

# RNDM INTERNATIONAL MISSION NEWSLETTER



**RNDM INTERNATIONAL MISSION  
DEVELOPMENT - ROME  
PROMOTES MISSION THROUGH  
COMMUNICATIONS AND FUNDING FOR THE  
SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF THE MISSIONS  
IN 22 COUNTRIES WORLDWIDE**



**March 2021**

Dear friends,

"To change the world, we must be good to those who cannot repay us". These words of Pope Francis found great meaning during these pandemic times when we see people helping people whom they have not known or seen before. Persons going out of their way to feed the needy or homeless people and the frontline health personnel risking their life to save other's lives. People everywhere becoming so generous and concerned that the compassion of our God has been seen through their good deeds.

Pope Francis continue to inspire us through his words: "We need a movement of people who know we need each other, who have a sense of responsibility to others and to the world. We need to proclaim that being kind, having faith, and working for the common good are great life goals that need courage and vigour." (Pope Francis, *Let Us Dream – The path to a Better Future*).

It was very encouraging to see that our sisters and mission

partners coming forward enthusiastically with their best efforts to support our mission projects through the Christmas Catalogue and solidarity funds. Though the pandemic has caused economic recession and job loss, we were able to receive the required funds to support all the projects for mission needs. We are truly grateful and express our sincere appreciation to all.

In this edition of our newsletter you will find some of the stories of people for whom your generosity has made a great difference and those by their creative ways raised funds to support the mission projects.

Easter is the story of transformation from death to life, sadness to joy, despair to hope. Let us rejoice and share in the hope and new life of Jesus, our Risen Lord, so that all our brothers and sisters may experience the fullness of Christ's new life. May this Easter fill your home and family with joy and lasting peace!

*Smitha Thomas*  
**Smitha Thomas RNDM**



## CARING FOR ABANDONED CHILDREN —BANGLADESH

Dear friends and benefactors,

We would like to thank you for your generous contribution to St. Benedict Crèche and St. Scholastica's Convent, Chittagong. Your donation has made a great difference in the lives of our abandoned children. We feel very blessed by your generosity and thoughtfulness.



Presently we look after 17 children up to 6 years of age who have been abandoned and rejected by their parents. The sisters provide good care, support and protection for the poor and marginalized children. Health check-ups are conducted on a regular basis and medical care is provided accordingly. Appropriate nutrition programs are being implemented and the children receive good education. They are able to interact with their companions during school activities and are happy. We are very grateful to you, our donors and mission partners.

Through your financial support, we were able to buy food, shoes, clothing, bedding, school bags, school supplies, daily basic items and medicines for their normal life and growth. Thank you and God bless your good will and generosity! We assure our prayers for you and your families!

**Sr. Teresa Sonju Assam, RNDM**



# CHILDREN ARE OUR FUTURE—VIETNAM

Dear Benefactors

The RNDM Sisters who directly serve in the Chu Community, Bac Ninh Diocese are sincerely grateful for your support in improving the education in Chu community, the North of Vietnam.

Twenty children attending Primary school and twenty other children attending Middle school benefited from this educational project and will be assisted in the study of foreign languages. Our children worked hard and attended classes energetically. They improved their knowledge and learnt how to keep good hygiene and care for the environment. They are more confident and enjoy their studies. The children have also become more polite in their behavior and work harder than before. All the results that they get are partly due to your compassion and generosity.



Our sincere thanks on behalf of the sisters and their parents. Your willingness and generosity to support and create opportunities for these children allow them to expand their knowledge, have fun and enjoy their childhood, make friends and go to school. It is crucial to look after and encourage these children to be educated so that they will have a better future.

There are two students, Phan Quynh and Nguyen Tan, who are in grade 6. They are very poor and the main income of their families comes from farming and cultivation. The crops are dependent on the weather, so they were forced to drop out of school in order to help the families who could not afford to send them to school. Fortunately, they came to us, RNDMs, asking for help that we were able to give and thanks to the support received from our benefactors. Now they feel more confident and excited to come to class and enjoy their studies. They got very good marks at the end of last year.

Again, we thank you so much for your collaborative support for the mission of education of the children in Chu, Bac Ninh, Vietnam. God bless you all.

*Anna Nguyen Thi Hoan RNDM*





## FACING THE COVID CHALLENGE WITH HOPE - UK & IRELAND

The New Year 2020 began like any other year— with new ideas, new plans, excitement for what a new year might bring. In UK/Ireland mission office, it was not any different. It was my first year in this ministry and after three months of finding my way around, part of which was distributing the Christmas Catalogue, I was all set for this New Year. And then, something never seen in our lifetime happened! The pandemic of Covid-19 hit us, with its social distancing, wearing of masks and orders to stay home, reminding one of those words addressed to a mouse by Scottish poet, Robert Burns, “The best-laid schemes of mice and men go aft awry, and leave us only grief and pain, for promised joy”.

So, what to do about Mission promotion in 2020? It would not be possible to make appeals in Churches, to have coffee mornings, or cake sales, or sales of work. Was there anything we could do? Well, yes, we could still keep in touch with people.

We believe that personal contact is the best way to promote Mission awareness and it is through these contacts that the greatest support comes. Accordingly, Sisters in different areas distributed the IMDO newsletter and contacted associates, families and friends by phone, letter or e-mail.

The craft group never seemed to rest and with lockdown, they appeared to become even busier. Fine jewelry and crocheted

items were made and found its way to some communities and our local Parish Church shop in Wealdstone, who ordered some ear rings bearing an image of angels - the little angels guaranteeing their suitability for sale in the Church shop!

Sisters, Associates and friends produced toys and various knitted items. In spite of the lockdown, a sale was held in a Parish in Scotland. We put much effort into the promotion of the Christmas Catalogue, which brought in many donations. Indeed, 2020 was a very good year for our Solidarity Fund, a tribute to all who support their missions. I am truly grateful for the support we receive from our benefactors and friends here in the UK and Ireland Province without whom, much good would be left undone.



*Carmel Looby RNDM*

## A NEW STUDY SET UP — KULAMAN, PHILIPPINES

Delesan Kailawan Center continues to reach out to the Manobo Dulangan people in Kulaman, seeking ways towards a united, self-sustainable and empowered tribe. RNDM Solidarity and other mission partners provided support for 60 indigenous girls in their formal education through modular classes during the school year 2020-2021. The government has given the Centre special permission to accommodate the children in the dormitory for their modular classes as their parents can not read and write and they are not able to help them with their studies. It is heartening to see that Delesan Kailawan students during lockdowns took initiative to teach how to read and write to the kids. Witnessing the contributions of these young girls during home visits renews our own enthusiasm for climbing mountains and our courage to

continue journeying with these people towards self-determination.

It was a great joy to see this girl making the best use of her knowledge and time



in teaching these children who eagerly listen to her.

The school year was challenged by the Covid-19 and children had to adjust to new study set up. The children made great effort to continue studying



well and adjust to the new school timing and setting. The Notre Dame of Kulaman where most of the children are enrolled started modular classes in September 2020. Tutorial sessions were conducted from Monday to Friday in the dormitory by the Staff of the centre to assist the children with their module. All the children were diligent in doing their modules. The modular classes have been very challenging and demanding for Delesan Kailawan Staff who had to stretch out time to accompany the children in their modules. We are grateful to our donors and benefactors for the gift of laptops which were a great help during the children's modular classes during this challenging year.

*Delma Barrientos RNDM*

# SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT FOR COVID -19

## SACRED HEART GIRLS COLLEGE, OAKLEIGH - AUSTRALIA

The Sacred Heart Girls College, Oakleigh has been in partnership with Philippines and Vietnam over the last ten years. Each year a group of teachers led by Mr Michael Smith and others took the students for the immersion program to the Philippines. Hosted by Sr Kate O'Neill, an Australian RNDM working in the Philippines, the teachers visited the work of the Sisters among the homeless in the squatter areas of Manila and spent time with the boys of the Kuya Centre – a place of learning and social development for small boys living off their wits in the streets.

The second part of the immersion was to travel to Mindanao and visit Kulaman in the remote southern mountains of Mindanao. Here the teachers met the Menubo Tribal people and stayed in the hostel for the Menubo girls – beginning a long story of friendship and partnership with these girls and the people of their tribe.

A special feature of this immersion program to the Philippines was the relationships the students developed with the tribal Menubo teenage girls. Since that first group 10 years ago, 8 groups of teachers from Sacred Heart have participated in the immersion experience in their September holidays. Since 2015, 5 groups of students from Year 11 and 12 in the weeks after their final exams and have also participated in the immersion experience.

A different form of Immersion was experienced by teachers who have gifted their September holidays to go to Vietnam to teach English to RNDM Novices in Vietnam – two each year!

This gift of their teaching expertise and creativity in making language learning fun and exciting has had a great impact on the young Sisters and their presence is always greatly valued.

RNDM Sisters express deep gratitude to the teachers, students and their families for their interest in and support for the mission to women and children who

live, lives of disadvantage in the Philippines and for the generosity of teachers who give their entire term holidays to teach our younger Sisters in Vietnam.

The richness of these experiences is beautifully expressed in student reflections on their return:

*"I have grasped a greater understanding of those with whom I share the earth and the ongoing struggles many of them face. "*

*"I think I sensed, perhaps for the first time, the amazing spirit of humanity that allows all people to connect and share special moments for a few minutes. It is the human spirit and love for one another that allows these moments to be so special."*

Due to the Covid -19 pandemic and many months of lockdown in 2020 the teachers and students missed their yearly immersion program to the Philippines and Vietnam. However, the Sacred Heart College students and teachers kept their partnership alive through their communications and support.



They were creative and adaptive in their methods to raise money with their cake stalls, fun days, auctions and many more activities throughout the year culminating in the end of year making a total amount of AUD\$ 28,000 to send directly to the Kulaman project .

**Sr. Madeleine Barlow RNDM**



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