

Suore di Nostra Signora delle Missioni

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To All the Sisters in the Congregation

Dear sisters

Loving greetings from Rome. We are just days away from celebrating our great patronal feast of Pentecost. We continue to pray for all those who are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and are struggling to look after their families and to survive. I hope you have been praying with the Novena in preparation for Pentecost that was sent out last week. In the Generalate community we have found it helpful to focus our attention on our place in creation and to consciously reflect on how we can bring about ecological conversion in ourselves and others.



We are in the midst of Laudato Si' Week which is the culmination of the yearlong celebration of the fifth anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical "*Laudato Si'*", on Care for Our Common Home. The Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development is proposing that Catholic communities across the world work toward "total sustainability" in the coming decade. The action platform will have a soft launch on Tuesday 25 May. This platform is framed across seven "Laudato Si' Goals" grounded in the encyclical's concept of Integral Ecology. The holistic goals reflect the range of Catholic social teaching, and each lists examples of various benchmarks such as becoming carbon neutral, defending all forms of life, adopting simple lifestyles, promoting ecologically centered liturgical celebrations and educational curricula, divesting from fossil fuels and other economic activity harmful to the planet or people. It is hoped that participants would represent seven categories (families, dioceses, schools, universities, hospitals, businesses, farms, religious orders) and would commit to complete the goals in seven years. The dicastery hopes that the number of participants in each group would double with each successive year. The rollout would continue through to 2030 hoping to arrive at the 'critical mass' needed for radical societal transformation invoked by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*. This action plan is a great initiative to be collaborative with other congregations and the whole Church.

The gospel passages of recent weeks ask us to "remain in God's love" with Jesus promising that "God is always with us" and "whatever we ask in the Lord's name he will give to us". Pentecost brings anew the Advocate, the Paraclete, the Counsellor, the Spirit to refresh and reenergize our minds and hearts. As missionary women with disciple's hearts, let us open our eyes to see what God wants of us today and our ears to listen attentively to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. May we respond with compassionate hearts filled generously with the Spirit's gifts of faith, hope, peace, patience and joy.



Mass with Pope Francis for people from Myanmar in Rome

Pope Francis celebrated Mass for the people of Myanmar at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome last Sunday 16 May, as the death toll continues to rise in the country following February's military coup. In his homily, Pope Francis encouraged Myanmar people not to fall into despair and not to lose hope as their homeland is engulfed by violence. There were about 200 in attendance both Myanmar citizens and well-wishers. Jo, Margaret Maung and Lissy had the opportunity to participate in this special prayerful event.

Welcome to Rome Community

General Secretary: Phuong Linh

I am Agata Nguyen Thi Phuong Linh from Vietnam Province and I have been an RNDM for 21 years. I am the fourth child in a family of six, four boys and two girls. After my first profession in 1999, I was involved in Pastoral Ministry, Education Ministry, Province Secretary for 7 years, and a member of the Province Leadership team from 2015-2021. I arrived in Rome on 1 April 2021 to respond to the call to serve the Congregation as its General Secretary. Many thanks to Joyce Peter for the smooth transition. I also appreciate and I am thankful for the support that has been shown to me by the CLT, Rome community and the Sisters in Vietnam. As we are approaching Pentecost, the Patronal Feast of the Congregation, I hope that you all are showered with blessings of wisdom, strength and peace of the Holy Spirit. Happy Feast of Pentecost to all of you.



We are very grateful to **Joyce Peter** for her service to the Generalate and congregation for the last seven years as General Secretary. She has been industrious and diligent in the secretariate and we have appreciated her generosity greatly. We have not had a formal farewell for Joyce as her mother became ill with Covid-19 and Joyce was able to travel to Bangalore to be with her. Thankfully her mother is recovering and Joyce is able to look after her and have some home holiday. Joyce will return to Rome for a farewell before she begins her mission in the province of United Kingdom and Ireland.

Margaret Scott



It was with great relief that I arrived in Rome on 25 April leaving Yambio on 12 April, after nearly thirteen years in South Sudan. Saying farewell to the students and staff on Monday 12th was a sobering moment as we had shared so much together. My time as a teacher trainer in that fragile country was both challenging and full of blessings. We, as a Solidarity group, learned much together and were able to build up an Institute that delivers quality education. We were pleased to have the opportunity to train the young ones to be primary teachers and to be agents of change in the country.

The college is now in good hands under the leadership of Br Chris, a De La Salle Brother, and the team of Solidarity members. It is time for me to begin a new chapter in my life.

Travelling to Italy required Covid tests in two countries as I had a few days in Ethiopia on the way. Those tests are challenging as you are never sure if you have been exposed to the virus or not. Great relief when a negative result shows up. Probably the only time we would want to be negative!

Arriving in via di Bravetta at 6am on a Sunday morning isn't the best way to endear yourself to a new community but I was warmly welcomed and felt "at home" after so long away from an RNDM community. What was the first priority on coming to this new country? Learning Italian, of course. Progress is slow but there is progress. The whole community is committed to language learning and that helps as we help each other.

My initial mission is to assist in the archives so more learning in store for me. Already I am delighting in increasing my knowledge of Euphrasie and the beginnings of our congregation. I am in awe of the courage and inner strength of that French woman and what she achieved in her lifetime. Isn't it a gift that we are all "daughters of Euphrasie"? Another responsibility is to be the RNDM representative on the JPIC Commission. There will be more in store for me, I am sure, but this is only the beginning.

Congregation Commissions

Care for Our Common Home

The Commission had two meetings on 6 April and 18 May. Based on the 2020 Chapter recommendations Care for our Common Home, the members shared their hopes in preparing for a more organized action plan for our ongoing work for care of creation in the congregation. We are aware that we have an abundance of resources within the congregation to get this work started. JPIC in Rome is also in the process of launching a seven year action plan based on Laudato Si, inviting all religious congregations to participate in the mission of caring for the Earth. The Commission is exploring all the available resources to gather ideas to develop a plan of action including an assessment tool to evaluate the carbon footprints in the congregation. We will appreciate your support and cooperation in our endeavour to promote Oneness for Mission through this work.

Communications

The first meeting of this Commission was held on 16 April. To be connected to different time zones is a huge challenge particularly for this Commission. But, we are grateful to the members for being so generous to be available for the work of the Commission.

The proposal for a Communications Plan in the congregation is very new but it is inevitable at this particular time when technology is taking over our life. Advancement in technology is exciting but to live our missionary life in a digital world is a challenge. The members shared their hopes as we embarked on a new venture and were able to see the many possibilities to devise a Communications Plan that will be inspiring, challenging and leading us deeper into who we are as RNDMs. We hope this plan will provide sisters with several opportunities to share their experiences, pool in as many resources as possible and also introduce creative programs to help us in the various aspects of our missionary life. Our next meeting is scheduled for 28 May and the members hope to explore ideas for a structure of the plan.

Formation

The first Zoom meeting of this commission was on 15 April and all the CLT members were present. Josephine Kane welcomed everyone and thanked each one for accepting to be part of this commission. We began with self-introduction and the role that each one holds in the formation ministry. All the members of the commission are formators in different stages and they bring their personal wisdom and experiences of the formation ministry in the congregation.

In our future meetings, we will be guided by the orientations in our Chapter Document 2020 on Initial Formation and together we will develop a plan for the implementation. As we work together, we hope that we will have a good understanding of the present reality of formation in the congregation and identify some practical ways to enhance it. We are living in a changing world and as a congregation we constantly need to reflect on how we prepare the young people in different stages of formation so that they can fully respond to the mission of the congregation.



We hope to identify some ways in which we RNDMs can continue to enrich one another and have resources which will be made available for both initial and ongoing formation in the congregation.

Heritage

The first meeting of the Heritage Commission was on 12 April. Each member of the Commission shared their hopes which included what is stated in the Chapter mandate as well as other ideas such as how to treasure the foundation stories of each province. Rose Mary Harbinson, Patricia Boyd, and Probha Mary Karmokar will be presenting a short video clip of their respective places of Heritage – Sturry, Lyon and Chittagong - to the members at the next meeting. This will help us form some ideas for further planning.

Structures

Traditional pyramidal structures demand too much of too few and not enough of everyone else. Gary Hamel

The commission has had two meetings so far. These helped the group to clarify the tasks of the commission and to give some initial thoughts about how to proceed with getting the tasks done.



Congregation Chapter 2020 approved several new Directives to facilitate working out appropriate governance models for each context. The ultimate goal of governance structures is to enable us to live our missionary vocation more fully and to promote communion across the congregation. The Commission is beginning to plan ways of gathering information about the current reality in each context. We are aware of the challenges facing us, and the need to change our attitude to change! There is a need to unravel our individual and collective fears of the unknown and address our struggles in letting change happen and embracing the new with openness.

Prayer Intentions

- ✚ For those affected by Covid-19 especially for the people of India and those who have died due to Covid
- ✚ For all doctors, nurses and frontline workers
- ✚ For women and children whose lives are at risk
- ✚ For the Balay Euphrasie team, Davao and the TP Sisters who will be participating in the online formation program
- ✚ For the provinces of Bangladesh, Vietnam, and France who are in the consultation process for new leadership
- ✚ For migrants, refugees and victims of human trafficking
- ✚ For political leaders and governments

Born to Eternal Life

We give thanks to God for the life of the Sisters who have passed away since our last newsletter. May they know God's eternal peace and love.



Bridget Windle 17/04/2021 Dublin UK & I

Mary Higney 20/04/2021 Preston UK & I

A Prayer for Pentecost

Joyce Rupp

Spirit! Power and Passion of my being, press upon my heart your profound love. Move through the fragments of my days; enable me to sense your fiery Presence consecrating my most insignificant moments.

Spirit! Source of Vision, Perceptive Guide, permeate the moments of my choices when falsehood and truth both call to me. Turn me toward the way of goodness, so that I will always lean toward your love.

Spirit! Blessing for the heart grown weary, encircle me with your loving energy, empower me with your active gentleness. Deepen within me a faith in your dynamism which strengthens the weak and the tired.

Spirit! Breath of Life, Touch of Mystery, you are the ribbon of inner connection, uniting me with the groaning of all creation. Because of you, my life gathers into a oneness. Keep me attentive to this interdependence. Fill my being with constant compassion and a deep hope that knows no bounds.

Spirit! Dwelling Place, Sanctuary of Silence, you are the home for which I deeply yearn. You are the resting place for which I long. I find both comfort and challenge in you. Grant that I may keep my whole self open to the transforming power of your indwelling, that I may ever know the blessings of your tremendous companionship.

We wish you all a very Happy Pentecost.

Josephine Kane, Margaret Maung, Lissy Sebastian, Lucy Wambuí, Joicy Madassery

