SSpSWW E-Newsletter

Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit

Congregational E-Newsletter **September 2021** **No. 178**

Exploring the Scriptures in South Africa

The SVD/SSpS started the two-year "Exploring the Scriptures Together" programme in 2018 with the vision of spreading the Divine Word. At the end they received their certificates.

Classes are held at the end of a week, once a month, at the Ave Maria Pastoral Centre in the Diocese of Tzaneen, Limpopo Province, South Africa. Aside from teaching the Bible, we include the Faith sharing Syllabus and teach the importance of the Liturgy.

The diocese of Tzaneen is a frontier mission with few Catholics. Of the 14 existing parishes, several are located in remote areas with many substations. Each parish sends some representatives who then animate their basic groups. The programme consists of the Old Testament, New Testament with special emphasis on the four Gospels and the letters of St Paul. We use films, video clips, short stories and life experiences to convey the message of Scripture to them.

After the second wave of Covid-19, we partially opened the pastoral center and called participants to complete the Course. On June 13 we had the joy of giving the certificate of completion to 14 people. Some of them could not come to receive the certificate due to funerals in their homes and one of them passed away due to covid-19.

For me it was more of sharing and reflecting together than just teaching.

The participants in their evaluation said that the course was a spiritual Journey and not just for gaining intellectual knowledge. Many of them narrated that they learned how to pray, how to share the word of God and how to find comfort in the WORD.

Sr. Marita Kurian SSpS - Region of Botswana and South Africa

Sisters celebrate Independence Day in Kalimantan

For the Sisters, celebrating Indonesia's Independence Day in the midst of the pandemic, strengthens the spirit of commitment to the homeland and the virtue of resilience in the face of challenges.

Amidst the pandemic situation of COVID-19 that continues to increase, we follow health protocols and, as good citizens who love their homeland, we SSpS Sisters of Kalimatan Provincial Community, celebrated the 76th anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Indonesia on August 17, 2021.

We opened the activities with morning worship and celebration of the Eucharist of Thanksgiving. We continued with a karaoke competition, singing the Indonesian national anthem, and some traditional games.

Our Provincial, Sr. Albina Ifi, said that at the age of 76, we humans experience the decline of physical strength, but the Indonesian nation will always be young because of the young generation that is always born and growing. Our task is to strengthen unity and integrity to achieve a strong Indonesia, to be creative and lovers of peace, harmony and total giving to God.

We are grateful for the gift of independence from foreign colonialism, for the freedom to rebuild and reorganize the various sectors of life: economy, infrastructure development, education, health, defense and security, agriculture and others.

We closed the celebration with a prayer, with 76 lighted candles, for the healing of the Indonesian nation and the whole world from the coronavirus outbreak. This celebration expressed our respect and appreciation for our predecessors, the warriors of the nation, and invited us to be strong women warriors.

Sr. Imelda Irna, SSpS - Kalimatan Province

Food for Street Dwellers in Philippines South

The Provincial House Community in Cebu City has resumed the feeding program for street people. This outreach activity was stopped at the outset of the pandemic lockdowns in March 2020. A year after the pandemic started, more and more people came to the convent gate asking for food. They were street dwellers who were stranded in the city and lost their jobs because of the closure of many business establishments and construction projects.

Responding to the situation, in January 2021, the community started to organize food distribution. Once a week, on Fridays, the Sisters take turns by basic groups (with the help of some lay house staff) to prepare a hot meal and distribute it at the gate during lunch time. While maintaining health protocols, some Sisters would carry on conversations with the people while the food is being distributed. Funding for the project comes from donations and community savings.

Two elderly Sisters said that it gives them joy, peace and contentment to be able to contribute, even in a limited way, to help alleviate the sufferings brought about by poverty and aggravated by the ongoing global health crisis. They see the weekly outreach as a way to continue the proclamation of the Good News of God's love to the needy. It is a concrete experience of "giving and receiving in love".

Sr. Mary Joy Quizan, SSpS - Philippines South

"It gives joy, peace and contentment to be able to contribute to help alleviate the sufferings brought about by poverty and aggravated by the ongoing global health crisis".

Indigenous people renew their catholic faith

In Argentina Misiones, a group of the indigenous Mbya Guarani people from the village of Yacutinga asked the SSpS Sisters to return and help them renew their faith. They received the Sacrament of Baptism and Marriage.

After the first announcement of the Gospel, a group of natives had opted for the Catholic religion and received the sacraments. Later, there was a long recess, before the local community asked for the return of the Missionary Sisters to accompany them more closely. They expressed the decision and desire to renew their catholic faith.

It happened after 22 years since their last reception of the sacraments in the indigenous village of Yacutinga at Sagrada Familia Chapel, where Srs. Berta Schrammeier, Manuela Ramos and Ana Gertrudis Benítez, had accompanied the community in the area of Health Care and Education.

Thus, we began with catechism, and happily on July 31st, 23 people between 12 and 78 years old, received baptism and two couples validated their marriage with the Sacrament of Matrimony. The external preparation was very significant, which gave the spiritual unction perceived in the joy of waiting for the moment of grace by the Mbya-Guarani families and the catholic Church.

The grace and joy of the spirit continues, because soon another group of children will be baptized; more young people and adults will be receiving Holy Communion and Confirmation. We pray that the Holy Spirit continue to work in the Heart of the Mbya - Guarani people.

Sr. Ana Gertrudis Benítez SSpS, Argentina Misiones

MaZ – Germany: Walking New Paths

For eight young women and two men, this September is a very special month: They will be strengthened and prepared through various seminars,before they will begin their voluntary service as temporary missionaries (MaZ).

Although they cannot travel to India or to the Philippines due to the Corona pandemic, the MaZ Coordination Team has been looking for and finding new ways to enable the young people to go abroad nonetheless.

"Through our volunteer service Mission Beyond Borders (MBB), we had already built up a very good network in Europe and are happy that our MaZ can look forward to go to wonderful places where they will work," says MaZ Coordinator Magdalena Beier. "Together with the SSpS Euro Council and the Sisters on the ground in the countries, we look forward with success where to accommodate the young people".

All the MaZ will live, pray and work in the communities of the Sisters in Roman, Romania; Madrid, Spain; Dublin, Ireland; Lisbon, Portugal and in Athens, Greece. Two other MaZ will leave for Chile at the end of September. If it doesn't work out because of the pandemic, the MaZ coordination have a plan B.

In the end, it's worth pondering on what a young volunteer formulated last year after completing her voluntary service in Germany: "To help out as a MaZ and discover new worlds, I don't have to fly halfway around the globe. Sometimes it's enough to take a step outside your front door, put your time and heart into it, and walk through life with your eyes open."

Steffi Mager, Communication Coordinator of Germany

The Temporary Missionary Programme (MaZ) offers open-minded people from the age of 18 the opportunity to work for a year as a volunteer in a world church project of a religious community, thereby broadening their horizons, immersing themselves in a new culture and gaining new experiences of faith. The motto of the programme is "live with, pray with, work with".

Austrian Province bids farewell to Wöllersdorf

At our last Provincial Chapter in 2019, it was decided to close the two communities of Wöllersdorf and Sterzing in order to be able to open a new small community in Bixen, South Tirol.

The Immaculate Convent, from which we Sisters are now leaving, had an important meaning for the Austrian Province for almost 100 years, especially during the heavy times of war and diseases. Bought in 1924 as a rest house for the Sisters, a growing collaboration with the parish also developed. Later, an outpatient home nursing, a kindergarten, as well as a cooking and sewing school were managed by the Sisters.

In 1939 the kindergarten and sewing schools were closed by the National Socialists. In 1940, all the Sisters had to leave the Provincial House of St. Koloman, from where the aspirants and postulants came. After the end of the war there was a feeding program for many poor children.

In August 1991 the novice master, Sr. Maria Theresia Hörnemann and the first 5 novices came. They began the Western European Novitiate.

Some Sisters from the Austrian Provincial House pay a farewell visit to the community in Wöllersdorf, which is due to leave by the end of September. Below, the Immaculate Convent and the group of novices from 1993.

The Balkan War broke out. In July 1992, 7 women and 8 children came who had fled from Yugoslavia. They stayed with us for three years.

Pastoral care for children and young people, deepening of the faith, accompaniment, possibility for relaxation and silence, as well as Eucharistic adoration have been offered in the last years. A group of people has joined the "Missionary Holy Spirit Association". They will keep alive our missionary spirituality here.

We are very grateful for the good collaboration and for every help that the Sisters have received over the years.

Sr. Andrea Maria Maier, SSpS – Province of Austria

Solidarity with threatened indigenous group in Brazil

Sr. Stela Maris Martins works for the cause of indigenous peoples and shares the plight of an indigenous group that was the victim of an environmental crime that forced them to abandon their territory.

The indigenous Pataxó Hã-Hã-Hãe group was directly affected by the collapse of the 'Vale' mining company's dam in 2019 in Brumadinho, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil. The Paraopeba River, on which they depended for survival, was totally contaminated by the mining company's tailings.

They were forced to leave their territory and move to the outskirts of the capital Belo Horizonte. Living in conditions of vulnerability, insecurity and precariousness, at least 23 indigenous people were infected by COVID-19.

In solidarity with them, members of the Association of Japanese-Brazilian Culture of Minas Gerais performed a heroic act by donating 70% of a 36-hectare plot of land. This land has been invaded by land grabbers since 2010 who refuse to leave and have been burning the forest, cutting down trees and threatening the safety of the group.

The State has shown itself absent. The Federal Police has so far failed to provide security for the indigenous people. Fundamental rights such as access to water and electricity are also not guaranteed.

On the other hand, the indigenous people have sought to revitalize the area by taking care of the existing trees and planting new ones in the devastated places. Several concerned individuals and many groups from civil society have also formed a network of solidarity with the indigenous people, helping them meet their basic needs like building houses and fight for their rights.

Sr. Stela Maris Martins, SpS – Province Brazil North

On the left, the environmental damage after the disaster. On the right, the hope of building their houses and starting a new life, thanks to the solidarity of those who donated them the land.

Generalate News

Launching of the Platform Laudato Si

On October 4th will be the launching of the Platform of Action Laudato Si. As a sign of communion with this important initiative of the Vatican's Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral Human Development (DPIHD), and with all the people who mobilize in favor of the care of our planet, we have produced a video highlighting our commitment as SSpS.

In this video, Sisters Maria Theresia Hornermann and Maria Cristina Avalos show how the Congregation is deeply committed to this cause, once we have assumed the Communion with Creation as one of the Congregational Directions in the last General Chapter. The video also brings a song composed by Sr. Gerci Lopes de Souza (Brazil South Province) about the cry of the Earth.

The video is available in the Congregational YouTube Channel: **https://youtu.be/GrgdAb_r1Tw** and in the website **https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/about/** there are further information about the seven goals to measure the Integral Ecology in the spirit of Laudato Si'.

Election Process in the Provinces and Regions

All provinces and regions are in the process of electing their leadership teams, which implies an intense process of discernment with assemblies and voting according to the methods of each one.

Also, the CLT is preparing for this moment of significant importance for the whole Congregation, which is the renewal of its leadership and which will influence the composition of the 15th General Chapter that should take place next January.

For this reason, beginning in the second half of September, all the Councilors will be in Rome. Even Sr. Mary John who was on holiday with her family in India and could not return because of the coronavirus pandemic, was able to come.

Arrival of Sr. Teresa Sri Wahyuni

Sr. Teresa Sri Wahyuni, from the Province of Java, Indonesia, arrived at the Generalate on August 17. She will be part of the Congregational International Core Team (ICT) for the "Arnold Janssen Spirituality Network" (AJSN) that will give continuity to the mission of the previous Arnold Janssen Spirituality Center (AJSC).

Sr. Maria Cristina Avalos (Argentina), Fr. Peter Dusicka (Slovakia) and Fr. Dennis Manzana (Philippines) are also part of the ICT. They hope to be able to come together for team building and planning sessions before the end of this year.

Pearls of our Past

Encounter with Mother Teresa

Mother Teresa of Calcutta, responding to the invitation of our Mother General, Aloysine Roscop (1960-1973) visited the participants of the VII SSpS General Chapter. This meeting took place in Rome, on 02 Nov. 1973. She said, among other things:

"I think, Sisters, that we are all trying to do the same: to bring Christ's love into today's world. The world is completely ruined by so much suffering, so much hate, so much misfortune. You, who are a specialty dedicated to the Holy Spirit, you are light and you must become more and more Lamp and God's love in the world".

Leaving the Chapter, she pleaded again: "And do not forget YEMEN". Let's talk to God about it because: "The game is worth it, as long as we don't know what the end will be." (Foucault M.)

Sr Krystyna Szweda, SSpS - Historical Archive, Rome

Read more: **https://www.worldssps.org/the-pearls-from-our-past/**

Vivat Deus Website is collecting Prayers

The editorial team of the Vivat Deus Spirituality website is looking for prayers, celebrations and meditations related to our spirituality and missionary life for publication.

All members of our congregations and lay people related to us are invited to contribute by sending texts of their own authorship to **editors@vivatdeus.org**. The team will select those that are suitable for publication and include them in the annual programme of the website.

Contribute, visit, read, subscribe and disseminate:

vivatdeus.org

SSpS Worldwide E-Newsletter

Thanks to all the provinces and regions which contributed
to the SSpSWW E-Newsletter 178.
For the next issue, kindly send articles to Sr. Ana Elídia Neves
at sspsww@worldssps.org before 25 September 2021.

Thank you!

SSpSWW Team

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