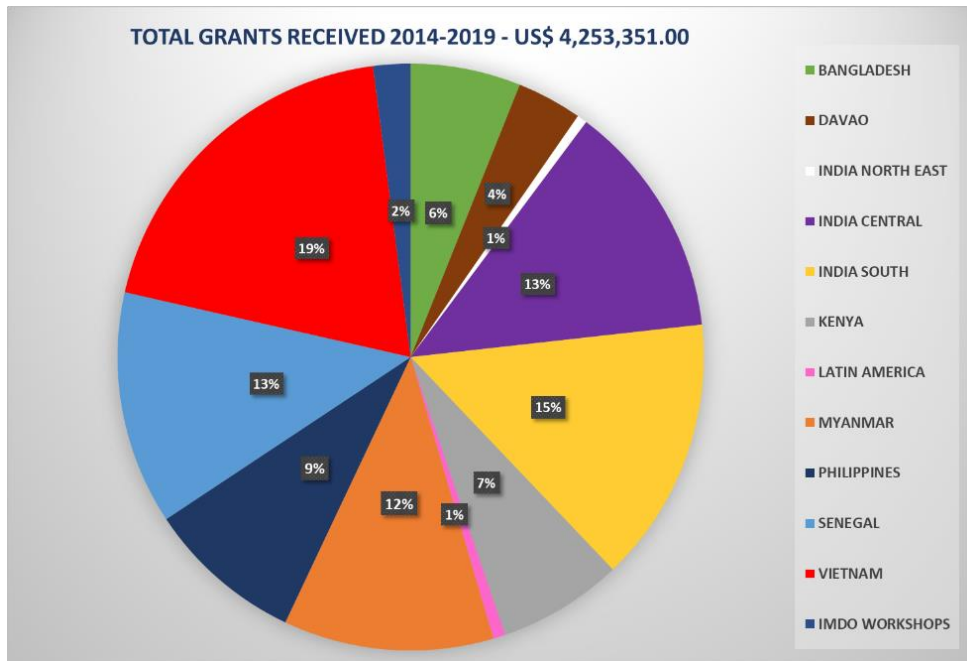
³² Ibid p.13

³³ Catherine Brabender, Workshop for Mission Promoters, 2014, Davao

4. Grants and Donations Received

As a congregation, we have been fortunate to be able to secure funding for many mission projects, building constructions for ministries, child sponsorships, education of children and young girls. We acknowledge the sharing of funds from provinces within the congregation for some building constructions, purchase of property when external funding was not possible. Approximately, US\$1,846,600 has been transferred from provinces to these projects including the renovation of St. Rambert.

Given below is a pie chart showing the total percentage of external grants received. The Bar Graph shows the different agencies and groups that have given funds. The column on **Other/Individual** includes smaller agencies, groups and individual donors.

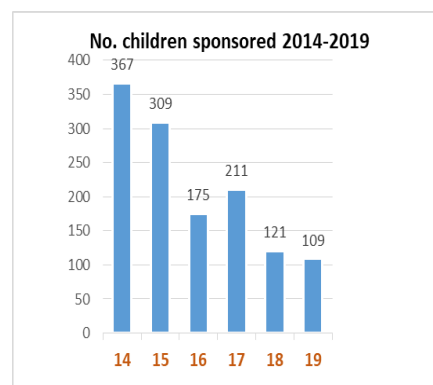


We are grateful to the sisters, friends and partners in mission for promoting the annual Christmas Catalogue which has supported 27 projects in the last six years. The RNDM Solidarity Fund has supported 135 small projects. Over the years, we have seen greater participation in both these fund-raising efforts. We encourage all our provinces to take keen interest in promoting the Christmas Catalogue and creative fund-raising for RNDM Solidarity. However small the contribution might be, participation is important.

| CHRISTMAS CATALOGUE 2014-2019 | | | | | |
|---|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
| \$ 47,481.41 | \$ 43,766.00 | \$ 53,567.00 | \$ 78,956.00 | \$ 61,627.47 | In progress |
| TOTAL: US \$ 285,397.88 for 27 Projects | | | | | |
| CONGREGATION SOLIDARITY FUND 2014-2019 | | | | | |
| 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
| \$ 98,032.00 | \$ 102,133.00 | \$ 81,908.00 | \$ 126,444.00 | \$ 122,149.00 | \$ 118,419.70 |
| TOTAL: US \$ 649,085.70 for 135 projects | | | | | |

5. Child Sponsorship Program

Maureen Dwan in Australia continues to take responsibility for the **Child Sponsorship Program** in the congregation. Recently Maureen said “Some donors have died and others were only interested in short term commitments... I am tending to direct donors to places where I know we will get good reports and photos which the donors look forward to getting”.³⁴ From her statement, we can see how important it is to send good reports with photos on time as it builds trust and credibility in the donors.



At the moment, 109 children are being sponsored, 49 of them through the congregation Child Sponsorship Program. The other 60 are supported by agencies and government social welfare.

6. Mission Promotion in Italy

A new initiative for mission promotion in Italy has taken place in the last two years. We invited our parishioners, friends and well-wishers for an afternoon gathering. We presented a PowerPoint on the mission of the congregation and shared our mission stories with them. For many, it was the first time they had heard about our mission activities. We had a very good response from the people as they were keen to know more about us and some of them continue to support our missions. There were displays and sales of handcrafts produced by the women who participate in the empowerment projects in different provinces. It was a very good experience for all. Silvia is organizing a concert entitled *Gospel and Solidarity* as a fund-raising event in December this year.

³⁴ Maureen Dwan, email on 23 September 2019

7. Participation in Mission Appeal in USA

In 2018, we were invited by the Pontifical Mission Aid Societies of Los Angeles Archdiocese, USA to participate in their annual mission appeal program. Catherine Brabender, Crescencia and Smitha spent three weeks speaking at Sunday Masses in three parishes. In 2019, Crescencia and Smitha participated in the Mission Appeal again and were also invited to speak to a local primary school. This is an annual event which we have found a worthwhile experience and a good opportunity to expand our connections.



8. Partnerships and Associates

Partners in mission and associates in different provinces make a significant contribution to promoting the charism of our congregation and giving support to our missions. We are grateful to all the mission partners and associates across the congregation for their dedication and passion for mission. We know that the activities of partners in mission and associates take a variety of forms across the congregation. We hope that provinces will continue to promote and encourage more lay members to share in the RNDM charism, spirituality and mission worldwide.

9. Observations

IMDO has expanded connections with sisters across the congregation, mission promoters, partners in mission, funding agencies, donors, schools, friends and parishioners. One of the key challenges we have been facing is that most of the mission promoters are overburdened with other responsibilities and do not have sufficient time for mission promotion. The frequent change of mission promoters lessens the effectiveness in the continuity of the ministry.

We encourage leaders to involve mission promoters in preparing strategic plans for mission projects and ensure the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and annual updating to the staff and coworkers.

10. Questions

- What is your experience of the IMDO?
- What has been achieved in terms of mission promotion in your province?
- What has been done to develop or to sustain the associates and partners in mission in your province? What best practices would be worth sharing with others?

G) FINANCE

“The reality of our world and of our congregation calls us to give corporate witness through the careful management of congregation resources so that they will be available for the continuation of our missionary response to the needs of our world.”³⁵

³⁵ Directive 88



When we began our term in 2014, knowledge about the financial situation of the congregation was very much an unknown territory for all of us. The outgoing CLT and the congregation bursar provided orientation to help us understand our roles and responsibilities. As we began our mandate, the assistance of Carlo Michero, CEO, was very important in understanding the congregation's financial picture and refining the implementation of the FMS project. Lissy Sebastian was appointed as the general bursar and CLT

liaison for finance. Giovanni Maria Manozzi and Silvia Mazzenga played important roles in giving us day-to-day clarifications about the workings of the finance office and its many tasks. They provide ongoing assistance in matters related to the administration of finances and accounting at the generalate. The Congregation Advisory Board, through their expertise and skills, has generously played a key role through its support, challenges, questions and recommendations. The Board has assisted us particularly in the analysis of consolidated budget, half-year and year-end reports as well as challenging us to think more specifically and longer term about the governance of the congregation.

1. Chapter Recommendations

The following were the recommendations³⁶ that we received as part of the CLT mandate concerning the finances and sustainability of the congregation.

- We commit ourselves to the development and implementation of a Financial Management System across the Congregation to ensure greater financial accuracy, planning and coordination.

In 2010, the previous CLT undertook the review of the financial administration of the congregation. The outcome of this review was the HBC Report, which gave the CLT a clearer understanding of the urgent task of upgrading the congregation's skills in management of finances and accounting. Carlo Michero was hired primarily to help the congregation implement the HBC recommendations. We acknowledge the preparatory work done by the previous CLT including the hiring of Giovanni, the management accountant.

The planning for a new Finance Management System (FMS) was in process before the Congregation Chapter 2014. The initial months of our term saw the extensive research and finalization of the most suitable accounting software QuickBooks, developing a new chart of accounts for the congregation and upgrading the server and computer systems at the generalate.

The FMS project envisaged installing QuickBooks in provinces that previously had no specific accounting software. We hired KPMG as advisor to the finance team to custom-build the software and to start the pilot project. The bursars of Bangladesh and the Philippines worked with the finance team at this initial phase of implementation.

The Rome finance team organized a basic training in QuickBooks and double entry accounting in 2015 in Bangalore for bursars. Between 2015 and 2018, the team has offered training to the bursars in Vietnam, Bangladesh, Kenya, Myanmar, France and Latin America and installed QuickBooks in these

³⁶ | Am Doing Something New 2014, p. 14

places. Rome office continues to provide ongoing training and mentoring for the bursars through TeamViewer and skype calls.



In 2016, the finance team had a meeting with the finance officer of UK and Ireland to understand their accounting tool, Sage, and to work on transcoding between QuickBooks and this software.

In 2017, the finance team made a trip to Bangalore to meet with the auditor and the bursars of the three provinces of India, to understand better the Tally Program, the accounting software used in India as

well as to discuss the best ways to get a system-generated report rather than manual work.

The FMS project concluded at the end of 2018. There are 17 QuickBooks accounts currently monitored by the generalate finance team consisting of the general bursar, Giovanni, Virginia Bellucci and Phan Yen. Valeria Perucca, a senior accountant from Milan works with the finance team on a consultancy basis. With the implementation of FMS, we have a better, fuller picture of the actual financial situation of the congregation and this information helps the CLT and PLTs to make informed financial decisions going forward.

- We commit ourselves to ensuring that all RNDM Ministries develop an annual budget and submit an annual report to their PLT/RLT and then to CLT.

The FMS project was implemented in two phases. The first phase was all the work mentioned in the above section, and the second phase focused on working with our institutions and major ministries. We now have more or less a complete picture of the finances of all the congregation-owned institutions and ministries. There is more work to be done with some institutions. On the whole, the congregation needs to improve skills in preparing a more realistic budget.

- We affirm that the EGC meet at least twice between Congregation Chapters. This provides an opportunity to be updated on the financial priorities and situation of the Congregation.

The congregation had two EGCs (2015 and 2018) and a Leaders' meeting in 2016. These venues provided the leaders with updated information on the progress of the FMS project as well as other congregation matters.

- We commit ourselves to training in accounting and business management for bursars. We encourage forward planning to ensure continuity and availability of bursars at all levels. When sisters are not available for these positions then lay professionals are appropriately appointed.

The congregation in the "western" provinces has been employing lay professionals for accounting and finance management for many years. We have experienced some reluctance in some provinces where there are corrupt political systems and governments. There is an anxiety about sharing financial information with outsiders. In some cases, utilizing banks for financial management is also viewed as dangerous as there is no trust in the banking systems in their countries.

As mentioned a bursars' training was organized in 2015. Several individualized training sessions were also given, particularly for QuickBooks users. Many of the bursars do not have formal training in accounting or finance management. However, as they gain experience, they grow more confident in their role. The challenge at present is that some of the bursars have other responsibilities and are not able to dedicate sufficient time for this ministry.



Additionally, the province bursars often struggle with the lack of skills of community bursars. Several provinces now have ongoing training for local bursars and there is need for more work at this level.

- We recommend that across the Congregation all become familiar with the Handbook on the Administration of Temporal Goods.

The Handbook on Administration of Temporal Goods was finalized at the EGC in 2015. The orientation sessions offered to new leadership teams and bursars included a study of this handbook. Provinces were encouraged to study this document. This handbook is a “work-in-progress” and will need to be revised again to incorporate the changes with regard to the new procedures used for the CIO.

- We call on the CLT to continue to explore the possibility of alternative administrative/management structures.

An important component of the FMS project was to gather accurate information about the need for subvention in the congregation. Quarterly reports on bank and cash balances from places that need subvention is one of the ways that we are able to determine actual need for finance at a given time. The number of transfers made has reduced considerably over the last six years.

- To ensure sustainability, the CLT will explore the feasibility of establishing designated funds for new missions, health care, aged care and formation.

Asian provinces that make an operational surplus have established funds for future needs such as health care, aged care and formation. Transferring funds from these provinces continues to be difficult although small amounts can be hand-carried by sisters travelling overseas. Some of the Asian provinces have begun health insurance schemes. Some provinces have funds set aside for property development.

2. Charitable Incorporated Organization (CIO)

The creation of a new Charitable Incorporated Organization (CIO) to reorganize the congregation's fund held in United Kingdom was a significant step taken during our term of office. We thank the United Kingdom and Ireland province for managing the funds until 2015. The CIO is a “grant-making” organization. Currently the Trustees of the CIO are the Congregation Leader, the CLT Liaison for Finance and the Leader of United Kingdom & Ireland province as well as two lay professionals who are citizens of the United Kingdom. The Trustees are legally responsible for the assets, policies and activities of the Charity. They meet regularly to review the developments with regard to the Charity and its activities and to make important decisions. The accounts are audited annually and a report is posted on the UK Charity Commission's website.

Funds previously designated as LAP and CCIF are now reconstituted under Congregation Support Fund (CSF) within the new Charity. Provinces that were holding CCIF funds have transferred them to the CIO. Some provinces have contributed other funds, e.g. a percentage from the sale of property. More work needs to be done in assessing the actual ongoing financial needs in the “older” provinces and determining how the surplus funds could be transferred to the CIO for a more “disciplined and structured financial strategy”³⁷ with regard to the practice of common purse in the congregation. All provinces that need subvention receive from CIO. Over the last four years, the CIO has made grants for formation, international missioning, RNDM renewal programs and for the EGC 2018. It also made a significant grant towards the renovation of the St Rambert property.

3. Property

Over the last six years, the congregation in Africa and Asia has bought new properties for sisters’ living and for ministries. Sisters in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and United Kingdom and Ireland have sold some properties and used the income to renovate existing property or purchase more suitable houses for sisters’ living or made investments. A database of congregation-owned property is being completed at the generalate finance office. This will be useful information for the congregation.

- Rome property

At the time of the 2014 Chapter, there were some legal issues with the Rome property which needed to be resolved. After considerable negotiations by Carlo and Giovanni and with the help of legal advice, these issues have been resolved and the property is clear.

- St Rambert Property

The Chapter 2014 recommended that: “Future planning for the use of St Rambert for the ongoing formation for RNDMs and the long-term use of the property”.³⁸ The renovation project of St Rambert was presented to the EGC 2015 and at the leaders’ meeting in the following year. After considerable discussion and discernment, the decision was made to renovate the building. The PLT of France worked in collaboration with the CLT for the renovation and reorganization of *L’Abbaye*. Lay professionals were hired to help the community manage the facility. The new facility was inaugurated in 2017. We are grateful to all the provinces for the financial contributions offered for this project.

In the past six years, we have organized seven congregation programs and two CAB meetings at St Rambert. We are aware that more groups are using the renovated facility for different programs.

- Davao property

The Chapter 2014 affirmed:

“Openness to the integration of Davao property into the Philippine Region, given consultation with the CLT, RLT of the Philippines, members of the Philippine Region, Balay Euphrasie Team and CEO. In

³⁷ Carlo Michero’s letter to the Leaders and Bursars, 4 June 2015

³⁸ I Am Doing Something New 2014, p.15

this eventuality, the CLT will continue to be responsible for the six-month program of preparation for Perpetual Profession”.³⁹

In collaboration with the RLT of the Philippines Region, a feasibility study was carried out to determine the financial viability of the Davao property. We have not been able to pursue this matter any further.

4. Some Observations

One of the primary values held in the congregation from the very beginning was the ideal of the “common purse”. We have experienced a growing sense of sharing of our resources across the congregation.

We appreciate the positive work being done in provinces to ensure long-term sustainability. Overall, our needs for subvention have been reduced and fundraising activities for ministries have improved. The congregation has made efforts to increase financial sustainability. New properties have been bought in almost all provinces that have active ministries.

The work of FMS has been a major undertaking for us and the Rome finance office. We were able to access a grant from Porticus for this project. We invested considerable amounts of time, energy and finances for implementation. The positive outcome of this project is beginning to show through the financial reports and accounts received in the last three years. We have been able to get a system-generated consolidated picture of the congregation’s accounts and more accurate information on our material assets. The prediction that the congregation will not have financial resources beyond the year 2022 is now corrected. Together we have enough. With careful management and wise investments, we can continue to carry on the many valuable missionary activities.

We need to recognize the fact that a number of provinces are almost solely dependent on investment income and pensions. While these provinces have generously supported the financial needs of other parts of the congregation, this may not be so possible in the future as they have increasing demands for health care and other needs as well as the world of investments being increasingly volatile and unpredictable.

Lack of skills in finance management has been a long-discussed topic. This is a serious question for Asia, Africa and Latin America.

This narrative report does not include the figures. The actual accounts and an update on the investments will be presented at the Congregation Chapter.

5. Questions

- Where do we want to be in the next five to ten years in terms of finance and sustainability?
- How can we increase the skills and capacity of the bursars in provinces?
- How do we ensure that bursars would stay in the role for a considerable number of years?
- As a congregation, we seem to hold some unnamed fear about finances, and this fear comes to the fore at the time of budgeting. How do we address this and be more realistic in our personal and collective approach to budget making?

³⁹ Ibid p. 12

H) HERITAGE

1. Cause of Euphrasie Barbier



The Beatification process of Euphrasie Barbier is progressing slowly. Beatification, Canonization has an ecclesial dimension, it is not just for our Congregation that we seek to have Euphrasie declared an official Saint, if it were so then we should stop right now. Saints, and if Euphrasie is numbered among them, have a message from God for us and for the people of our time. They make God visible, through their lives, they reveal something of God. Holy men and women have a message to convey, a mission to accomplish. The Saints, and Euphrasie intercede for us with Christ who is the mediator with the Father. “Let the charism emerge from history, look at the historical development of your Congregation. The action of God did not stop with

Euphrasie, it is continuing through the members, through us”.⁴⁰

How has the Process progressed?

Since the last Chapter we have undertaken, at the request of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, two Additional Diocesan Inquiries in order to ascertain the continuation of the reputation of holiness and of intercessory powers of the Servant of God, Euphrasie Barbier, from 1960 to today and to nominate a Historical Commission to search out and verify any further Documentation regarding the Servant of God.

Both Additional Inquiries required the calling of witnesses to testify on behalf of Euphrasie. This work has been done and at present the Documentation for the second Inquiry is being examined. We hope that when this is completed that the Decree of the Validity of the Acts be granted. The Historical Commission examined Documents, not previously presented, that were found in the Archive of the Congregation for Consecrated Life and that of the Propagation of the Faith. The Commission’s work has been accepted.

Parallel to the above work Srs Kathleen Prendergast and Clare Murphy have been steadily working on preparing the material on the Virtues required for the **Positio Super Vita, Virtutibus et Fama Sanctitatis**. They have just completed this task. For myself, I am busy preparing an abridged Life of Euphrasie together with the other materials that form part of this Positio. With the completion of this Positio and the acceptance of this work by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, we hope to rejoice in Euphrasie being declared Venerabilis. Then we need a miracle to have her declared Blessed.

The photo shows members of the Second Tribunal with the new Archbishop of Southwark, Archbishop John Wilson who signed the final Documents. Please continue your prayers and spread the good news among family and friends.



Sr. Carmel Eberius - Postulator

⁴⁰ Fr. P. Molinari SJ, 1975

2. Composition of Euphrasie Chants

We congratulate Elaine Madonna (Weeyaa) Villanueva and Theresa Dau Thi Hai and the participants of the Davao program in 2018 for creating the beautiful Euphrasie chants. Our thanks to Rose Mary Harbinson for her work in producing the CDs and booklet which includes the Chapter Theme Song composed by Teresa Thien Huong Nguyen and prayers created by the members of the Chapter Planning Commission. They are being widely used across the congregation.



Heritage Sites

Renovation of St Rambert property was a major improvement over 2015 – 2017. It is the closest property that we have to Lyon. While Lyon is an important part of the congregation's history and many sisters long to visit there, the house cannot accommodate a large group. Seven congregation programs have taken place at St Rambert to enable sisters from other parts of the congregation to have a sense of what Euphrasie Barbier lived, where she came from and a greater knowledge of the history of the congregation.

As Sturry is the final resting place of Euphrasie, it needs to be preserved. A proposal is being developed by the province of United Kingdom and Ireland and will be presented at the Chapter for further discussion and decision-making. These two sites Lyon and Sturry are the patrimony of the congregation. They need to be preserved and available for the congregation.

What kind of structure and strategic planning do we need to preserve our patrimony and heritage?



PART 3: DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY - OCTOBER 2019

1. Background and Assumptions

A demographic study has been completed for the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions. The study includes projections of membership for a 25-year period (from 2019 up to the year 2044). The projections take into consideration both mortality (using mortality statistics for female religious) as well as detailed future projections of vocations.

Projections have been carried out for each Province and Region within the Congregation based on the data from the central membership database held at the Generalate in Rome. It should be noted that statistical anomalies may occur for small populations, particularly in the use of mortality statistics.

Vocations were reviewed for each Province and Region in the Congregation, for the last 10 years (2008 - 2018). Future assumptions of vocations were estimated based on this historical reality, as well as the current membership of a Province / Region. New members are considered as those who have made first vows / Temporary Profession. Where appropriate, estimates were also made for leavers up to Perpetual Profession. No assumptions were made for leavers after Perpetual Profession as they are too difficult to project.

2. Total Membership

The following tables outline the membership by five-year age groups over the next 25 years. This includes current members less any deaths and leavers (before Perpetual Profession) as well as additional vocations. There is no assumption of any movement of members within the Congregation as it is too difficult to know when and for whom these changes will happen.

Historically, the total number of members in the Congregation has reduced by 30% during the last 50 years, from 1969 to 2019. In 1969, there were 1,243 members in the Congregation. This reduced to 872 members in 2019. Over the next 25 years, membership is expected to increase by 4% to 905 members by 2044. However, total membership will decrease over the next 15 years as the number of deaths is higher than the number of new vocations. However, after 20 years, membership starts to increase and will increase further over the following five years.

The current average age in the Congregation is 56 years. As a result of the number of vocations within the Congregation, the average age will decrease over the next 25 years to 51 years by the year 2044. This is also reflected in the percentage and number of members under the age of 40. In 2019 there are 260 sisters under the age of 40. This will increase to 309 sisters within 25 years, which represents 34% of the congregation at that time.

TOTAL CONGREGATION - Membership Profile

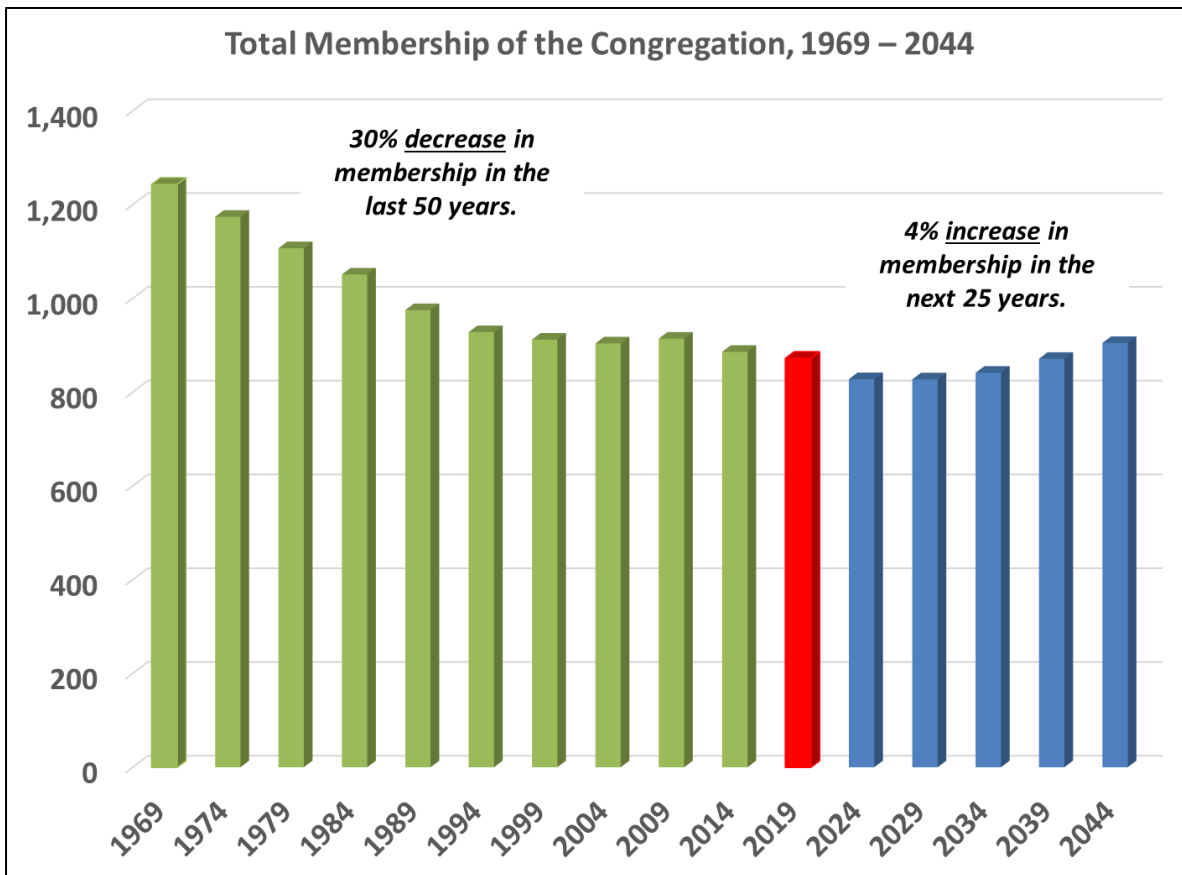
| Age Group | 2019 Actual | 2024 Estimate | 2029 Estimate | 2034 Estimate | 2039 Estimate | 2044 Estimate |
|-------------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Under 21 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 21-25 | 25 | 50 | 49 | 48 | 47 | 46 |
| 26-30 | 65 | 59 | 85 | 85 | 88 | 84 |
| 31-35 | 92 | 68 | 62 | 88 | 89 | 91 |
| 36-40 | 78 | 92 | 69 | 62 | 88 | 88 |
| 41-45 | 84 | 79 | 91 | 69 | 61 | 89 |
| 46-50 | 80 | 83 | 78 | 91 | 69 | 61 |
| 51-55 | 46 | 79 | 83 | 77 | 90 | 68 |
| 56-60 | 48 | 11 | 78 | 81 | 75 | 88 |
| 61-65 | 40 | 47 | 11 | 76 | 79 | 73 |
| 66-70 | 33 | 38 | 45 | 10 | 73 | 76 |
| 71-75 | 55 | 31 | 36 | 42 | 9 | 68 |
| 76-80 | 63 | 49 | 27 | 32 | 37 | 8 |
| 81-85 | 68 | 52 | 40 | 23 | 26 | 31 |
| 86-90 | 57 | 48 | 37 | 29 | 16 | 19 |
| 91-95 | 28 | 31 | 26 | 20 | 16 | 9 |
| 96-100 | 10 | 9 | 10 | 8 | 6 | 5 |
| Over 100 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Total Membership | 872 | 828 | 827 | 842 | 871 | 905 |
| Average Age | 56 | 54 | 52 | 51 | 51 | 51 |

| % - 10 Year Age Bands | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Age Group | 2019 Actual | 2024 Estimate | 2029 Estimate | 2034 Estimate | 2039 Estimate | 2044 Estimate |
| Under 40 | 30% | 33% | 32% | 34% | 36% | 34% |
| 41 - 50 | 19% | 20% | 20% | 19% | 15% | 17% |
| 51 - 60 | 11% | 11% | 19% | 19% | 19% | 17% |
| 61 - 70 | 8% | 10% | 7% | 10% | 17% | 16% |
| 71 - 80 | 14% | 10% | 8% | 9% | 5% | 8% |
| 81 - 90 | 14% | 12% | 9% | 6% | 5% | 5% |
| Over 90 | 4% | 5% | 5% | 4% | 3% | 2% |

Number - 10 Year Age Bands

| Age Group | 2019 Actual | 2024 Estimate | 2029 Estimate | 2034 Estimate | 2039 Estimate | 2044 Estimate |
|-------------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Under 40 | 260 | 270 | 264 | 282 | 312 | 309 |
| 41 - 50 | 164 | 162 | 170 | 160 | 130 | 150 |
| 51 - 60 | 94 | 90 | 161 | 159 | 165 | 157 |
| 61 - 70 | 73 | 85 | 55 | 86 | 152 | 149 |
| 71 - 80 | 118 | 80 | 63 | 74 | 47 | 76 |
| 81 - 90 | 125 | 100 | 77 | 51 | 42 | 49 |
| Over 90 | 38 | 41 | 37 | 30 | 23 | 14 |
| Total Membership | 872 | 828 | 827 | 842 | 871 | 905 |

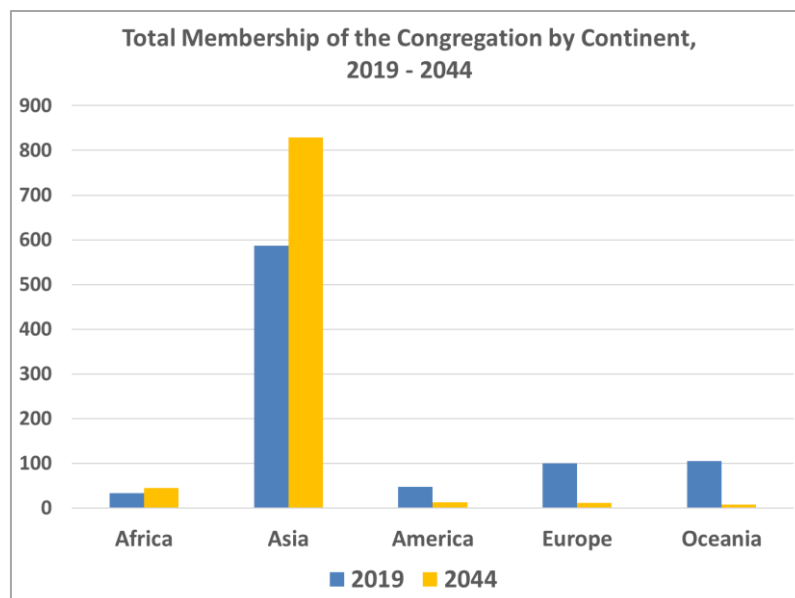
Note: Differences in Summation may occur due to Rounding



3. Membership by Continent

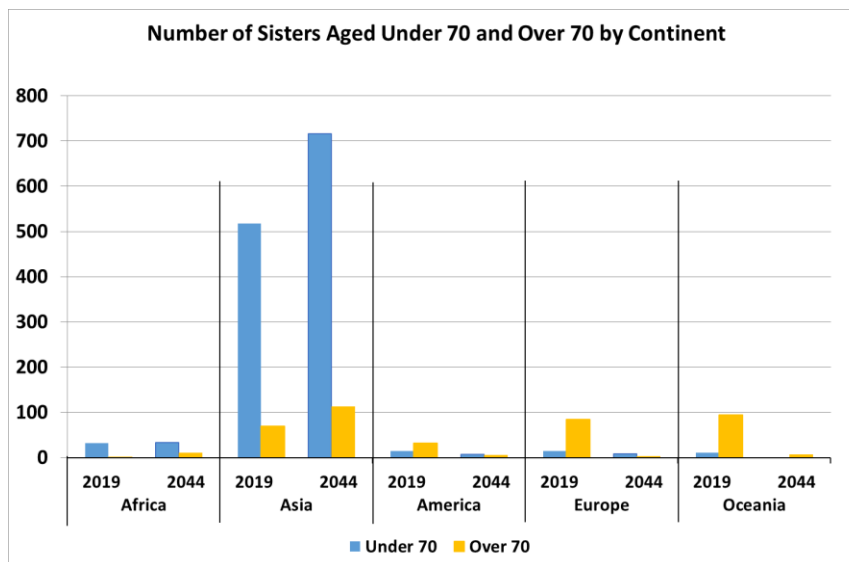
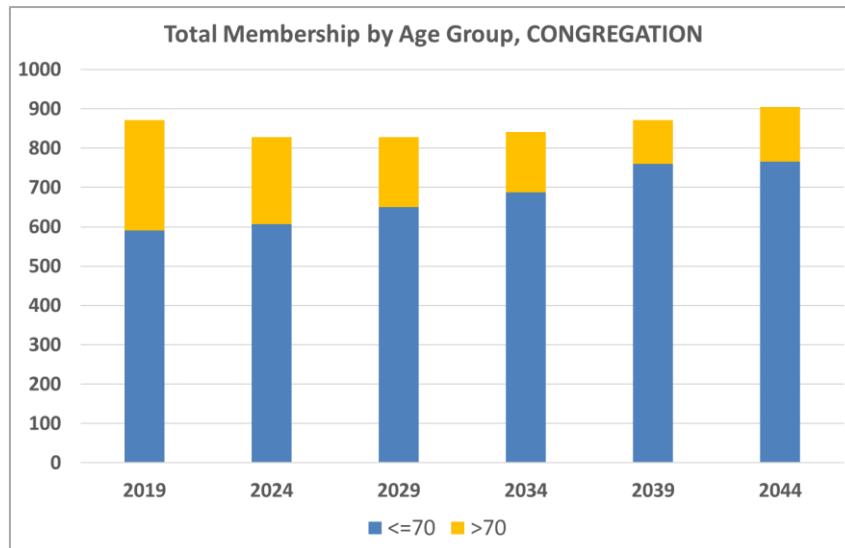
The table below outlines the changes in membership by continent for the last 15 years and for the next 25 years (chart below) within the Congregation. In America, Europe and Oceania, there have been decreases in membership in the last 15 years. It is projected that there will be further significant decreases in membership during the next 25 years. In Asia membership has increased during the last 15 years and it is projected that there will be significant increases over the next 25 years. In Africa, membership has been more static in the last 15 years, although it is projected that there will be an increase in membership in the future.

| CONTINENT | ACTUAL | | | PROJECTED | | | | | % Change* |
|-----------|--------|------|------|-----------|------|------|------|------|-----------|
| | 2009 | 2014 | 2019 | 2024 | 2029 | 2034 | 2039 | 2044 | |
| AFRICA | 35 | 36 | 33 | 35 | 36 | 38 | 42 | 45 | 35% |
| ASIA | 511 | 586 | 587 | 617 | 675 | 729 | 783 | 829 | 41% |
| AMERICA | 72 | 55 | 47 | 35 | 25 | 18 | 14 | 12 | -74% |
| EUROPE | 158 | 130 | 100 | 65 | 41 | 25 | 16 | 12 | -88% |
| OCEANIA | 143 | 122 | 105 | 76 | 51 | 30 | 16 | 7 | -93% |
| TOTAL | 919 | 929 | 872 | 828 | 827 | 842 | 871 | 905 | 4% |



4. Membership by Age Group

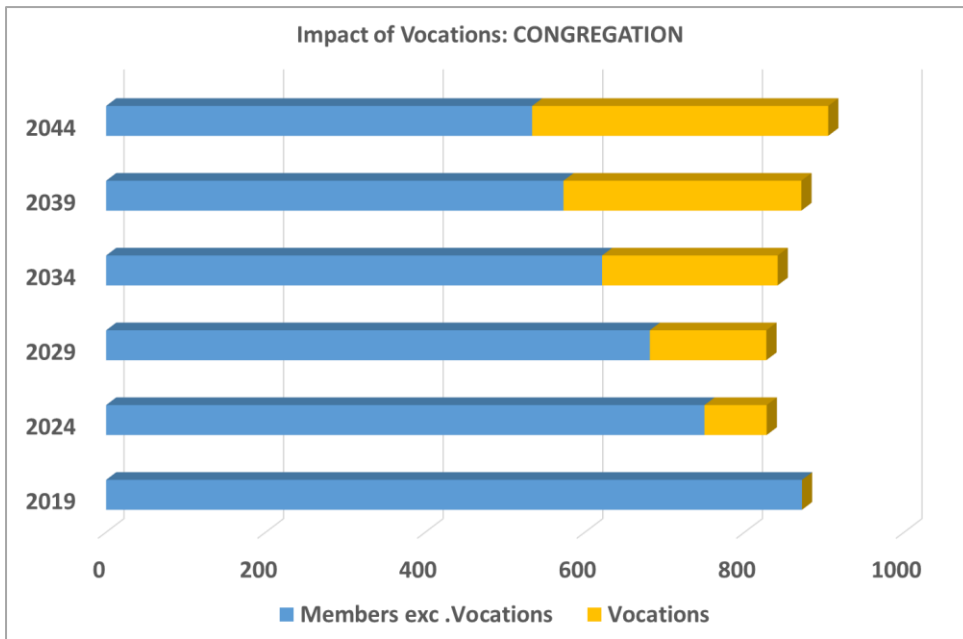
In 2019, 68% (591 members) of the total membership of the Congregation is under the age of 70. Within 25 years, this is projected to increase to 85% of total membership, representing 765 members. There are significant differences between continents. In America, Oceania and Europe the majority of membership in 2019 is over the age of 70. In Asia and Africa, the majority of membership is under the age of 70 in 2019 and this continues for the next 25 years.



5. Vocations

Vocations can be difficult to project. They are based on faith, working with the Holy Spirit. However, for the purpose of the demographic study, there is a need to make assumptions for the future. These assumptions are based on the historical reality from the last 10 years for each Province /Region.

New vocations are key for future membership of the Congregation. In 2044, 41% of the projected membership at that time are not yet members of the Congregation.



6. What Statistics Cannot Measure

Statistics can only measure certain aspects regarding members. There is a need to use the information and data from this Demographic Study, with the understanding and reality of each Province and Region and the overall Congregation.

Statistics of membership cannot show the physical and psychological health of the members in the Congregation. Illness can affect members at any age. The statistics cannot show the leadership capacity among members or the involvement of members in ministry. While the age profile may give an indication of those “usually” involved in ministry, it is only that, an indication. Importantly, the statistics do not show the background and education of new vocations joining the Congregation. The statistics assume the ages at which new members make their first vows, but do not show where these members are from, their experience or their level of education, all of which will impact formation.

7. Summary

Overall, membership in the Congregation is expected to increase in the future. However, it is expected that there will be a decline in membership within the next 10 years and a further increase in the next 20 to 25 years up to 2044.

The average age of members within the Congregation is projected to decrease from 56 years to 50 years over the next 25 years. This is due to the decrease in the number of older sisters and an increase in the number of younger sisters, particularly those under the age of 40.

Geographically, there are significant differences over the next 25 years. America, Europe and Oceania are projected to decrease significantly, with very few sisters remaining who are originally from these continents. Asia will increase significantly as will Africa but from a smaller base. Asia is currently the largest continent within the Congregation with 67% of the membership. This is projected to increase in the future and in 2044, 92% of the total membership will be in Asia.

Vocations are critical for future membership. 41% of the projected membership in 25 years' time are not yet members of the Congregation, i.e. 371 of the 905 members.

8. Implications and Questions for Future Members

The Demographic Study gives an indication of a possible future membership for the Congregation. Knowledge and understanding of members is of key importance for future planning, but also raises questions for reflection for the Congregation. Understanding membership can assist with:

- Planning for the care and welfare of members
- Determining future formation requirements
- Determining the future direction of ministries
- Planning for financial and property resources.

9. Care and Welfare of Members

Care and welfare of members is always the first priority of any Congregation. For Provinces where membership is decreasing, there are questions regarding the provision of care for sisters, both for those sisters who are older as well as sisters who may be younger, but require additional care due to poor health. If there are aged care facilities either owned or used by Provinces, the requirement for these facilities may decrease in the future as membership declines.

For Provinces where membership is increasing, there is a need to ensure that there is appropriate accommodation and communities available for those in formation and for new members. It may also be the case that there is an increasing need (albeit a limited need) for aged care in Provinces which have in the past been considered "young". Planning for the provision of aged care can take time and needs to be considered before the point at which it is needed.

10. Formation

The Demographic Study highlights the importance of new vocations for future membership of the Congregation. In areas of growth, which are projected to receive vocations in the future, are there appropriate formation programmes in place? Are there formators available for formation, not only for the next 10 years, but for the longer term future? As outlined above, is there accommodation available for those in formation (Community and Formation)? Are there sufficient financial resources to support new members, both to support their educational needs, but also their community needs at a time when it will not be possible for them to earn a significant income.

As well as initial formation, there is a requirement for ongoing formation in all areas of the Congregation, including Provinces which are in decline and where change is constant. Formation for leadership and for finance require long-term planning to allow sisters both the appropriate formation, but also experience in leadership in other capacities.

11. Ministries

While involvement in ministry within the Congregation may have already altered with historical changes in membership, there are questions regarding future involvement in ministry as membership continues to change.

In areas of growth, where new vocations are expected and membership is increasing, what are the implications for the involvement in ministry? What ministries will new members be involved in, what are you asking members to join? Are there sufficient ministries available for new members? Are there any implications for ministries if members are required to support those in formation?

In areas of decline, what are the implications for involvement in existing ministries? Are there any plans to withdraw from certain ministries when there is a decline in membership? If ministries have already been handed over to another legal entity/organisation/congregation is there a need for ongoing involvement of members, e.g. as members of a board, provision of pastoral care, providing formation to lay associates/partners in mission?

12. Other Resources – Finance and Property

Membership has an impact on the other resources of finance and property within a Congregation. These resources support the members in living the mission.

In areas of decline, what are the plans for financial and property resources? Do these Provinces have sufficient resources to support sisters who may require additional care? If there are additional resources, what will these resources be used for? Planning for any transfers can take significant time. How will members from other Provinces who are missioned in another part of the Congregation be supported if they are assisting with leadership/care of members? Will all the properties be required if the number of members is declining? Property cannot be transferred to areas of growth.

In areas of growth, do these Provinces have sufficient resources to support themselves? Funds to purchase/rent additional community properties, funds for formation, funds to support new ministries? What requirement is there for new members to earn a salary? How will healthcare be provided for new members, is health insurance required?

13. Summary

As membership changes within the future of the Congregation, an overarching question is how will the mission be lived in the future? Where is the focus/the priorities for the Congregation? Membership is reducing in some areas, therefore will the Congregation ask sisters from other places to come to continue the mission, or should there be a focus on the areas of growth to support new vocations? These are questions for reflection, but based on a solid base of statistical information on membership, assisting the Congregation as you move into a changing future.

Concluding Reflection

We are grateful to God and the congregation for all the blessings of the last six years and the way in which we have been able to carry out this service of leadership. As we all move towards the transforming moment of the congregation chapter 2020, we are reminded of the words of Euphrasie: "May our Lord keep forever united in His Love all the members of this dear spiritual family so that they may have among them in a genuine way but one heart and one soul"⁴¹.

Together we dare to dream and discover what will bring us deeper into the heart of our charism.

Everything Has a Deep Dream



I've spent many years learning
how to fix life, only to discover
At the end of the day
that life is not broken.

There is a hidden seed of greater wholeness
in everyone and everything.

We serve life best
when we water it
and befriend it.
When we listen before we act.

In befriending life,
we do not make things happen
according to our own design.
We uncover something that is already happening
in us and around us and
create conditions that enable it.

Everything is moving toward its place of wholeness
always struggling against odds.

Everything has a deep dream of itself and its fulfillment.



Rachel Naomi Remen⁴²

May Mary of Pentecost and the Visitation continue to inspire us to find God in our daily encounters and challenges as we respond with generosity and love to the sufferings, joys and hopes of our world.

Josephine Kane Liszy Sebastiani Sr. C. Cruz Lucy Bich Duyen

⁴¹ Euphrasie Barbier, Report to Second General Chapter, 18 October 1877

⁴² Finding Our Way, Margaret J. Wheatley, 2007, p.230