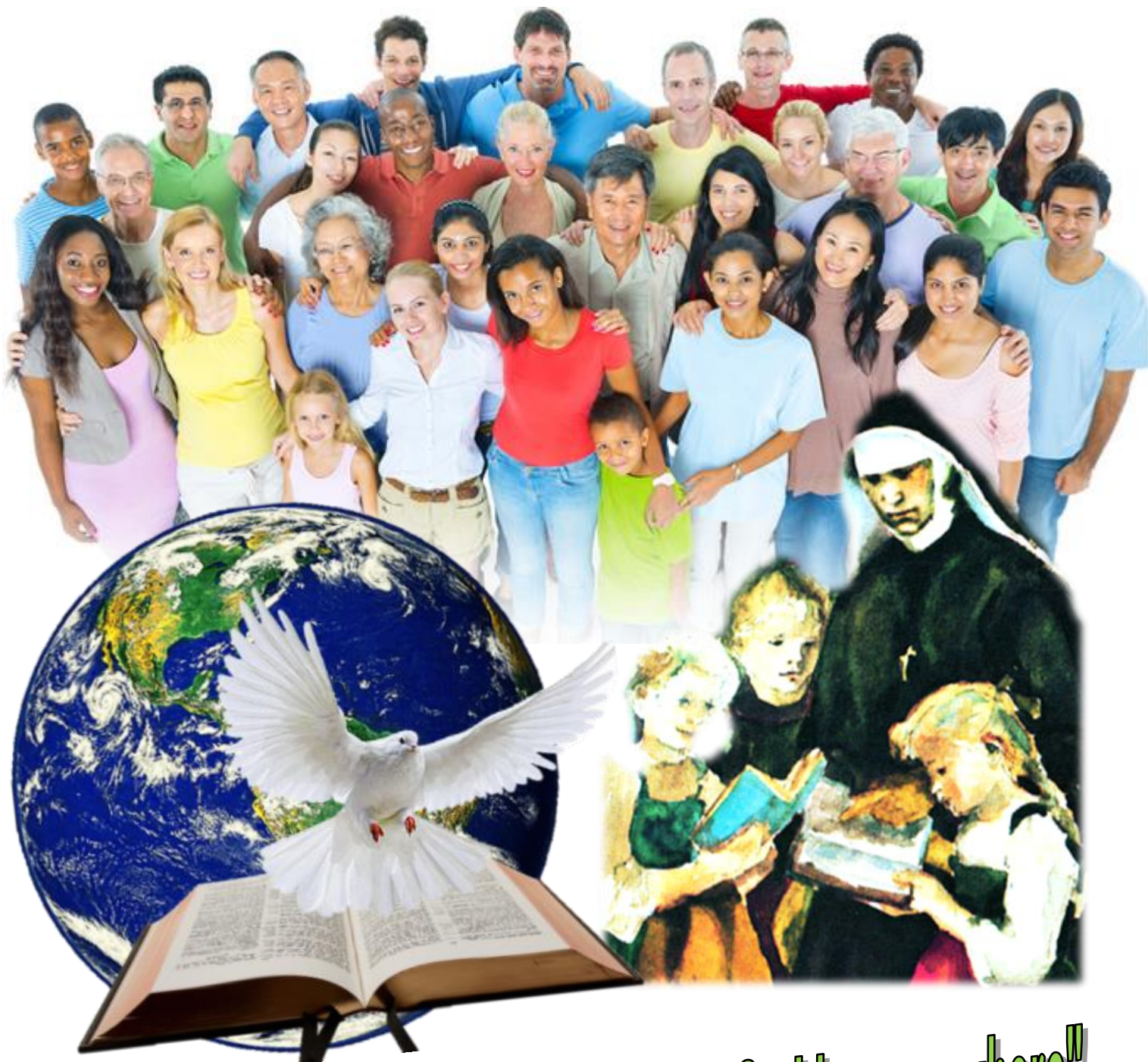




Edition 2022 : Menzingen



"Our convent is the world for the good God is everywhere".
Fr. Theodosius

WE ARE HEIRS OF THE DREAMS OF OUR FOUNDERS HEIRS OF HOPE WHO HAVE NOT DISAPPOINTED THEM

Dear Sisters,

I am always struck by the commentary on the parable of the Merciful Father (Lk 15: 11-32), especially when the Father shares his inheritance with his sons. The term that indicates this division of goods with his sons translated from the original language means "the father divided his own life among them" (Lk 15,12b). The Father therefore does not limit himself to dividing things but to sharing and giving life, giving himself.

Celebrating the 200th anniversary of Mother Bernarda's birth connects me precisely to this style of giving an inheritance and to the way of receiving this particular inheritance. Mother Bernarda has indeed left each of us a precious legacy. She did not bequeath us things, houses, activities, roles, but her own life, her own style, the gift of the Spirit that allowed her to generate a specific way of being consecrated women in her time, in our time.

Mother Bernarda had the courage to immerse herself in the social reality of the century in which she lived, embracing its lights and shadows. She looked to the world not to condemn it but to love it like Jesus. The world was for her the precious place in which to live and proclaim the Gospel, not in a devotional way but in a constructive, prophetic way ... a way capable of changing the person from within. She felt that she participated in the typical style of God who sees the suffering of His people and bends down to save them (cf. Ex 3,7-10). She fulfilled the dream of bringing "*life to the full and life in abundance*" (Jn 10:10) through the education of the poorest and most disadvantaged in her society, so that, like her, they could find the true meaning of life in God.

Pope Francis in a homily dedicated to consecrated persons said: "*We are heirs of the dreams of our fathers, heirs of the hope that did not disappoint our mothers and our founding fathers, our elder brothers*". How meaningful, dear sisters, to feel we are heirs of Mother Bernarda's dream, a dream that did not disappoint her because it came true! A dream made possible by her trusting God deeply, to the end.

It is precisely for this reason that in the 2022 edition of LIFE we did not choose to include commemorative or devotional articles on the life of Mother Bernarda. Rather, we asked several people for articles that help us to savour and make her legacy come alive: to look at and listen to the world from multiple perspectives and then bring it to life, especially where there is spiritual poverty, poverty of dignity and poverty of respect for fundamental rights of people (Part One). It is our desire to invite each other to cherish this heritage together, by giving thanks in prayer and listening to the Word (Part Two) and then ask ourselves if we are still faithful guardians of the values that shine within this heritage (Part Three), an inheritance focused on life and not of material things.

Mother Bernarda shared with each Sister of the Holy Cross her own life, her own inspiration, her openness to the Spirit so that by treasuring this heritage we are able to live with courage and humility in this world to transform it with the Gospel. This attitude "*will make our lives as consecrated people more fruitful, but above all it will preserve us from a temptation that can make our consecrated lives futile: the temptation of survival*"²

Therefore, may the celebration of this event of grace of Mother Bernarda's birth distract us from the temptation of simply surviving and encourage us to live with joy and passion the precious gift and legacy of life received from her: an inheritance that calls us to give life.

Happy Anniversary dear Sisters! Let us support each other spiritually as we fulfil the precious dream left to us as an inheritance ...



M. Dorina

¹ Homily of Pope Francis, 2 February 2017

² ibidem



THE WORLD SEEN THROUGH OTHER EYES...

PART ONE

The Light and Shadow of a territory marked by the Cross

- *Sister Paula María Palacios Oñate - Cusco*

One Man's true story

- *Fr. Tom Uzhunnalil SDB - India*

Salphina is the story of many women who struggle today

- *Mrs Salphina Hahlani - Zimbabwe*

This is very real – not a dream – War children from Ukraine

- *Report by Cristian Seguraantonio and Luis De Vega*

Harvesting little seeds of joy reinforce my Faith – A Christian youth perspective

- *Ms. Alice Gallareto – Italian*
- *Devna O'Neill (13) and Holly Magee (14) – Northern Ireland*
- *2nd secondary school class from Neuheim... Switzerland*

PART TWO

AN INVITATION TO PRAYER - A JOURNEY IN DAILY LIFE

'LISTENING' with the ear of our hearts – 56th World Communication Day 29th May '22

- *Fr. Phuti Makgabo*

Can the experience of PENTECOST inspire you today? - Pentecost Sunday 5th June '22

- *Sr. Giuseppina Donati*

Build UNITY – Embrace DIVERSITY

- *Lorraine and Piet Groenewald*

VOCATION and MISSION of the Gospel - World Mission Sunday 23 October, '22

- *Fr Lancy Naveen OFM*

Into your hands O Lord - in Communion with Mother Bernarda 26th November, '22

- *Sr. Rosa Rico*

PART THREE

WALKING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MOTHER BERNARDA

The following articles are presented by the Holy Cross Junior Sisters, 5 to 9 years professed. The articles are a group effort from the four different continents of the Congregation. The titles were chosen by the Junior sisters after their online workshop held last November, 2021 in response to the question:

How does your dream as Holy Cross Sisters follow in the footsteps of Mother Bernarda?

- **COURAGE IS A GRACE UNDER PRESSURE**

Sisters Anjila Central India, Sr Celina North India and Sr Anastasia Southern Africa.

- **MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN ALL YOU DO**

Sisters Beatrix Eita Southern Africa, Benedicta Devadhas South India, Canista Alfred Sri Lanka and Christy Central India.

- **BELIEVE**

Sisters Laura Marisa Ozuna Latin America, Pascha Mary Central India & Jyoti Susama Kullu North India

- **STAND UP**

Sisters Constania Torevei Southern Africa & Larisa Songthiang North India

- **BE THE CHANGE**

Sisters Maria John Central India; Sathiya Helan South India and Diyansili Pushparajah Sri Lanka.

- **BEAR WITNESS**

Sisters Sheela Central India; Nishani Amalathas Sri Lanka and Premchina Sangma North India.

- **DREAM A SIGN OF GOD'S PRESENCE**

Sisters Shanthi Jeevarathinam South India, Priyanka Central India & Nostar Musinachirevo Southern Africa.

- **COURAGE**

Sisters Sylvia Sekei Lesotho, Tengre Momin North India and Maria Jenifer Amburose South India

A special word of gratitude to all who have collaborated with CLT to prepare this magazine:

Translators: Mrs Evi Wendlinger (German), Ms. Daniella Persia (French), Sr Dorina Zanoni (Italian) and Sr Matilde Inostroza (Spanish)

Editors: Ms. Mary Mc Cann, Ms. Colette Mc Cann & Sr Rosemarie Curran

Proof readers: Sr Fatima Puthenthoppil & Sr Rose Paul Puthusserril

Design and Typist: Sr Bernadette Duffy

We are deeply grateful to all our contributors who have shared their personal stories with us, to our spiritual guides who have invited us to pray and our Junior Sisters, who like us all, walk in the footsteps of Mother Bernarda today...

PART ONE

The world seen through others' eyes



*'Before you judge my life,
my past or my character...
Walk in my shoes,
walk the path I have
travelled,
live my sorrow,
my doubts,
my fears,
my pain,
my loneliness,
my laughter,
my hopes,
my joys...
Remember everyone
has a story.
When you have lived my life,
then you can judge me...
(Author anyone!)*



Sister Paula María Palacios Oñate, Cunco Province, is a teacher of General Basic Education with a postgraduate degree in Religion, with international certification in ontological, executive and educational coaching. She is the Director of the Santa Cruz de Freire School and is currently completing her Master's degree in educational neuroscience. She is a member of the Provincial Council and serves as Provincial Assistant. She is also in charge of the organic pastoral care of the Province of Cunco.



THE WORLD SEEN THROUGH 'MAPUCHE EYES'

Light and Shadow of a territory marked by the Cross

Remembering the visit of Pope Francis to Chile and specially to our region La Araucanía, we recall His words when in his homily he reminded us:

*"This land, if we look at it through the eyes of a tourist, will leave us in ecstasy, and we'll just continue on our way, remembering the beautiful landscapes, but if we get close to its soil, we will hear it sing, and sing with sadness; Arauco carries a sorrow that can't be kept silent: centuries-old injustices are being applied in front of our eyes."*³

Along with this, it is important to remember some of the history of the Mapuche people which, although dawning with the origins of the continent, it encountered the Chilean people at the end of the 18th century. However, from the 19th century onward, and after a supposed "independence from Chile", the emerging Chilean state snatched almost all its possessions, sectioning the Mapuche people, granting them a minimum amount of land, and coexisting with other settlers and Chileans, who continued plundering and violating human rights.⁴



A Mapuche woman with traditional head-dress and drum

It is important to look at the past in order to understand the present, and to envision the future of the native peoples. Throughout history we can see there have been attempts to Christianize, Hispanicize, and Chileanize the Mapuche people; nevertheless, they kept fighting for their rights, their lands, and to claim Mapuzungun as their mother tongue and the Mapuche culture in general. Historically, schools have been considered one of the main strategies used by the state to carry out and consolidate territorial occupation processes.⁵

It is worth recalling the arrival of the missionaries to the Araucanía, among them the Capuchins of Bavaria, who invited the Sisters of the Holy Cross as "missionary" assistants to be in charge of teaching and education. Soon thereafter, and almost invisibly, the Sisters of the Holy Cross assumed responsibility for many Capuchin missions; they did everything and were even the first to visit Mapuche families in their "Rukas" (houses).

With their charitable services they created relationships of trust before the arrival of the missionaries. In the educational system that they implemented, they were the first to integrate the daughters of Mapuche, Chilean and settler families.

³ Homily January 17, 2018

⁴ (Mariman 2019; Pozo 2018).

⁵ (Porma 2015)

The training of the Sisters of the Holy Cross as teachers, allowed them to staff many of the missionary schools and colleges with professionals. Following western principles, they taught learners how to speak, how to relate, what to eat, how to dress, how to comb their hair, in short, how to live and understand the human beings who inhabit the planet. With the desire to give them tools to improve their living conditions, and with the best of intentions, they began to introduce new ways of doing things, which also meant taking away their own history, as happens in all underhanded colonisations; evangelization without integration.

Today I wonder: are we, the Sisters of the Holy Cross in La Araucanía, *a transforming presence* or *a colonising presence*? Although these questions may sound challenging and blunt, it is necessary to discern about this. We cannot deny that centuries have passed and many times, our authoritarian and moral codes; our lack of understanding of the Mapuche worldview; our lack of interest in learning their language; and the activities that we recreate, at times without meaning or without the depth and appreciation they deserve, continue to remind us that, deep down, we see the Mapuche people as uncivilized and uncultured.

As a Congregation we must also ask ourselves: how do we look at, value and approach the cultures of the different Provinces, given that we say we are an international Congregation? What vision do we have of the sisters in Latin America?

Remembering history, we are called to discern the signs of the times; to recognize and allow these lights and shadows of which we have been a part, to speak to us again; and to listen with an attentive ear to the voice of God in their culture, in their ways of loving, of being, of feeling, and of living together. The invitation as Sisters of the Holy Cross in Latin America, is to respect the rights of each person, to value the richness that exists in each culture, and to integrate into our lives the wonders of the Mapuche worldview which, in harmony with the Holy Father, we must appreciate and take care of our common home. Every Mapuche man, woman, boy and girl has been marked by the cross: the cross of injustice; the cross of dispossession; the cross of questioning; the cross of violence; but like Jesus,

we must look up to the hopeful Cross of encounter, to look into our hearts again and discover that differences cannot challenge us but rather enrich us, and unite us from the richness each one brings, with the willingness to be reconciled from the depths of our being.

Today, in La Araucanía, once again we want to recover the hopeful gaze of the common good, where there are no races, cultures, peoples, where no one is better or worse, but rather, human beings who recognize each other and want to walk together and build in solidarity the long-awaited unity. We say no to the violence that separates us, that divides us, that leads us to respond with more violence and inequalities.

From our current mission as educators, we are in a privileged place to change the way we approach the Mapuche people, to seek peace as the fruit of justice, to show solidarity with their pain of many years, and to humbly respect and learn from their culture and religion, so that together we can move ahead and coexist among all and for all.

We want to learn from the wisdom of the Mapuche people without invading their space. We want to listen, to understand and to converse from a holistic perspective; we want to respect their religiosity, without demonizing what they have, respecting their spiritual authorities; we want to be close, without them feeling that we want to Christianize or indoctrinate them, but rather to learn and share life together, so that they come to know that we also believe that without memory we cannot build a present or a future.



As a sister of the Holy Cross in La Araucanía I want to be part of this Transformation and be a Presence that with its words and actions contributes to dialogue, to the integration of cultures, to good living and to unity.



Fr. Tom Uzhunnalil SDB is an Indian Catholic priest who is a Salesian of Don Bosco. He was kidnapped in March 2016 and held by terrorists in Yemen. He was serving as a priest in Yemen from 2010 assisting Mother Teresa's Sisters who were taking care of the sick and elderly. On 12 September 2017, Fr Tom was released.

THE WORLD SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF A PERSECUTED CHRISTIAN

One man's true story

Anything and everything that happens in our lives meets a specific need in the Lord God's mission for us. Some events strengthen us physically and others emotionally and spiritually. Many an event, smoothens the rough surfaces of mind, heart, and body too. As children, we gather strength of body, mind, and heart from our own family members. Later, through our schools, colleges, Church and civil society we mature in these very strengths.

As we grow and mature, we extend these strengths to others in our families, in civil society, in religious communities and others we encounter along life's journey. We are to be strength, comfort, consolation, and light to others through the experiences that we have gained through our lives' events, of learning, loving, sharing, and caring. To the extent that we achieve this we find meaning and fulfilment and thus self- satisfaction and true joy.

This is the joy and satisfaction I feel and enjoy in my present life as a Salesian priest of Don Bosco and expressed in my priestly ordination motto, **"...come to serve and not to be served."** My journey is not over and so I desire to continue along the very path that I have already traversed. I am a trained Telecommunication Technician and an Electronic Mechanic. As a priest, I worked with young people imparting technical skills to them for twenty years. I cherished in my heart a dream of being a missionary. This dream was actualized in 2010 when I was given the chance to go to Yemen. My mission was to minister to the Missionaries of Charity Sisters and the small community of Catholics and Christians, who had come to work and serve in Yemen, mainly in industry, and the health care and hospitality sectors.

Trouble began for the people of Yemen in 2011 with the Arab Spring. I served in Taiz city for two

years and moved to St. Francis of Assisi Cathedral Church in Aden in the year 2013. In the middle of 2013, I became aware of a health issue, a small growth in my throat, which was removed. The biopsy results revealed that it was cancerous. A few periodic checkups were performed the following year. Finally, my Provincial Superior asked me to return to my home province, Bangalore. I returned to Bangalore, India, in the second week of February 2015. After one month, the political situation in Yemen worsened and people were expelled by the Indian Government. They included three of the four fellow Don Bosco priests who were serving in Yemen. Fr. M. K. George opted to remain in Yemen risking his life, to serve the spiritual needs of the sisters in the four cities of Sanaa, Taiz, Hodeida and Aden. This happened in the Holy week of 2015.

Soon after the Easter celebrations, inspired by an inner call to go to Yemen to serve in the crisis, where only one priest remained to look after the spiritual needs of the people, I expressed my desire and willingness to my new Provincial Superior. Besides that, I was still holding a valid visa as the only Catholic priest for Yemen. The Lord's will was confirmed for me through the permission granted by my Provincial Superior to return to Yemen.

I started my journey in the second week of April and took over a month to land in Sanaa in the war-torn capital of Yemen. I travelled on a Red Cross flight from Jibouti as its only passenger on 2 June 2015. After waiting a month in Sanaa, I finally reached Aden on the 2 July 2015. All through this period and thereafter, I witnessed the ravages of war and the destruction of cities and the hardship of the ordinary people of the country. I witnessed the bombings, buildings collapsing, and the dead bodies of people killed scattered in the streets.

On the morning of 4 March 2016, the first Friday and third week of Lent the terror group of three or four men barged into the Home for the Aged in Aden, Yemen. They shot and killed the security man at the gate. They killed all twelve workmen and women, who were on duty that morning, and four Missionary of Charity Sisters. One sister, Saly, was miraculously saved by the protecting mantle of our Blessed Mother Mary, who hid her from the eyes of these men, who were searching for her. Soon after, the security man was shot, I too was caught and made to sit and watch the killing of the sisters. I thought they would kill me too. But that did not happen for reasons best known to the Lord Jesus. I spent 557 days in captivity, and you all prayed for my safe release which took place on the 12th September 2017. My mission was not yet over in Yemen. I remained to bear testimony to the power of prayer and the mercy of God.

***I say to the people of Yemen:
'Through these events I have
come closer to God and to
each one of you. The Lord
Jesus has a unique mission
for each one of you who are
listening to my testimony.
Say 'Yes' to the Lord and you
too will be able to experience
His Love. Forgive yourself,
extend forgiveness to others
and come to the realization
of the mission that the Lord
God has for you in allowing
you to go through such an
experience of pain and
agony for one's own
salvation and that of all our
sisters and brothers.
Participation in Holy Mass
daily, if possible, will be the
nourishment for our souls
and that of our private
prayer.***

In captivity there was no possibility of either attending nor of celebrating Holy Mass. Yet, as a priest I continued to be faithful to saying Mass daily. It was my great strength and consolation to have celebrated the Mass spiritually, without bread and wine, most of my days in captivity. I also had private prayers and practices of piety like the Rosary, the Stations of the Cross, and the Divine Mercy Chaplet, etc. that kept me going in captivity, without becoming depressed or mentally derailed. The attackers that morning did not come to kidnap nor to loot the house but to kill all the sisters and the workers. And that was in fact what they did.

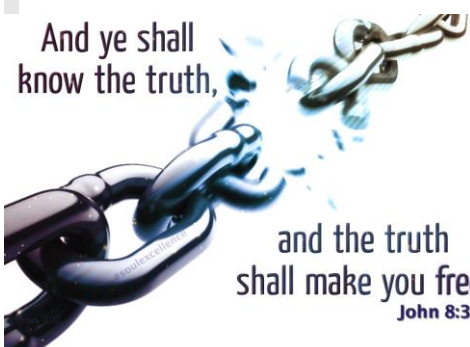
In light of all this, I believe that the Lord God has a definite plan and mission for each one. I believe my life's purpose and mission must have been the reason why those men who came to that campus in Aden on 4 March 2016 took me away without shooting or killing me. For this reason, I am convinced that the Lord Jesus wanted me to strengthen our brothers and sisters in their troubles and pains and to take refuge in prayer for themselves and others. I know prayer is the most powerful weapon and forgiveness is the best medicine.

Ever since my release, my relationships with others have become more and more compassionate, kind, less judgmental and more loving. I have travelled around the world giving my testimony and thanking people for their prayers offered for me while I was in captivity.

From the end of March 2020, movement restrictions were in place due to COVID 19. I am assigned to Don Bosco, Mysore, our pre-novitiate house, as the financial administrator and the assistant superior (Vice Rector). I teach Christian doctrine to the Seminarians in Mysore.

Since I am also a Telecom Technician and an Electronic Mechanic, I am currently engaged in installing a 12 KW 3 phase solar electric power system for the house here in Mysore.

And ye shall
know the truth,



and the truth
shall make you free.
John 8:32



Salphina Hahlani is a 42-year-old widowed mother of three children. She is a Zimbabwean refugee who seeks employment and a livelihood across the Beitbridge border in Musina, South Africa. She seeks temporary accommodation at the Catholic Women's Shelter in Musina while trying to provide for her family.

THE WORLD SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF AN AFRICAN CHRISTIAN MOTHER

The story of Salphina is the story of so many women who struggle today...

As night approaches we hear Salphina desperately share her story with Sr. Francis Grogan, from the Shelter in Musina, where she is a 'guest' among hundreds more refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. Musina lies on the South African border with Zimbabwe.

"Sr. Francis this evening I want to cry. The lorry which was supposed to take me and my daughter to Zimbabwe had a breakdown, now this other person whom I can take a lift with wants R1000⁶ for transport and I only have R600⁷. I asked if I could give him a goat in exchange for the transport money, when I would reach home, but he refused. My daughter needs to go back to school."

Here is Salphina's story:

My name is Salphina. I am 42 years old and the mother of three children. I come from Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe.

In 2011, we had a bad car accident. My husband and my little son were killed that night in that terrible accident which I cannot erase from my memory. I was badly injured, and I still have serious wounds and scars on my legs and body.

I am a Catholic but where I live the Catholic Church is far away, so I go to another Christian Church. My faith and God mean everything to me.

I always wanted to be a "businesswoman," to buy and sell and make a living for my family. Ever since my husband passed away, I have done my best to be a "businesswoman". I know it is not my cleverness that makes me able to do business, but I am convinced that God gives me the ideas and the strength.

My business means coming to South Africa to buy a box of soap and bags of Zimba chips and return home to Zimbabwe to sell them. With the income I gain from selling I buy new stock and sell again. When it is school time, I buy plastic covers (for books) and sweets and sit outside the school gate and do my business. I can look after my family with this income.

'To be called a **refugee** is the opposite of an insult. it is a badge of **strength, courage** and **victory**.'

Tennessee Office for Refugees

⁶ 1,000.00 ZAR = 60.47 EUR

⁷ 600.00 ZAR = 36.28 EU

Last year, 2021, my daughter suffered a mismanaged delivery by an untrained mid-wife in the village (*her husband had refused to allow her to go to the clinic*) and as a result the baby died and now my daughter suffers from internal injuries.

After this experience, her husband walked out on her and left her alone. That is why I have come to Musina now with my sick daughter to try to get medical help for her. To get here I sold a cow to cover the travelling expenses, and, in my heart, I know it was God who gave me the strength to make this journey.

While in Musina, I go out every day in search of piece jobs⁸ to earn some money. Yesterday I picked chillies all day and got only R24⁹ at the end of the day. When I do piece jobs, I don't feel my own pain until I return in the evening. In my evening prayer I say to God:

"Thank you for helping me find some little piece of work today. God, I know you are looking all over the world but please don't forget to look at me".

Back at home in Zimbabwe, I used to plough small rows of vegetables, including onions, tomatoes, and spinach. I raked and irrigated them using a wheelbarrow to transport water from a local tap. From selling these vegetables I could feed my family. Unfortunately, I had to leave my vegetables to be with my daughter in Musina.

I say to my two other children:

"You must go to school because it is not easy being a woman in Africa. I want you to have a better life than I have."

So, Sr. Francis, tonight, I am trying to bring my one daughter back to Zimbabwe so that she may go to school. Once she is settled, after a week or so, I will come back to Musina to try to get help for my sick daughter. I am suffering but I thank God for my life. He is the One who is helping me.



I always wanted to be a "businesswoman,"
to buy and sell and make a living for my family.

Insert: a refugee mother and child —————>



⁸ Any work that will give you a small amount of money to buy some food for one day.

⁹ Equivalent to €1.45

‘This is very real – not a dream’ – War children from Ukraine

Children are being forced into exile with their mothers, leaving behind their country, homes, schools and lives due to a conflict that they don’t understand...



Friends Stanislava and Vladislava, both refugees of the war in Ukraine, in the city of Lviv. Jaime Villanueva¹⁰

Children usually feel uncomfortable when their mothers cry. They don’t know how to react. They contort their faces into forced smiles. Viktoria is different: she strokes her mother’s hand when her eyes well up. The woman is crying because her 10-year-old daughter has just explained to journalists from EL PAÍS that what she’ll miss the most is her grandparents. They are sitting on a bench in a train station in Lviv, in the west of Ukraine, 800 kilometers from home. Their town, located in the province of Kharkiv, now lies on the war’s frontlines. They have been traveling for two days, and they still have one to go before they arrive at the border with Poland. Viktoria’s father, who works in Warsaw, is waiting for them there. Among the more than a million Ukrainian refugees who have already fled from the war, tens or even hundreds of thousands of them are children who are escaping hand-in-hand

with their mothers. Many more are hiding in shelters every day or suffering in besieged cities such as Mariupol. **Cases like Viktoria’s show how the horrors of war are playing out before a child’s frightened eyes.**

The cold is unusually severe this Saturday in Lviv. Viktoria pulls her hat, marked with a TikTok logo, down to just above her eyes. Vlad is 11 and also comes from Kharkiv. He had time to pack his backpack with a shirt, a pair of pants and food given to him by his mother. His most important possession is a round blue monster toy: his father gave it to him when they said goodbye in Kharkiv train station. “*I lost it on the train and I cried a lot,*” Vlad explains. “*But in the end we found it.*” At the Lviv train station, Vlad, Viktoria and his sister Juliana are strangely calm. “*It’s because we already cried a lot when the train left,*” Juliana says, “*because we knew that they were going to bomb our city.*”

Stanislava, eight, and Vladislava, nine, are friends who reunited in Lviv, having been neighbors in Kyiv. Stanislava heard the first missiles fall in the Ukrainian capital while at school. “*We were all inside the shelter, and we were really scared,*” she explains. In a quiet voice, she confesses that she had also felt embarrassed: she didn’t dare break the silence to tell the teacher that she needed to pee.

Meanwhile, in the wedding hall of a hotel in the Romanian city of Suceava, 13-year-old Dina Vok is sitting on a mattress, surrounded by hundreds of people, all refugees like him who have left via the Romanian border. Dina is the kind of person who keeps everything inside. Along with his aunt and cousins, he has come from the city of Vinnytsia. He left behind his father, a soldier, as well as his mother, who is a nurse and felt the moral obligation to stay.

¹⁰ Cristian Seguraantonio Pitaraúl Sánchez Costa, Lviv / Suceava (Romania) - MAR 09, 2022 - 01:42 CET

To combat his boredom, Dina is listening to music, playing with his cousin and using games on his cellphone. He has stopped checking TikTok because, he says, *“it’s full of Russian propaganda.”* A little over a week ago, he had been checking the application frequently to keep himself calm. His mother had woken him a few hours before, just as the invasion began, and explained to him in no uncertain terms that he had to leave because Russia was bombing their country. *“I was really scared. I started packing the clothes that she told me to take,”* he says. When the car got stuck in an enormous traffic jam at the city’s exit, he focused on checking his phone. *“I kept looking at TikTok, Google News and Telegram to find out what was happening,”* he says.

He understands that *“this is very real, not a dream,”* but his green sweatshirt, printed with the word “Positive,” summarizes his life philosophy. *“I’m fine here. I can eat and stay warm,”* he insists, though when someone mentions his parents, it’s clear what is going through his head and what he is struggling to keep inside.

When asked, “What does war mean to you, Dina?”

He replied, *“When one country kills people from another country because it’s greedy.”*

Now they’re heading toward Bucharest so that his mother, who is leaving by another border, can give him “a hug” before returning to



Dina Vovk in a hotel in the Romanian city of Suceava

Ukraine. He will go to the United Arab Emirates, where his grandparents live. *“It will be really nice like a vacation from school and it’s warm there,”* says Dina.

From where she is sitting cross-legged, 14-year-old Sofia Holodalina starts jumping with joy when the journalist approaches, even though she thinks *“newspapers are for old people.”* It’s the closest thing to fun that has happened to her this week. She arrived in Romania a few hours ago from Zaporizhzhia. That day, the place happened to be in the headlines: it is home to Europe’s largest nuclear plant and had been taken by Russian troops. She starts to laugh when her mother explains that they had planned to visit her sister in Torrevieja, in the Spanish province of Alicante, in the second half of 2022, but the war has forced them to move their travel plans

forward. *“Thanks, Putin, for the favor!”* says Sofia, dressed in a tracksuit, with a mischievous smile. And when the journalist tells her that there’s a beach in Torrevieja, she breaks into a smile, gazes in another direction and says, *“I think I’ll stay in Spain. I don’t think I want to return to Ukraine just to see how it’s rebuilt, how they make everything again out of nothing.”*





Twelve-year-old Islam takes care of his brother Yasin 4, while his other brother Lias 7, hugs their mother Kamala. Luis De Vega¹¹

In the packed and chaotic Kyiv station, one of the places that are serving as an escape from the conflict, 12-year-old Islam is keeping an eye on his younger siblings, seven-year-old Lias and four-year-old Yasin. They cluster around a large, orange, wheeled suitcase among hundreds of people. They are accompanied by their mother, 28-year-old Kamala, who does not speak Ukrainian and lets her oldest son communicate with the reporter. Islam's father, 35-year-old Ali, will accompany them to the border and then return to Ukraine. For this Uzbek family, who came to Ukraine four years ago, it is time to emigrate once more. The boy remains resolute and confident amid the whirlwind.



For them, at least for now, the time for studying and attempting to integrate into a country far from Uzbekistan has ended. Rivers of people, foreigners and Ukrainians are showing up each day to try to secure a space in one of the trains that are leaving for Lviv. They reach the top floor through the station lobby, and after confirming that the next convoy to the west leaves from Platform 10, they head straight there, on the way to their new lives.

At 6am on Friday, 11-year-old Nika left her home in Odessa alongside her mother, two of her sisters and their dog. Six hours later, they crossed the border into Moldova by car. In the store where tea and sandwiches are offered to the new arrivals, they were waiting for a cousin to take them to Chişinău, the capital, where they will stay with him for 'a week.'

Nika is about to turn 12, and she is hoping to be back by then. *"She cries all the time because her best friend went to Poland and won't come back. She's going to stay there for school,"* her mother says. The girls correct their mother's English, laugh and quickly become engrossed in their games. *"We wanted to go. It was really scary. We took an hour to cross the border,"* says the oldest sister, who doesn't speak much more English. *"I'm fine,"* says Maria, who is the youngest sister aged nine.

She grabs a stuffed animal and continues playing on her tablet among the family's suitcases. The others take turns looking at the phone and holding the dog in their arms. Their lips are all chapped from the cold.

¹¹ [Luis De Vega](#)|Kyiv|Mar 31, 2022 - 05:39 Cest



Alice is an employee for Mott MacDonald as an international engineering consultant. Her main area of expertise is urban regeneration. Her focus is in providing inclusive and innovative designs while planning streets and spaces. Often, she facilitates stakeholders and community involvement in the decision-making-process offering her experience in consultation and engagement techniques for place making and master planning projects.

The world seen through the eyes of young Christians today...

Hi, my name is **ALICE** and I am a Transport Planner and Urban Designer currently based in Liverpool, UK. I grew up in Italy in the hinterlands of Liguria where I spent my childhood and teenage years. I then moved to Torino for my University studies - attaining a Bachelor degree in Architecture and a Masters in Urban and Transport Planning. During the last year at University, I had the chance of travelling to the UK for an Erasmus project in preparation for my thesis and that experience inspired me to keep exploring. I moved to Berlin for my first job with an international transport start-up. I then came back to the UK in 2016 and settled in Birmingham to start my career in the engineering consultancy world. From there I progressed through three different companies until I moved to Liverpool enjoying life on the coast and focusing on regeneration projects - with the goal of making the urban environment more accessible and safer for all. This is a snapshot of my life and career progression, but behind the highlights of my CV there is such an assortment of experiences - the excitement of travelling and settling into a new place far away from home, countless video-calls and pictures and prayers to help me feel closer to the people I love. Many different experiences: interviews, apartment hunting, missed flights,

language classes, new and lost friendships, moments of loneliness of bravery and of beauty. Lots of long, long nights but also incredibly positive successes. Then there is the distance factor and being away from the people and places I built so many memories with, the distance from my amazing younger brother growing up in height and talent on the other side of FaceTime. A distance that has always been purely physical, but made smaller and smaller by the connection that true love empowers and here is where my Faith came into play. I grew up Christian and this allowed me access to a community where I learned compassion, empathy and hope. I had the opportunity to volunteer with kids and young girls spending time playing, singing, laughing my head off with them - but also praying with them. I was humbled by the beautiful, deep questions they had about Faith and life and even death (never easy questions from the kids!). I did not truly realize at the time that by dedicating a bit of myself to others, I was actually harvesting little seeds of joy and core memories reinforcing my own Faith. So, when I started living further away, having to reinvent myself, I discovered such comfort and brightness in Faith. Sharing prayers with my family in gratitude and in grief kept us close. Knowing my grandma

would light a candle and pray to Maria before all of my flights and interviews gave me courage. All those little seeds I collected as a Christian teenager volunteering at summer camps blossomed into a form of spirituality, open to friendship and dialogue. And I believe all of this reflects in my daily work as well: while there are several technical aspects to my job, a core principle I am particularly fond of is making transport and places accessible, safe and welcoming for everyone. This includes the softer voices within our communities: kids, elderly, women, people with disabilities, minorities - and it requires listening and caring for others, even more when they do not have the privileges that we have. And I like to think the way I approach my job today also comes from the Faith in which I find hope and beauty.

At 9 years old, my dad passed away from pancreatic cancer. Naturally at this young age I found it difficult to comprehend this loss. However, as I have grown older, I have been able to fully express the true emotions of grief and have been able to grow and learn from this. Christianity has been extremely important through this journey as it has allowed me to feel less alone through praying to God and seeking comfort in Him. Praying has also enabled me to have a stronger connection to my dad and has made me feel grateful for the fact that I have someone looking over me and protecting me through all of the ups and downs of my life. While this has been a difficult journey, I believe that my reliance on my Christian faith and my close relationship with God has allowed me to grow and develop as an individual. It has enabled me to have a more positive outlook on life as well as allowing me to appreciate my family and friends. I believe that this experience has also allowed me to become a more empathetic person as it has helped me to become more understanding of others.



Holly (left) and Devna (right) share with us their faith lights and shadows... Students from St. Ronan's College, Northern Ireland.

HOLLY says; "My strong Christian faith has played a prominent role throughout my life, particularly through the challenges that I have experienced such as the loss of loved ones. Christianity has given me the opportunity to reflect on these hard times and ask for guidance and motivation to help me through the tougher times in my life.

While my Christian faith has helped me through shadows that I have faced, it has also massively impacted my life. It has encouraged me to work to the best of my ability to not only make myself proud, but also to make all of my family members proud including those in heaven. My faith has inspired me to work hard throughout my GCSE's and A levels as by going to Mass and praying privately every night I have been given the spiritual guidance which has motivated me and encouraged me to keep focused on my studies. So far, I feel that my faith has helped me with this as it has given me inner strength to achieve my goals in my personal and school life.

Furthermore, my Christian faith also gave me inner strength throughout the pandemic especially through lockdown when I was

unable to socialise with my friends. The feelings of isolation and loneliness, which so many teenagers have also experienced, tested my faith. However, through praying and speaking to God, this gave me a sense of support which helped me to overcome these feelings and readjust to the unfamiliar situation we experienced. Coming out of lockdown, once again my faith guided me to fit back into normality as I felt that God was looking after me especially when going back to school.

Finally, my faith has always been there to guide me throughout the shadows and lights of my life. I know that it will help me in the future as I move to the next stage of my journey where I hope to study Primary School teaching with Religion in St. Mary's University, Belfast and pass on the seed of faith to the next generation and nurture its development through prayer and learning."

DEVNA shares how she sees the lights and shadows of being a young Christian. Today, not only are Christians often persecuted or criticised for their beliefs, young people are frequently judged unfairly and face many challenges. People make assumptions about young people without understanding our experiences, issues and the stresses we are under. A famous quotation says, **"You can't understand someone until you've walked a mile in their shoes."** So, I want to share my life experience with you as a young Christian who attends a Catholic school. There are many positive aspects of my life as a young Christian living in today's society. Personally, I have strong support from my family who brought me up with good values. My Christian beliefs are reinforced by my school and its pastoral community especially in the way in which we are treated as students. We also live out our Christian beliefs by doing good for others. We take part in outreach programmes, such as Saint Vincent De Paul society, by giving donations to victims of the Ukraine war and by raising money for Trócaire, to mention a few. Furthermore, as a young Christian I help to form

relationships among friends and family always being sensitive to their situations and needs. Another expression of my faith is participating in celebrations that are special and important to Christians such as the Eucharist, Carol Services at Christmas, Lenten campaigns, etc. School helps to keep my Christian faith relevant. It does this through teachings that tell me and my classmates that being God's children, we are deeply loved by Him. Confident of God's love we too are empowered to help others with special needs and are encouraged to show respect to others.

Although there are many positives to being a Christian in today's society, there can also be some challenges. It is my experience that a lot of young adults nowadays strive to be popular or to do what others want them to do even when they do not agree on principle. This can be challenging as it may distract us from our faith. Such challenges include indulging in misbehaviour such as drinking alcohol while we are still underage. Another challenge to our faith is the effects of social media and how the messages we hear shape our personal self-images. Many of us feel we are only acceptable if we are 'the perfect role model' with a slim figure, well dressed in the latest fashion and flawlessly made-up. The need in us young people to live up to these expectations is enormous and it leads us to overspend money that we cannot afford.

I may begin to stress and worry about certain things going on in my life or in the world. This may include several things such as the Ukraine war, Covid, climate change, lack of future jobs, future exams, losing loved ones, which are all realities many of us young people face today. Furthermore, it is difficult as a Christian today to follow the Commandments, to not envy or judge others and to behave in an appropriate manner. There is also the temptation to not attend Mass, especially if our social life is hectic or if we are too busy doing things we want, and we would prefer to take a longer sleep on Sunday mornings. Finally, people may try to hide and abandon their Christian

faith due to other individuals thinking that they are a 'goody-two shoes'.¹² This sometimes happens when one speaks up for what they believe is the right thing to do or to put a stop to something that's clearly wrong.

I conclude by saying that although we are faced with many challenges as Christian youth in today's society, we can also recognise that there are many positive aspects. We are called to allow ourselves to be well informed to make the right individual choices for the benefit of the common good.

the Churches in Switzerland is on the decline, denominational religious education is part of the school timetable in the canton of Zug. This is also the case in Neuheim, where religious education is taught ecumenically in the upper school. Here, a Catholic or a Reformed teacher teaches a mixed-denominational class. The Catholic religious education teacher Irmgard Hauser is such a teacher. She has been teaching for almost thirty years and has a good rapport with her pupils. With the 2nd upper school class, which are teenagers aged 15, she discussed life, the Church, God and the world.



These were the questions:

What is it like to be young today?

What is beautiful?

What is challenging?

How do you see the world?

What does it mean to you to be a Christian?

How do you see the Church?"

Neuheim is a small village in Switzerland with a population of little more than 2,000 people. The Church is in the centre of the village. The parish has a large group of altar boys and an active Jubla group.¹³ Nevertheless, more and more people have to be considered rather distant from the Church as is probably the case throughout Switzerland. This also applies to children and young people who are actually baptized. For many of them, religious education at school is the only place where they come into contact with the faith and the Church. Even though the influence of

The youth respond:



"It's great to be young because you are fitter and healthier. You have more freedom and not so many worries yet," stressed almost all the students. And some added that they don't have to pay anything themselves because their parents pay for their living expenses. It is also cool that they still have a lot of free time as upper secondary school students. The secondary school students experience school as more arduous. After all, school shortens their beloved free time. French lessons in particular are a problem for some of them. In addition, some of the young people would like more understanding from their parents...The

¹² an ostentatiously virtuous or well-behaved person.

¹³ Jubla (Jungwacht/Blauring) is a children's and youth organisation of the Catholic Church open to all young people of all denominations, religions and cultures.

pupils of the 2nd upper school see their personal future in a positive light. They know that they live in a beautiful place and in a country that offers them a good education and many opportunities. They are happy that they can make more of their own decisions as adults. At the same time, they are aware that independence comes with responsibility. Young people are more concerned about the following issues: climate crisis, environmental pollution, the constant new wars and persistent racism. These topics make them think. The discussion also remains exciting on the topic of Christianity and the church. For almost all of the 12 class members, baptism primarily means that they belong to a faith community and believe in God. Nevertheless, most of them rarely attend church services. And if they do, then preferably when there is something for them to be involved in for example assisting as altar servers. They also enjoy the Christian festivals they can celebrate

during the year. Some also mention that as Christians they keep the Ten Commandments and respect God. With a wink, they add that only baptized people are allowed to get married once in church. Most of the young people in Neuheim's 2nd upper school find the churches themselves quite OK. They feel accepted and welcomed by their church. They also perceive that the churches do a lot of good. They help the homeless and other people in need. They create community and try to convey good values. However, opinions differ when it comes to church services. Half of the class think the services are okay the way they are. The other half, believe they should be more modern and interesting, with alternative types of liturgical music rather than just traditional organ and choir. In the end, the conversation shows a class with many open, critical and yet also positive young people. May their hopes for a good future and a peaceful, healthy world be fulfilled.



PART TWO

An Invitation to PRAYER



Be Still
AND KNOW
THAT *I Am* GOD
-PSALM 46:10



Fr. Phuti Makgabo, from Limpopo, South Africa is a Catholic priest in the Archdiocese of Johannesburg. He was ordained a priest in 2015 after he completed his theological studies in Rome. He obtained a Licentiate in Institutional Social Communication from the University of the Holy Cross in Rome in 2019. He is currently a parish priest and the Communications Officer of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC).

THE 56TH WORLD DAY OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS **Sunday, 29 May, 2022**

*The experience we are called to pray about today is **'LISTENING'** with the ear of our hearts*

1. Opening hymn of your choice

2. Opening Prayer: God our Father, you have given many of us a gift of sight and hearing that we may not only listen to what we hear but also find in what we read of You, a way of knowing the promises you made to your people. Grant that when we see and hear your message it may remain in our hearts and bear fruit in our everyday life, through Christ our Lord. Amen

3. Listening with the ear of the heart in the context of 'Social Communications'

The Master Social Communicator is God. Not only did He self-communicate in the Incarnation, in person, but He taught us how to communicate ourselves, as He did, in radical self-giving. The Revelation of God is the self-communication of Himself. The day for social communication will always be important in that it reminds us that we are social beings and communication plays a very important part in every society. A heart is the sanctuary of a human person. It is where God speaks intimately to us. "I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jer.31.33). In writing the law in our hearts God is communicating His will to us. And so, it makes sense that we listen with the ears of our heart because it is where the Lord speaks with us. We learn the same lesson about the importance of the heart from our Lady, "But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart," now, and hopefully always, you will ponder the words of the Gospel in your hearts.

4. Lectio 'Read'

We read the gospel according to Luke 24:⁴⁶⁻⁵³ and let the Word enter our hearts. (The Ascension)

Jesus said to his disciples: "Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold I am sending the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." Then He led them out as far as Bethany, raised His hands, and blessed them. As He blessed them He parted from them and was taken up to heaven. They did Him homage and then returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and they were continually in the temple praising God.

The Gospel of the Lord

5. We read the gospel again... Luke 24:⁴⁶⁻⁵³

6. Short pause.. keep in mind that we are called to 'Listen'

7. Each one says aloud the word or phrase that she/he is drawn to. Remain in silence

8. Read the passage of Scripture again.

9. Meditatio – 'Meditate' - How does the Gospel connect to your life? Imagine yourself present and 'listening' to what is being read.

10. **Contemplatio – ‘Contemplate’** - Take time for interior ‘listening’ as a quiet expression of the love between God and yourself. Listen! What is God saying to you through the scripture?
11. **Share** what you hear God say to you or what is touched within you as you listen to the Word of God.
12. **Short period of silence.**
13. **Input on the importance of Social Communications Day as a mode of Evangelisation and to announce the Gospel.**

The Church is not new in using the latest technology for evangelisation. In fact, right from the beginning we see the apostles using the latest technology of their time, namely, oral tradition. Our Lord’s message for evangelisation, which is a communication of the Good News, was initially an **in-person transmission**. We see this in the way Jesus went about preaching among the people, and how later He sent out His disciples two by two, eventually sending them out to preach the Gospel to the whole world, the universal mission, Matthew 28:16-20. And this in-person communication of the Gospel still remains the most important and irreplaceable platform for our faith, despite all the advanced technology that we have.

If we take St. Paul for example, we can see that in his time the latest technology was writing letters on papyrus. But our understanding from Scripture tells us that he would have visited a community and established a local Church before he would write a letter to them. In fact, one of the reasons he gives for writing letters was because he could not be there in person. In 1 Thess. 2:18, he says, “We wanted to come to you, certainly I, Paul, did again and again ...” In 2 Cor. 1:16, St. Paul says, “I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia and to come back to you from Macedonia.” So, the in-person social communication should not necessarily be replaced or reduced by the technological means of communication because person-to-person communication is always invaluable.

The World Day of Social Communications gives us the opportunity to show gratitude to God for the gift communication and to thank God for the wisdom He has given to those who create this new technology. It is a very important day in that it helps us each year to draw attention to a certain aspect of our human nature in relation to our relationship with God and one another. Some of us still remember very well the theme of last year, **“Come and See”**, and this year’s theme, **“Listening with the ears of our hearts”**, will be remembered by some next year, because there was a special day to remember it. As the Communication Officer of the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference (SACBC), this day is important on a moral and practical level. Today by focussing people’s attention on a moral level, we are provided with the opportunity to also appreciate the progress and opportunities that have been made whilst heightening our awareness of the dangers that come with it. It also gives others an opportunity to speak about the importance of having in dioceses, religious Congregations and other entities in the Church, well-structured communication and teams of people working for the sake of the Gospel. In the end, the World Day of Communication is about people and not the means of communication. New technology is there to serve us and help us reach each other where physical obstacles make it impossible. After all, it is the members of the society that have hearts and not the machines. It is to people that we evangelise.

14. **Conclude with Oratio – ‘Pray’** - Pray in thanksgiving for our shared time together and thank God for His love and care for each one.
15. **Sing a closing hymn of your choice**

I invite you to further reflect on the message of Pope Francis for this 56th Day of Social Communication, **‘Listening with the ear of the heart’**. Among many deep thoughts his message offers a strong yet humble challenge to re-think how we ‘listen to those in front of us’, that can include all our relationships, at home, in community, at work, to creation and particularly to God.
<https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/communications/documents/20220124-messaggio-comunicazioni-sociali.html>

Sr. Giuseppina Donati, House Italia, has a background in biblical theology and has always been very fond of Scriptural texts. She says, "I try to share the fruit of my study through conferences offered to a non-specialist but attentive audience. I collaborate with the Diocese of Como in the catechetical and biblical apostolate sector with the Parish of Sondrio for the formation of catechumens. I am also available to give biblical reflections to groups and/or religious associations if requested."



CAN THE EXPERIENCE OF PENTECOST INSPIRE YOU TODAY?

Pentecost Sunday 5th June 2022

Hymn to the Holy Spirit

Reflection on the passage from Acts 2:1-13

The second chapter of Acts focuses substantially on the founding event that marks the beginning of Christianity: the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. It is important to note that the Church, born from Pentecost, shows from the beginning its missionary nature, that is, a community open to dialogue with the world, in all respects faithful to the Risen One's mandate to be His witness "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

In this reflection, we will reread the Pentecost narrative, retracing its fundamental stages, in order to highlight the missionary character that the Spirit wanted to imprint on the Church from its very beginning.

The story of Acts 2:1-13 can be easily structured into two scenes: **the descent of the Holy Spirit (vv. 1-4) and the reaction of the crowd (vv. 5-13).**

First Scene: THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. While the day of Pentecost was being fulfilled, they were all together in the same place. 2. Suddenly there came a roar from heaven, almost like a rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were. 3. Tongues like tongues of fire appeared to them, dividing, and resting on each of them, 4. and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, in the way the Spirit gave them power to express themselves. The account opens with reference to Pentecost, a feast that in ancient times marked the conclusion of the harvest, and in more recent times, celebrated the gift of the Law and the making of the covenant on Sinai. Certainly, Luke has grasped above all the religious significance of the feast, so as to make it the background for his narrative: the descent of the Spirit seals the renewal of God's covenant with his people, indeed with all humanity. It is very significant that "all" were present "in the same place". Who these "all" are is not clear: certainly, the apostles, but a reference to women and those who had already joined the movement inaugurated by Jesus is not excluded. In any case, Luke insists on the unanimity that characterized the first Christian community, a

fact not taken for granted if one thinks of the divisions that had arisen in the drama of the passion. To describe the coming of the Spirit, Luke uses the distinctive vocabulary of the theophanies of the Old Testament, namely fire and wind which are characteristic elements of the manifestations of the God of Israel (cf. Ex 3:2-3) and yet, in the narrative of Acts 2 some original aspects emerge that should not go unnoticed. The first concerns the form assumed by the fire, namely that of a "tongue", a term that can indicate both organ and language. Luke seems to play on this double meaning, since the first effect of the action of the Spirit consists precisely in allowing the apostles to speak different languages, thus enabling them to realize an encounter that would otherwise be impossible. **The second aspect** concerns the tension that is created between individuality (the tongues rest on "each" apostle) and totality (they come from the "same" source), so that "the separation of tongues confers a particular identity on each disciple, linked to a gift that is proper to him, but without being separated from the others" (D. Marguerat).

Paul will reflect on this experience, emphasizing that the charisms, in their diversity, if they are truly authentic, must be at the service of ecclesial communion (cf. 1 Cor 12-13). The gift of the Spirit does not correspond, however, as some would have it, to "glossolalia", that is, to ecstatic speech, but rather to the ability to speak "in other languages", thus giving the apostles the possibility of making themselves understood by all. As G. Rossé rightly points out, it is a matter of missionary speech, the expression of a Church that is above all a communicative event accessible to all, no one excluded. The content of these words will be revealed in v. 11, where we read: "...we hear them speaking in our own tongues about the great works of God". This is an important lesson: before dispensing who knows what kind of teachings, the community of believers is first of all called to magnify God's action in the history of salvation.

Second scene: **THE ASTONISHED REACTION OF THE CROWD**



5. Then there lived in Jerusalem observant Jews from every nation under heaven. 6. At the sound, the crowd gathered together and was disturbed, for each one heard them speaking in his own language. 7. They were astonished, and were beside themselves with wonder, saying, "Are not all these who speak Galileans? 8. How is it that each one of us hears in his own language? 9. We are Parthians, Medes, Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10. Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene, Romans living here, 11. Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs, and we hear them speaking in our own languages of the great works of God. 12. All were astonished and perplexed, and asked one another, "What does this mean?" 13. But others mocked them and said, "They have become drunk with sweet wine" (Acts 2:5-13).

After the account of the irruption of the Spirit, Luke goes on to describe the **reaction of the bystanders**, an important reaction because, thanks to it, the narrator can further explain the meaning of the event.

The amazement of the crowd is part of the typical pattern of theophanies in the Old Testament, confirming the extraordinary nature of the event.

The list of peoples in vv. 9-11a seems to follow a circular motion going from north to south and from west to east: in short, it seems to have been composed "ad hoc" to convey to the reader a feeling of universality in reference to the powerful action of the Spirit of God.

The real miracle of Pentecost is that individuals, coming from different cultures, are able to understand the message of the Gospel, without confusion or ambiguity: "the Spirit can transcend every culture, or rather inhabit every culture, in order to make people hear and understand the wonders of God. In other words, the Spirit of Pentecost establishes the Church as a diverse community in which universal communication is a gift" (D. Marguerat). At heart, this is the great mission of the Church: to communicate to humanity, without discrimination, the salvation of God.

The Pentecost narrative describes a situation that in many ways is familiar to us: many people of different languages and cultures gather in the same place. That, the story goes on to say, is the privileged place for the proclamation of the Gospel.

Today we are increasingly frightened by the arrival of foreigners, often on the run, who come to inhabit the same place as us. We fear for our identity. We are afraid that other cultures, and especially other religions, will take over and erase our traditions, traditions that are very often formal, in which almost no one believes anymore and which for this very reason are very weak.

Once upon a time, in order to proclaim the Gospel, some heroically left their home and went to bring the Christian message to other places, sometimes without experience and with little understanding of the language and customs. Today, paradoxically, we no longer need to leave, nor do we need to send chosen and courageous people available for this task. Today the people come to us and this situation is inevitably transformed into an opportunity for evangelization.

We are faced with a great challenge, in which we have all become missionaries without moving from our homes.

On the day of Pentecost, the disciples made themselves understood by those who spoke different languages. They translated the Gospel so that it could be received in other cultures, and found ways to be welcoming and hospitable; perhaps they made themselves understood through ways of living that everyone could understand.

That first evangelization had begun not by sailing the seas, but by staying in Jerusalem and welcoming those who came from afar. Could God be asking us today to return to the origins of that first evangelization?

Personal reflection:

- How do you experience the presence of strangers in your world?
- How do you proclaim the Gospel to those who do not believe?

Concluding prayer

*On the path of love!
Spirit of God,
love that penetrates history and every life,
come, come into us
and fill us with you.
Penetrate what we are,
every tiny space in us,
every dark corner,
every whim,
every thought,
every choice made by self and not by God.
Spirit of God,
love that makes life shine,
come and push us,
beyond ourselves,
beyond our little world... towards God.*





Lorraine and Piet Groenewald have been married for the past 41 years. They have four grown up children and 5 grandchildren. They own and manage the Mohale Rest Retreat Centre, Pretoria. Both Lorraine and Piet are fully trained Ignatian Spiritual Directors. They offer Mohale Rest as a sacred space where people can rest a while, in stillness and in nature in an uninterrupted way to listen to God and respond to Him.

Build Unity - Embrace Diversity

"I can do things you cannot. You can do things I cannot. Together we can do great things." Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Background:

Piet and Lorraine Groenewald married 41 years ago. When they met both of them were Protestant. Lorraine, a Methodist and Piet, a member of the Afrikaans Reformed Church. Before they got married, Piet decided to join the Methodist Church so that, as a couple, they could have unity as he experienced the effects of diversity with his mom in the Reformed Church and his dad in the Apostolic Church, all through their marriage. For Piet at that stage, unity was essential in worship. Lorraine appreciated Piet's decision.

During 1994, Lorraine attended and experienced an Open-Door retreat in the Methodist Church. During that time, it was a weekly two-hour session of Retreat in Daily Life, over a nine-week period, introducing Ignatian Spirituality. In 1995, Piet went on the Open-Door retreat. (With 4 young children they could not do it at the same time, but took it in turns). With our **'hearts on fire'** we began the journey of being trained to facilitate Open-Door retreats by an Anglican Priest. Our new insight and experience together

on the journey, led to quiet mornings, quiet days, and weekend retreats. In 1999, Piet and Lorraine met two young Catholic ladies whose **"hearts were also on fire,"** and who had just started to offer Prayer Guide training in Johannesburg. They made the Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life at the same time; Piet with Fr. Andrew Norton and Lorraine with Annemarie Paulin-Campbell, a Catholic Ignatian lay woman. Committing themselves to undertake this spiritual journey meant that the two of them together, would for years to come, engage in training in Spiritual Direction, experiencing the beauty and gifts of being involved in Ecumenical settings, leading and receiving various retreats. In 2019, after a long period of discernment, Lorraine was accepted into the Catholic Church while Piet decided that he would support her but chose to stay in the Methodist Church. Their relationship with each other and with God has had varied experiences of loving and serving God as laity, in their unity as well as in their diversity.

- *Becoming aware of how much our hearts yearn for unity in a diverse and often divided world, we invite you to the following Lectio Divina prayer experience. The questions for reflection that we pose are meant to lead you gently into the areas of your heart, mind, soul, and body that lacks unity. This lack of unity could be anything from differences in religious backgrounds, culture, gender, economic and social differences or just simply being uniquely different... and we all know from our own experiences that differences, although a source of strength, can also cause stress and tensions.*

Lectio Divina Prayer: Set aside 30-40 minutes for your prayer time. Intentionally plan and set aside the time for this reflection. Choose the place where you want to pray and show up for your time with God. Please make the necessary arrangements to ensure that there will be no interruptions during this time.

As you start this prayer time: Take some time to bring your whole self into this sacred prayer space. Become aware of any tension present in your body. As you breathe in imagine that all the goodness of God is flowing into those tense places and as you breathe out exhale and let go of all tension that you might be holding, even sigh deeply as you exhale. Do not change the rhythm of your own breathing, just notice it, and continue for a minute or two inhaling the goodness of God... exhaling any tensions... Now become aware of God's presence within you; become aware of God beholding you with so much love. Feel God's loving gaze on you, right here, right now, just as you are.

Reading: Read the word of God, listen carefully to Scripture — without hurry or intellectual strain. You may wish to alternate between the two readings suggested below... maybe use different ones for different days.

- ***Psalm 133:1-3 - The Blessings of UNITY***

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! It is like fragrant ointment poured on the head, running down upon the beard, running down upon the beard of Aaron, and flowing on the collar of his robes. It is like the dew of Hermon falling upon the mountains of Zion. For there the LORD has bestowed his blessing, life for evermore.

- ***John 17: 21-23 - The Disciples and the Church to Come***

May they all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I in you, may they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. "The glory that you have given me I have given to them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, and thus the world may know that you have sent me and that you have loved them even as you have loved me.

Read the passage again 1-2 times. Wait quietly for the Holy Spirit to bring God's Word to life. Then you pause on the portion of the passage that you're drawn to; the word, phrase, or image that God lays on your heart from this reading.

Meditation: Reflect and ponder its deeper meaning. Gently repeat to yourself a phrase from the Scripture, turning it over and over in your thoughts and feelings to renew your mind.

- *How is God speaking into areas of your life where you need to embrace differences and become more aware of the beautiful fragrance of diversity?*
- *Where do you experience the fragrant oil of anointing and the beneficial dew of unity?*

Prayer: Speak heart to heart with God. Respond to the words, sharing your feelings, confess your sins or struggles in the areas where more understanding and embracing of differences are needed. Ask God what you need: what specific situation in your life needs healing of division today? Is Jesus asking of you to live in the bonds of peace and unity that may express your union with Christ?

Contemplation: Rest quietly in God's loving arms. No words are necessary.

End with praying out loud, Our Father...

Reflective journal space: You might want to listen to Margaret Rizza song, "It is the Spirit" (or any other song that comes to mind), as you end this prayer time and settle with a cup of tea/coffee to journal and ponder even more on your prayer time.

Journal the words, phrases or images from the Scripture passages that stood out for you.

- How did you feel during the prayer time? What happened as you had a heart-to-heart conversation with God the Father, or Jesus? What specific situation in your life does this reflection speak to? What do you need to ask for from God as you choose to embrace diversity and be completely one with others, so the world may know...
- What is God's personal invitation to you from the Scripture? You can write down what the Lord may be saying to you or compose a prayer of thanks. Please feel free to use this prayer for a few more days.



Fr Lancy Naveen OFM is a Capuchin Priest from Sri Lanka. He is a Teacher in Biblical/Scripture studies and is presently the assistant Formator at Padre Pio Formation House, Pallansena, Negombo. He gives preached retreats and outside the Capuchin Formation he also teaches scripture to novices of other Congregations.

VOCATION AND MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

Sunday, 23 October, World Mission Sunday 2022

Opening Prayer:

Lord, you call us by name.

Help us to be confident in our own unique identity.

Help us to find opportunities to develop our specific gifts and talents.

Enable us to hear and recognize the call of Jesus in our lives, and those of others.

Help us to find appropriate and life-giving ways to spread your Good News

in a way which draws others to you and helps them experience your radical and extraordinary love.

Amen

Read either of the passages of scripture below:

Mark 3:13-15

Jesus went up on a mountain side and called to Him those He wanted, and they came to Him. He appointed twelve that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons.

John 15:14-15

You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know His master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

Reflection:

To have a deep relationship with Jesus is to follow Him and by doing so consecrate oneself to Him. First of all, consecrated life is a life of humility, we imitate Jesus who is humble and poor.

As Paul writes in the letter to the Philippians 2: 6-8

“Who, though He was in the form of God did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross.”

Therefore, humility is expressed as emptying oneself and renouncing all we have. God, who is the creator of the whole universe humbled Himself, that is emptied Himself of His glory and honor as God and became man. Thus, the primary condition of humility is renunciation.



As we read Mk 10;²¹

“Jesus looking at Him, loved Him and said, “You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.”

By renouncing worldly goods, we have treasure in heaven. For human beings it is an impossible task but when we have the attitude necessary for renouncing our own desires, plans, ideologies and attachment to earthly possessions combined with help from our all-powerful God we can achieve this. When we have the spirit of letting go, we are really humble. It was with this spirit of renunciation that Jesus called His Apostles to follow Him.

Points for Sharing: Transparency and openness:

To follow Jesus is to be transparent and to be open. Jesus was a genuine person especially in all His relationships and dealings with others.

What makes us transparent and open people?

- As we follow Jesus the focus is how can we become a source of grace for others, with regard to love, forgiveness and endurance?
- How can we touch the lives of others?
- How can we allow the Holy Spirit to work through us?

In humility the grace of God is at work within us.

Conclusion:

Jesus, who became all things to all people, knew well that the Father was always with Him. Let us who are called to follow Jesus always be aware of His presence in our lives. May He guide and direct us as we reach out to serve all whom we meet.

Amen

For further reading link into Pope Francis' Message for World Mission Sunday, 23 October, 2022
<https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/missions/documents/20220106-giornata-missionaria.html>



Sr Rosa Rico is the provincial leader of the Holy Cross Sisters in the Latin American Province and Vice Province of Argentina. She accompanies the sisters and the laity through their various ministries to keep alive the vision and mission of the Congregation. She has a keen interest in the wholistic formation of each sister and strives to lead and guide the province in the direction she hears God calling her.

INTO YOUR HANDS O LORD ...

in communion and on the journey with Mother Bernarda

Dear Mother Bernarda, as we celebrate the 200th anniversary of your birth, we recognise not only the great task you undertook at such a young age, especially taking into account the complex historical, social and ecclesial reality of the time, but we recognise especially, that you were a docile instrument in the hands of God who, with his great love and providence accompanied all your actions to develop the mission of the Institute.

Today, looking back, we can identify various stages on your personal journey, beginning in your family. Then, at a very young age you entered the world of work to help your family. Always restless and anchored in the spiritual life, you were open to and listened for the voice of God in the situations that arose.

Your personal experience became more and more defined when you made the decision to respond to God's call. With confidence you walked a totally unknown path, trusting in His Divine Providence. The different places of formation gave you the necessary elements and clarity to promote the charism and mission of the Holy Cross Congregation, Menzingen, and you were faithful to the initial objective of the Institute, in spite of the difficulties that arose along the way. Today, we recognise your great courage and dedication, honouring the formation of the whole person especially of women and the girl child.

Today, I would like to invite each sister and lay person, who form part of this great Holy Cross family, to live this moment of prayer which I have entitled:

‘Alone with Mother Bernarda’

Step 1. To begin this moment of reflection on the 200th anniversary of the birth of our Foundress, I suggest preparing the setting for prayer, (Bible, candle, photo of Mother Bernarda, instrumental music, songs, instruments, according to the custom of each community).

Begin with instrumental music to prepare the mind, heart, and spirit and, especially to quieten our bodies (to invite us to leave everything in God's hands).

"God wants only our deliverance - the external success is His"

Mother Bernarda

Step 2. If you think it is appropriate, you can sing a song of your choice.

Step 3. Biblical text: Letter of St. James 1: 2-4; 12

Brethren, count yourselves fortunate when you have to endure all kinds of trials. This testing of faith develops the ability to endure, and the ability to endure must become perfect, if we are to be perfect complete, lacking in nothing. Happy are the people who patiently endure the test, for after being tested, they will receive the crown of life which the Lord promised to those who love Him.
The Word of the Lord.

Step 4. After the reading, invite a moment of silence... (instrumental music).

Step 5. Reflection on the biblical text.

- Looking at my personal experience, how do I live the difficult moments or situations (trials) of my life, from the point of view of faith?

Step 6. Input.

All of us who have read the writings on the life of Mother Bernarda are very clear about what she did with great faith and love in favour of the emerging Institute, and also about the suffering she experienced; living with great fortitude and hope in the different difficult situations (trials). Mother Bernarda herself gives a complete and heartfelt account of all that happened in the letter she wrote to Bishop Lachat, on 10 June 1863, a few months before her death.

Today we can rightly paraphrase verse 12 of the letter of the Apostle James:

“Happy ‘the woman...Bernarda’ who patiently endured the trials, because, after the hard trials, she will receive the crown of life that the Lord promised to those who love Him.”

Step 7. To conclude this moment of reflection, pray the prayer to Mother Bernarda. It can also be a song.

Peace and Goodness among all!

The following is the letter written by Mother Bernarda to Bishop Lachat, 10 June 1863. Bishop Lachat had been elected bishop of the diocese of Basel on 26 February, 1863. His episcopal ordination took place on 30 November, 1863, Mother Bernarda died on 13 December of the same year.

Your Eminence:

Please be good enough to read patiently these lines which a person who has been ill for a long time (...) addresses to you on behalf of the Institute which you have had the painful honour of directing for nearly twenty years, and on which I would like to draw your special favour before I die.

I hasten, Monsignor, before my night comes, to tell you the things that concern me so much, and to ask you, as a future shepherd, to care for the lambs that have been entrusted to you (...).

After describing the origins and the situation of the Institute: the number of sisters (130), its organisation, the cantons where the schools are distributed, and the financial situation, sufficient to avoid having to live on collections, Mother Bernarda writes:

I am very sorry that God has not given me the same satisfaction in the spiritual field. To explain this to you, I must refer to three distinguished persons. And if my words seem to you too free and hurtful in the face of the precepts of charity and gratitude, I beg you to excuse a sick person, who has no other concern in this world than to have found in her Bishop, before her death, a paternal heart for the spiritual daughters, whom perhaps very soon she will be obliged to leave for ever.

The bonds which united our Institute from the beginning, and afterwards, with the Reverend Father Theodosius were bonds of filial love and gratitude. He did not have jurisdiction and did not want to have it because of his personal relations with the Capuchin Order. We, however, continued to consult him, submitting to his suggestions and considering him as a Spiritual Father, with all the powers. But finally, when, driven by the force of his temperament and his fervour, he undertook a series of dangerous works, undertakings which no longer allowed him to concern himself fully with our interests (...) we were obliged to appeal to our bishop (...).

You understand that these events cooled our relations with Father Theodosius. He considered our behaviour as ingratitude and obstinacy; a large part of the public, even some of our sisters, without being able to go into the matter in depth, condemned us as obstinate and ungrateful people. (...)

Fr. Röllin was our support at this critical moment. (...) The interest he had always shown in us, the great sacrifices he had made for our good, the satisfaction he had so often expressed in his reports to the bishop about our institutions, our conduct, and especially his intervention in the difficulties with Father Theodosius: all that gave us the right to place all our hopes in him. But it soon seemed to us that God wanted to force us to put our trust in Him alone. A very noticeable change began to take place in our Superior in his way of acting and seeing things. At our meetings, he reproached us most strongly for our indifference, our disobedience, our lack of mortification, our lack of fervour, and so on. He found errors in our Constitutions. The powers of the Superior seemed to him to be very limited (...).

The sisters, to whom I did not dare and did not want to explain the causes of these divergences, began to be uneasy and distrustful, not knowing what to do or whom to trust; and the perfect unity, which had reigned among us for so many years, was disturbed for the second time.

To make matters worse, we received as Vicar of our Superior, Monsignor Paul Birker, former Abbot of St. Boniface in Munich. The fame, the eloquence and the holiness of this priest reassured me about our future, until suddenly I saw him faithfully following in the footsteps of the Superior. He considered our Constitutions so negative that he spent several weeks explaining their deficiencies to a large number of sisters. (...)

I considered it my duty to warn these two gentlemen that there would be confusion in our Congregation. That the necessary changes in the Rule were up to the Bishop and the Superiors, as well as to propose them to the sisters.

Then Monsignor Birker was appointed Abbot at Disentis; he moved away, but the disturbance, restlessness and despondency of a large number of our sisters had increased, and the short visit of Monsignor Charles was too weak a remedy to reassure us.

I realise, Monsignor, in what an unpleasant situation I find myself with these lines. Three distinguished men have done for our Institute what they thought best; and now I come to you to accuse them. After this, who will want to deal with us? And should I not find the main fault in myself and in the sisters who assist me?

Ah, if so, if the principles I considered it my duty to follow and defend during my government are false; if the means I have used to achieve those ends have been wrong; if my self-love has blinded me to the defects of my character, ah, in that case, I am ready to accept all the sufferings of my last days as a just punishment for the evil I have done. I only want the Institute not to suffer and not to perish. May it find, through you and in you, Monsignor the remedies it needs. That is the supplication which I raise up to heaven and which I also address, with full and complete confidence to your paternal heart.

In September or October, the election of a Superior and an assistant for the next six years will take place. Those will be days of unrest and of the greatest consequences for our house, whether I am dead or not, until then. Ah! if it were possible for Your Excellency to take care of our affairs (...) If my sisters, after having experienced a detailed and impartial visitation, could hear from the mouth of their Pastor, words of peace and justice (...) Ah, I am sure that the good will which still animates the majority of my dear sisters, would be strengthened and consolidated!

Your Eminence, it is three days since I began this letter - Your most humble servant and daughter in Jesus Christ.

Sister M. Bernarda Heimgartner

PART THREE

Walking in the footsteps of Mother Bernarda



‘COURAGE IS A GRACE UNDER PRESSURE...’

‘The best protection any woman can have is courage.’

Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902)

Being deeply loved by Christ, Mother Bernarda our Foundress was filled with the gift of fortitude. As young sisters of the Holy Cross, this is a very special quality we admire in the person of Mother Bernarda. She took courage as her shield, against the many challenges she had to face with regard to following the inspiration she received from the Lord. According to the **‘needs of the time’**, she realised the will of God through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit and she bravely stood up for what she heard God say.

Mother Bernarda was brave in the face of adversity and sufferings.



Mother Bernarda teaches us that the failures and struggles we encounter in life are not the end, but what really counts is our courage to continue with our spiritual and human journey in spite of many limitations. Her spirit of courage, which alone came from the Lord, her beloved spouse, helped her to withstand and to conquer all things, in spite of her illness of body and mind. It was her courage that gave her strength physically, spiritually and mentally. Mother Bernarda experienced courage as grace under pressure.

As we follow Christ in the footsteps of Mother Bernarda, we have decided to carry out any mission entrusted to us with more zeal and enthusiasm. With great fortitude, imitating the example of our Foundress we will face the difficulties ahead and

stand up for our faith and values always bearing in mind that Courage is the ability to live fearlessly in the face of despair. Her courage helps us to accept challenges and we respond to them with the hope that we live our lives for the purpose of a great achievement, namely to do God's will. Through reflecting on her example, we have the confidence and zeal necessary to keep moving forward and to appreciate what we have.

With the confidence we gained from courage, we stand up whenever we fall, because we know that falling down isn't failure in itself, but staying down when we fall is failure. Like Mother Bernarda, we live our lives modelled on the strength and courage of our Lord Jesus who was rejected, insulted and whipped more than a hundred times. He is our spouse who carried the symbol of public shame and an instrument of His death on His shoulders, the Cross. His courage tells us that even if we are stripped and our weaknesses exposed for all to see, we will still stand with great stamina because God does not abandon His own who trust in Him. Through the help of the Holy Spirit and through the intercession of Mother Bernarda, we will be able to respond to the hardships in our lives and those we will meet in the lives of other people whom we will encounter in our ministries.

Courage

Presented by Sisters Anjila Central India, Sr Celina North India and Sr Anastasia Southern Africa.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

“...It is in your hands, to make a better world for all who live in it.”

Nelson Mandela

Life is all about making a difference and we as Holy Cross Sisters, are in a position right now to make a positive difference in life. We ask ourselves; is it necessary to make a difference? Or is it useful to be a different person in society?

Well, here are some of our thoughts. Let us begin with our Beloved Master Jesus.

Did Jesus make a difference? The holy Scripture gives us ample examples in which we find Jesus making huge differences to the society in which He lived right from His birth in the manger to present day.

- Jesus was different in His dealings with sinners. He forgave them and enabled them to have a different outlook on life (John-8:11)
- Jesus made a difference by healing people and restoring life to its fullness (Luke-8:54)
- Jesus made a difference by not judging people as others did and thereby restored their dignity (John-4:8)

Being a different person for the good of the society was not easy for Jesus. To be a different person Jesus had to face very many consequences. He even had to die for being different. In other words, the society put Jesus to death for being different especially in His teachings.

Let us glance through the life story of our Foundress Mother Bernarda, who is the iconic example of a great personality who brought a notable change to the society in which she lived. She selected different ways and means to bring change in the lives of people, especially to the girls who would become future mothers and members of the society. It wasn't easy for her to swim against the tide. For being different in the society she had to undergo many trials and hardships and as we all know Fr. Theodosius had to flee and Mother Bernarda had to experience silent martyrdom.



Having thought about Jesus our Master and our Founders who inspire us to go forward let us challenge ourselves to see the realities of the society in which we live. It is not enough that we just live among the people, we should make our presence as consecrated women a reality which has a positive influence on all whom we meet. As for us it's high time for the religious to make a difference right from our communities to the society at large.

Lift your own life higher and pull all of life along with you.

Actions speak louder than words, God wants your hearts not only your words. The Lord does not call the qualified, he qualifies those whom He calls, and we have been called to give witness to the world. Yes... The difference is not to start big but to begin with the small things that we are least bothered about at times. Gradually we will see how by making a difference in small things we actually make a difference in big things. Hence, we can change the world and make it a better place.



“...It is in your hands, to make a better world for all who live in it.” Nelson Mandela

Presented by: Sisters Beatrix Eita Southern Africa, Benedicta Devadhas South India, Canista Alfred Sri Lanka and Christy Central India.

BELIEVE

"If you believe you will see the glory of God. (Jn 11:40)

BELIEVING is an act of our total confidence in God whom we have met personally. It is also an experience that involves a process where it is important to open our hearts and minds and our whole being, that is to say, to have inner readiness to grow and to find fulfilment in our lives. It is an experience that breaks through exclusive human limitations and opens us to life in God.

Believing is not self-evident to anyone, and even less so in today's world and in the modern culture around us, in which to have faith is to expose ourselves to criticism, humiliation, marginalisation, rejection, etc. And those who say they have no faith are often far from having clarity in their convictions, ideals and values, not only with regard to faith, but even with regard to the attitudes that make it possible to believe.



This is why it is important to ask oneself about the true meaning of the act of believing, instead of living in a routine that does not question. To better understand this let's look at the example of Mother Bernarda. She was characterised by her great ability to listen to God, who called her to collaborate with His work and to begin a path of charismatic spirituality at the service of the Church in the Institute of the "Sisters of the Holy Cross". This attitude of listening is born from a heart that BELIEVES in love, service, dedication, and above all, a heart which BELIEVES in God the kind and merciful Father. He repeatedly expresses these sentiments in the phrase "the Good God will guide everything for our good as it pleases him, and He will surely take care of us". This is the God in whom Mother Bernarda BELIEVED, a God who is Father, loving, provident, kind, merciful, of whom she feels she

is a daughter, called to be part of His work. The Institute is the work of God and she feels that she is a woman fully called to collaborate with this work. This is Mother Bernarda's act of faith.

This act of faith transforms her and her experience of God forms her attitudes as an educator and founding mother. It is worth quoting here the text of Sr Finbarr, published in the LIFE magazine, 2020: "The founding sisters of Menzingen accepted the existence of a God who somehow liberated them. God's action enlightened them to carry out their mission. It was God who made the difference; He gave them authority to carry out His work, as they understood it. This faith in God transformed them."

The commitment Mother Bernarda made when she responded to God's call led her to face adverse situations, problems and conflicts inherent to the mission to which she was called. Collaborating with the work of God was not an easy and light work. It implied dedication, perseverance, objectivity, lucidity, trust and much more on the part of Mother Bernarda. It is with these convictions that she committed herself to educating and promoting the lives of children and young people. This way of understanding her mission led her to go through many adversities with a spirit of strength and total trust in her Father God. With this same spirit we are called to connect in following Jesus. With the same Jesus in whom Mother Bernarda believed, a human Jesus, capable of God's work of salvation for humanity. An ordinary person, Son of God, who calls us to be part of this mission and for which it is important to take off our masks, to discover our originality, our true identity, since we often have false images of God and of ourselves. Mother Bernarda was very original in her devotion. To BELIEVE is also to see the truth of each one and try to free ourselves from falsehood, fears and attachments, in order to find a more personal and closer God who invites us to grow and mature in faith. Only in this way will we be able to follow in His footsteps and achieve our dreams.

'Stand Up'

Reflecting on the phrase 'Stand Up' in connection with the life of Mother Bernarda, we have realized that we are called to support and defend the vulnerable especially the girl child. In this regard there is a call not to bow down or give in or even to be persuaded to do anything that is contrary to our beliefs because we accept this as God's will for us. As young religious in this fast-changing world, we hear a collective call to be soldiers of Christ through the Congregation of the Holy Cross Sisters who walk in the footsteps of Mother Bernarda. We need to always remind ourselves as baptized Christians that we have signed up in the army of the Lord.

Like Mother Bernarda, as young women in our time, we have become aware of the presence of Christ in our daily endeavors. We have become

aware that we are not alone but we always trust in God and allow Him to work through us. We are convinced that by trusting in God we are empowered to accomplish great things and to 'Stand Up' with courage and hope when faced with adversities.

Reflecting more deeply on the life of Mother Bernarda, we have realized that we should contemplate on the beginning of our Congregation and the early days, to equip ourselves with a deeper knowledge of our Congregation. This can help us to 'Stand Up' and be a sign of hope and a transforming presence through our way of life.

As young sisters we are called to uphold the dignity of every person, to stand in solidarity with the disadvantaged especially women and children and to respond to the needs of the time by participating in the prophetic mission of Christ.



‘BE THE CHANGE’

The phrase ‘**BE THE CHANGE**’ challenges us as we move forward in our religious life in following Christ. These words help us to think differently, creatively and to live our lives with full conviction. Each of us can leave a mark on this world by making our lives meaningful. We realize that change begins from within each of us. If we could change our limitations, poor attitudes and behaviours and witness to true Gospel values then a ripple effect would spread out to others with whom we live and work and eventually the wider society would be impacted and then the world would be a better place. We see this process of change as an act of Divine Mystery, of supreme nature, a wonderful thing and it is the source of our happiness. This desire for change is what we see in the person of Mother Bernarda, who wished to bring about changes in the lives of the people and in the society in which she lived. She did not wait for anyone to change but she courageously took initiative, and went into society and brought change in the lives of the people, especially in the lives of young women, who were to become mothers in the future. We are also aware that change means taking risks and it is never easy to change, especially when it means radical change. Yet it urges us to grow in patience and humility and calls us to depend on God.

When we go through the process of change, we realize that it is a painful experience. The process of change could be likened to a tree. If the tree wants to remain as it is, and if it does not allow the woodcutter to cut, then it remains a tree, but when it gives in to being cut and shaped it could become a beautiful piece of furniture.

Similarly, a seed, if it remains a seed and refuses to go into the ground and die it cannot be transformed into a plant, a flower or fruit and we will not see its full beauty. We cannot see its growth, nor enjoy its fragrance or taste its fruit. If any material says: ‘I will not change’ then all are deprived of its full potential.



As Mother Bernarda inspires us to be people who accept change to bring about life in ourselves and in others then we also undergo the process of change with the help of God’s providence. We place our trust in the LORD believing we too will reach our full potential and offer life to others.



The best **LEADERS** the world has ever known are the reformers who were accountable and responsible for change in their own lives. Therefore, let us change beginning with ourselves first **IN LOVE, IN FORGIVENESS, IN COMPASSION, IN UNDERSTANDING, AND KINDNESS**. Then through us the community, the society, our countries and eventually the **WORLD** may **CHANGE**.

Presented by: Sisters Maria John Central India; Sathiya Helan South India and
Diyansili Pushparajah Sri Lanka.

BEAR WITNESS

While words can be very powerful and change the hearts of many, we tend to be more skeptical of those who preach the truth and do not live it out. Those who live wedded to the truth

and clearly show it in their actions are much more persuasive. We intuitively listen to Christians who practice what they preach. That is Christian witness. Down through the centuries people have been bearing witness to Jesus. Today we are called to do the same.

How do we bear witness?

Saints Paul and Barnabas went around and preached the gospel though they had not seen Jesus, but they came to know Jesus through other disciples as was the case specifically with St. Paul. Paul had the experience on the way to Damascus. This experience made Paul the greatest witness of God that the world had ever seen or heard.

Today's Examples

People who have shown this witness are Father Theodosius and Mother Bernarda. To witness to Christ, they chose the medium of educating young girls and workers in the factories and through their efforts brought others closer to Christ, making them the beloved children of God.



Living witnesses

Every day the Church is showing this living witness. Let us look at our Holy

Father Pope Francis. It is amazing to see Him constantly fulfilling the mission of God. He is a living witness of what Jesus had asked His disciples to do. The same invitation is to each one of us as Holy Cross Sisters to witness to Christ by living the Paschal Mystery in the world through our Charism.

Holy Cross Sisters as Witnesses

Through the Charism of our Congregation Holy Cross, we are bearing witness to Jesus through our teaching, preaching and healing ministries.

❖ We ask ourselves, “Is it enough that we bear witness collectively as a Congregation or as a province?”

We feel it is our duty and responsibility to bear witness as individuals rather than as a group. To be a witness to Christ is to show the world that we belong to Christ through our words, deeds, actions and attitudes. By witnessing to Jesus, we become ambassadors in the world, effectively making the Lord present to everyone we meet, in everything we do and through every word we speak. We say join us as we witness to Christ by living a value-based gospel life.

Presented by

Sisters Sheela Central India; Nishani Amalathas Sri Lanka and Premchina Sangma North India.

DREAM – A SIGN OF GOD’S PRESENCE

“You have to dream before your dreams can come true” Dr APJ Abdul Kalam.

To make our dreams come true, we Junior Sisters of Holy Cross, dream about our actions and thoughts according to our life situations and by the inspiration of the Spirit.

Jesus our Master came to this world to be a sign of God’s unconditional love and our Foundress Mother Bernarda, following in the footprints of Christ was reading the signs of the time and responding to that in a unique way.

“Great dreams of great dreamers are always transcended”. APJ Abdul Kalam

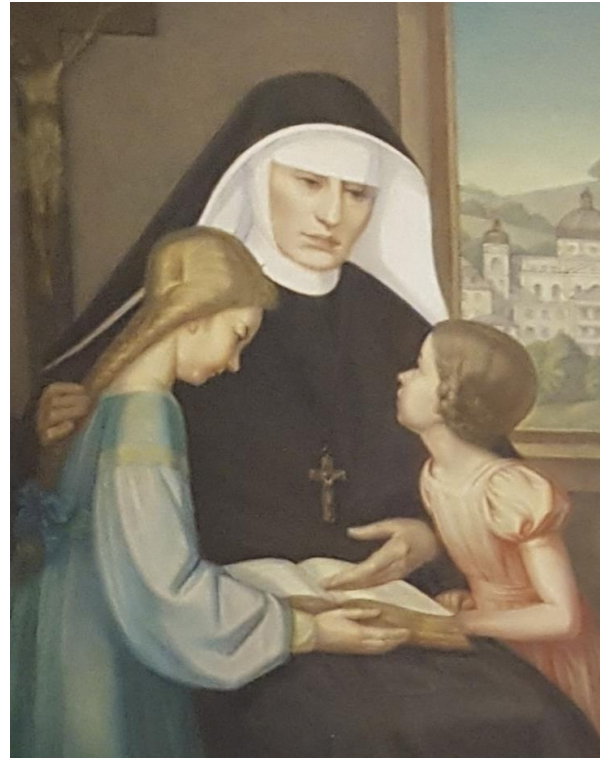
Mother Bernarda was deeply connected with the heavenly Father that led her to be successful in her life’s mission. She had a vision of society which was fulfilled through her various missions. Her inspirations are what inspire and encourage us to do more for the people of God.

Dreams are a sign of presence. They challenge us to be aware of the signs of the time and respond decisively; and thus, contribute effectively towards the betterment of the world.

As leaders in the Church, we are invited not only to have an eye on the horizon but to see beyond it and work for a better tomorrow which is built on gospel values of justice, truth, peace, love and forgiveness, etc.

Let us then through our love, mercy, compassion, commitment and prayer,

*‘Be the change
we want to see in the world’, Mahatma Gandhi*



Live
your
dream

We must make our lives a sign of God’s presence to the youth who are greatly influenced by technology, to the children who are growing without values, to the sick who are not cared for, to the families who are broken and to the society where there is no peace.

Presented by Sisters Shanthi Jeevarathinam South India, Priyanka Central Indian & Nostar Musinachirevo Southern Africa.

How courage inspires our dreams as we walk together in the

Spirituality of Mother Bernarda...

Reflecting on the life of Mother Bernarda, we see in her a deep faith. Her courage was like a shield which enabled her to be a powerful religious leader. She was confident to face dangers and the challenges of her time. The source of this courage was her love for God. Her great trust in God motivated her to go forward and continue the mission entrusted to her. The courage she had, helped her to fulfil the plan of God for our Congregation. This courage that she received through the Holy Spirit, strengthened her, to discern what pleased only God whom she called the Creator of her life. Often there were times in her life when she became driven to deepen her intimate relationship with God. She was able to empower women and witness to the life of Jesus by becoming a transforming presence in standing for the truth and for justice in her society and our Congregation.

As junior sisters following her spirituality and currently facing the issues and the crisis against religious life, we are also the shield of courage, confident enough to witness to Jesus Christ through our life and mission, standing for justice and truth especially for the less privileged and marginalized. Thus, we follow our Lord Jesus Christ radically.

This word **COURAGE** has been an awakening call for us to respond to today's challenges with the same courage that Mother Bernarda had. We are called to bear witness to the mystery of the Cross by bringing hope of new life in the face of the uncertainties. As young sisters we have learnt to stand up for the injustices in our communities and workplaces because we want to make a difference and transform our society. We have not only followed in the footsteps of Mother Bernarda but also of Fr Theodosius our Founder. We have been courageous to encourage our fellow sisters to love prayer and trust in the Lord because this is what we have received from our senior sisters.

“Courage is the mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear or difficulty.”¹⁴



Danger, fear and difficulty are what we have often gone through in our communities and ministry and the Lord has been on our side to conquer. The most important thing we have learnt, through our lives, is to love ourselves for who we are. We have had the courage to take some risks to bring about transformation in our ministry, thus we have accomplished what we would not have done, had we not been courageous. We have been courageous to challenge those with whom we journey together without hesitation, but calmly, to make our world a better place where justice and love are at the bases of all.

We have been courageous to say, 'No' to what does not give us the life and joy that we are called to have in our relationship with Christ and humanity. We have had the courage to say, 'Thank you Lord' for the experiences of life which have not left us unchanged people of God. We have never surrendered ourselves to our own discretion and will, but we have had the courage to trust in the Lord. As young spouses of Christ we have experienced His grace. We are called to be a transforming presence.

As Mahatma Gandhi expresses it, “... ***in a gentle way, you can shake the world.***”

Presented by: Sisters Sylvia Sekei Lesotho, Tengre Momin North India and Maria Jenifer Amburose SIP

¹⁴ Merriam-Webster Dictionary,

CLT messages from Menzingen

Looking At you...
Looking at the
footsteps of man
life that you,
M. Bernadette,
left in the world
Waiting God deeply
comes in us
the desire to
to walk, not
because it
easy but
BECAUSE IT'S WORTH IT! Don't!

Life is a beautiful
Journey in the Sea of
God's merciful love.
Let us take the
courageous steps to
take up the challenge
to move forward
with open eyes
to see, an ear
to listen, a
hand to reach
out, a word
to console....
may Jesus
walk with us
Sr Fatima

The journey of thousand miles
begin with a single step.
We never know which footsteps
will bring blessings
to many.
So let us keep on
walking....
a path guided
by God
making choices
that allow us
to see everything
through the eyes
of God
Be blessed
and loved!
Sr Rose Paul

...we please
you into is needed (br 4:5)
The articles to be read
invite us to have a
more global view of
reality from our own
experiences and to
open our eyes to
possible personal
changes that
will surely
influence
society.
cheer up...
Sr. Matilde

MENZINGEN 2022
As we walk in
the footsteps of
mother Bernadette
in following Christ,
may we be
renewed with
HOPE, deeper
FAITH and
LOVING
service.
God
Bless.
SR Bernadette



"I have come that they may have life..." John 10:10