SSpSWW E-Newsletter
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Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit
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Formation: Essential to our Global Mission

This month, the SSpSWW, in its 200th edition, highlights Formation as an essential condition for a meaningful missionary presence in our global mission.

According to the trend of recent decades, the largest number of vocations comes from Indonesia. Here are the latest statistics according to the stages of formation that gives a very concrete idea of our current reality.

Pre-novitiate: We have 111 young women in the pre-novitiate of which 90 are in Asia/Pacific (53 in Indonesia, 14 in India, 13 in the Philippines, 8 in East Timor and 2 in Far East). In Africa we have 11 (from Ghana, Angola, Mozambique and Zambia). In Europe we have 7 (from Germany, Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine) and in Panam, 3 in Argentina and one in Paraguay.

Novitiate: with the exception of countries where there are many vocations, novitiates generally take place by continent. At the moment we have 78 novices, 56 of whom are in Asia Pacific, 13 in Africa, 6 in Panam and 3 in Europe.

Juniorate: this is a period of approximately 6 years that helps the sisters reach the human and spiritual maturity necessary to take perpetual vows. At this stage, we have 357 sisters, 300 of whom are in Asia/Pacific, 32 in Africa, 20 in Panam and 5 in Europe.

Trends and Prospects for SSpS Formation

Sr. Mariana Camezzana is the reference General Councilor for formation together with Sr. Mikaelin Bupu. Here is a brief summary of the prospects for formation in the future of our global mission.

Vocations today

Vocations follow the trend of the times. In the past, consecrated religious life was one of the few opportunities for women to dedicate themselves to the mission; today, there is no shortage of opportunities. Another important factor in the reduction of vocations is the decrease in the number of children.

Along with most of the women's congregations, we also feel this reduction, but our focus is not on attracting as many young women as possible, but on offering quality formation for those who really feel called to this kind of life.

Formation Communities

Formation communities are fundamental in our congregation, because it is the community that forms in everyday life and relationships. Therefore, it is not enough to have a directress for each stage, we need a community.

Formators' Training

As a congregation, we are emphasizing the preparation of formators by opening new courses for the main languages, such as Bahasa Indonesia, Spanish-Portuguese, in addition to English, which has already been held for several years in the Philippines.

Temporary Vows and CCME

In the juniorate, we want the sisters to be imbued with the power of our charism and spirituality. We should encourage more CCME (Cross-Cultural Mission Experience) in view of missionary destinations.

Professional studies could be done in the country of destination to avoid the frustration of having to redo them or not being able to work professionally. What we want is that the sisters feel fulfilled in whichever country in the world they are sent to.

Ongoing Formation

We must also put a lot of effort into ongoing formation in order to give greater quality to the missionary communities and offer concrete proposals, especially to the leaders.

SSpSW interview with Sr. Mariana Camezzana, SSpS - CLT member, Rome

God's Calling & Vocational Animation

Vocational Animation Promotion with the Youth. Bellow, Sr. Nirmala Tigga, the formator, Sibonile (pre-novice) and Weronica (aspirant).

To get new vocation in Zambian reality is not easy. It needs patience and prayers.

Since 2018 when Zambia was established as a Region, the Sisters are promoting the call to religious life and visiting many young women. Many of them attended programs "Come and See" and "Come and Stay" trying to find their vocation.

Presently we have one aspirant and the pre-novice Sibonile Perpetua Mpofu from Zimbabwe, the first fruit of this vocation promotion. She started aspirancy in 2021 and is preparing herself for novitiate in Ghana.

Recently she composed a song and shares her experience:

"My journey in search of religious life has been long. It has been marked by moments of uncertainty and challenges, yet when I found the SSpS it marked a time of new beginning. I immediately felt a sense of joy, love, freedom, and peace.

I felt welcomed in this home and my desire to be a religious missionary more than doubled. I began to sing in my heart grateful to God, to the Congregation and to the individual SSpS sisters for their warmth and love.

Moved by many things I have written a song as expression of my joy. The joy of being welcomed in this great family, a true instrument of bringing Christ to the world. I'm just a pre-novice and I have been greatly loved by the Holy Triune God.

Inspired by the Congregation's motto "May the Holy Triune God Live in Our Hearts and in the Hearts of All People", I composed this song of love and submission to the Congregation in the mission of evangelization, because I am touched by the Trinitarian Spirituality of the Congregation."

Sibonile getting ready to record her song.

To hear the song:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ctgG2slP-JwSr

Malgorzata M. Baczewska, SSpS – Region of Zambia

Deep Experience of God in the Noviciate

"A journey towards God, towards themselves, the SSpS, community identity and future family".

This is how Sr. Svitlana Matsyuk, the novices' directress, defined this year's European Novitiate experience, in Rome.

This September the novices will write to the CLT and the PLT of their provinces asking for permission for the first vows. If they receive admission, after Christmas they will return to their countries to profess the first vows.

For Sr. Svitlana the novitiate "has been an intensive experience of prayer, reflection, life and faith sharing, learning with different sessions and also a quite intensive self-knowledge learning and community-built experience."

Also the novices share something about their experiences:

A time of many changes

Liudmyla Kmet
26 years old
From Ukraine

To be honest, there are a lot of changes during novitiate. Starting with the change of country, language, the people around you and the rhythm of life.

In the novitiate, we spend a lot of time in prayer and building relationships with God and the community.

My understanding of the congregation, activities and mission of the sisters has expanded since we have an international community in Rome. Also, meeting the sisters from the tertiate groups has shown the realities of ministry and the even greater beauty of our congregation.

Desire to serve others

Anna Staszak
29 Years old
Poland

The biggest impact from the novitiate to me is the experience of community, true friendship and sisterhood. This atmosphere enables me to be fully myself, to know myself and others more and more, our strengths as well as limitations.

The experience of living the vocation authentically in an intercultural community has opened up new perspectives and a desire to serve others at the ends of the earth.

The sessions increased not only my knowledge of consecrated life but also helped me to discern my vocation and my desire to follow this path.

New perspectives of future

Mariia Liuba
28 years old
Ukraine

The relationship with God and developing sensitivity to His voice in the noise of the world, will allow me to bring this experience to people, communities, and countries to which I'll be sent by the Holy Spirit.

The novitiate forms an openness to the new, the unknown, and teaches us to adapt to new circumstances. After the novitiate, I am returning to my country, Ukraine, and this experience of deepening my relationship with God will help me to recognize His presence in the circumstances of war and to bring hope to those who are suffering.

Vocational Retreat with Sisters in Japan

I was so happy and grateful to have met young people who had the courage to step into the missionary life and choose to spend their time with God.

Today, Japan is entering the era of a super-aging society, and birth rates finally falling below 800,000 in 2022. The smaller the number of young people is, even less are there young Catholics!

Our vocation promotion activities are also limited under these circumstances. However, we have been trying to create occasions where young people can gather regularly, share their faith, and experience a part of religious life through catechesis and visits in parishes.

After many years of COVID-19 limitation, we could hold a Vocation retreat in January 2023. Surprisingly, five young women from high school students to working adults in their early 20s, participated in it! One of them joined after seeing our Instagram. Others were those who in some way have contacts with sisters in their parishes.

We started by connecting the Bible with their daily lives through Biblio Drama. They adapted very quickly, and it was very meaningful. In the evening, they joined a prayer meeting with Taize songs with other outsiders. They had never met each other before, yet since all were close in age, they became good friends by the second day and said they would definitely participate again if there is such a program again.

I was so happy and grateful to have met young people who had the courage to step into the missionary life and choose to spend their time with God.

Sr. Marie Christina, Nishio SSpS – Province of Japan

Year of Passion for Mission

Learning about the mission and challenges faced by our sisters around the world brings us closer together and increases our communion and solidarity.

Visit our website and discover what each of our provinces and regions are doing.

Joining us on this journey and let's grow in our passion for mission: www.worldssps.org

Tracing the Roots of our Congregation

The European Postulant Meeting in Oies: our international group continue to grow in the same spirit through personal and spiritual sharings, music and games.

Six Postulants from Poland, Ukraine, Slovakia and Germany and their formators met in July 2023 for getting to know the life of one of the saints of our founding generation: Father Joseph Freinademetz. For this they spent one week at his birthplace, Oies, a small village in the wonderful mountains of Italy in the midst of the Dolomites.

Fr. Franz and Br. Michael (SVD) gave us a warm welcome in Fr. Joseph‘s birthhouse, which is more than 300 years old. In the same place they told us the story of Freinademetz‘ childhood in beautiful details.

Besides learning about the first China Missionary of our Congregational Family, our international group continued to grow in the same spirit through personal and spiritual sharings, music and games. It was a special delight that Sr. Svitlana, the novitiate formator joined us so that we got the chance of getting to know each other.

Walking together in the mountains we enjoyed very much the magnificent views from Holy Cross Chapel and our prayer in front of the majestic rock called Kreuzkofl. Through Fr. Janko from Slovakia, who had lived in Oies for years and accompanied our group, we were shown beautiful places in the area, celebrated Mass in nature and got in touch with relatives of Fr. Joseph Freinademetz who still live in Gadertal and invited us for handmade Italian pizza.

Another highlight of our meeting was the trip to Brixen where Fr. Joseph lived in his youth. Br. Michael brought us to different stations of Fr. Freinademetz‘ life: the cathedral, the seminary and the Capuchin church where Fr. Joseph Freinademetz and Fr. Arnold Janssen met for the first time.

With his inspiring way of explaining, Brother Michael brought us close to the life and the personality of our saint. Afterwards our SSpS-community in Brixen welcomed us in their place and we enjoyed coffee, homemade cake and the hearty sharing with our dear sisters.

Grateful for the enriching time and inspired by the various encounters in this special place, we are looking forward to the next steps in our formation and to our next meeting in Slovakia in November.

Sent by Sr. Katharina Stritzke, SSpS – Province of Germany

Panam: a Common Novitiate for Latin America

The Panam Novitiate in San Lorenzo, Paraguay, is for all SSpS provinces and regions in Latin America. The current novice directress is Sr. Maria Cristina Krupeck, from Brazil South. In addition to the three novices: María Dolores Bernal Vera (from Argentina), Natasha Sousa de Oliveira and Rosecleia Vasco dos Santos (from Brazil South), there is also a first-year novice, Maira Milde (from Argentina Misiones), who is doing her experience in Argentina Sur, and the Paraguayan postulant Natalia María Salinas from Paraguay.

As part of their second year of novitiate, the novices did a five-month community experience, each in a different location and returned very excited.

Sharing experiences of community and mission

Maria Dolores went to Chile where she could meet several communities. *"I learned many things from the community. Each one is so different, so unique and so loved by God as I am, with our successes and mistakes... countries, culture, language, ages, traditions and ways of doing things".*

Natasha had her experience in Brazil with the sisters in a maternity hospital, helping out in the neonatal ward, the ICU and visiting patients. *"I feel part of this beautiful mission to take care of the most precious good, which is life. From birth to our last breath, we are called to bring hope, compassion and mercy to so many people".*

Rosecleia also went to Brazil and had her experience in the community of a school, helping the teacher with the two-year-olds and in moments of spirituality with the students. *"It was amazing and exciting. I lived every moment of community life, feeling more and more the love of God through personal and community prayer".*

Natália also shared her gratitude for *"every adventure, so many laughs, love, advice, patience, learning, jokes, frustrations and sorrows shared.... "I treasure everything, every detail, with much affection. Now that I am starting my postulancy, I hope to know more about this beautiful Arnoldus family, which has already captivated my heart".* Before that she worked for a year with the elderly sisters in the provincial house, in Asunción.

Sr. Luisa Lipat, SSpS – Communication Coordinator of Paraguay Province

WYD: Young People Meet the Living God

The XXXVII World Youth Day held in Lisbon, Portugal, from August 1 to 6, welcomed more than 1.5 million people. Pope Francis encouraged the youth to seek Jesus and not to be afraid. Our sisters tell us what it was like.

World Youth Day brought enriching experiences for all of us SSpS Sisters in Portugal. We all took part in volunteer work, went on pilgrimage with the young people, served as ministers of communion and welcomed them at the Vocation Fair.

It is very beautiful to see the communion of so many young people from around the world celebrating their faith, and above all a very personal encounter with the Lord, who loves us all without distinction.

In the 'City of Joy' (a meeting place for young people), two areas stood out and offered real experiences of joy for the lives of the young pilgrims: the 'Vocation Fair' and the 'Field of Forgiveness'.

In our Arnoldine Family tent, the young pilgrims found an atmosphere of welcome, sharing and animation. They were able to learn about the charism and spirituality of our three religious' families with around ten thousand members spread across five continents.

Many young people passed by our tent and we were impressed by their faith and their desire to know more about where we are and what we do.

I was invited to share my personal testimony and also talk a little about the Arnoldus family. It was at the Cinema of St. George. A large crowd attended and there were 10 questions from the young people, boys and girls. It was an experience of joy, sharing and gratitude.

Sr. Maria Mendes, SSpS - Spain - Portugal Region

Communication's Team Meet Face-to-Face

The 2 SSpS Brazilian Provinces work together on Communication and have been successful with the unification of the social media.

The words body, presence, and connection took on new meaning during the first meeting of the SSpS Brazil communication´s team, held from 19 to 22 May at the Holy Spirit Convent in Ponta Grossa-PR. For the members of this working group, consolidated in 2022, this was the first opportunity to be together without relying on online meeting environments.

Brother Paulo Eugênio de Lima, an SVD Missionary worked with the group on the theory of the media and made a historical resumé of the publications of the congregations of the Arnoldus Family, highlighting the role of St Arnold Janssen in the production and dissemination of missionary activity in the world. 'And the Word became media', was the guiding topic of his presentation.

The SSpS missionary, Sister Ana Elidia Neves, emphasized that the use of communication tools improves missionary expression, playing an important role in the life of the Congregation throughout the world.

The Communication Team of the 2 provinces with the participation of Sisters, Lay volunteers and Lay collaborators.

The Strategic Plan

The team reviewed the SSpS Brazil Strategic Communication Plan to evaluate the final, unifying document formulated and based on the original plans of the Brazil South and Brazil North provinces.

In the team's assessment, the unification of the social media accounts and the SSpS Blog were seen as positive steps in the strategic planning.

The presence and participation of the 3 volunteers who write monthly for the SSpS Blog was also appreciated by all.

Watch the video in this link:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZxqpmUICOQ&t=92s

Sr. Zélia Cordeiro, SSpS - Communication Coordinator of Brazil Provinces

SSpSWW Newsletter reaches 200 issues

In these 33 years of our Newsletter's existence, we have seen the impact of major technological changes and how they have influenced its format, content and publication.

To celebrate the 200th issue of the SSpSWW (SSpS Worldwide Newsletter), let's thank all the sisters who, since its launching in June 1990, have dedicated their time and talents to sharing the life and mission of our sisters around the world.

SSpSWW has been produced in the congregational official languages with translations into several others in an average of 5 editions a year. The first editor was Sister Christel Daun. Then came Sisters Anita Maria Gutierrez, Simone Petra Hanel, Teresita Gerstner, Maria Theresia Ossege, Maria Petra Schüttenkopf, Maria Elizabeth Ello, Maria Lourdes Santos, Gini George and, currently, Ana Elídia Neves.

Although it began as a newsletter for internal use, from 2021 SSpSWW became a monthly publication open to mission companions, friends, relatives and other interested people.

Among other transformations, the SSpSWW has gone from black and white print with drawings to color with photos, and from print to electronic via email (Mailchimp) and social media. The printed version is still sent for translation, to elderly sisters and where Internet access is difficult.

In addition to the editors, we would like to thank the translators, proofreaders, those who did the layout and various other services, and everyone who sent in articles, photos and information. You are all part of a great network which, over these 33 years, has made it possible for the SSpSWW to be a register of the history and apostolate of our communities, provinces and regions.

Earlier SSpS publications

Previously we had several newsletters, in German, with annual publications such as:

- **Heilig-Geist-Glöcklein** (1916 to 1939),
- **Il Piccolo Osservatore Romano** (1956 to 1961),
- **Römische Nachrichten** (1962 to 1968).

The **SSpS Information Service** (1969 to 1980) and **SSpS Information / Communication** (1980 to 1987) were published in English and German with 5 to 6 annual editions.

The SSpSWW came after a gap of a few years and started being published in English, Germain, Spanish and Idonesian. Nowadays it is distributed in English and Spanish and the different provinces translate it to their own languages.

Embracing Challenges for the Congo Mission

Today we get to know Sr. Kristina Wola from Indonesia: a vibrant and creative missionary, always ready to begin something new.

Born on June 27, 1971, in Indonesia, Sr. Kristina Wolla, SSpS, joined the SSpS in Flores in 1992, and made her first profession in 1995. As a junior sister, she taught and engaged in youth ministry before attending nursing school in Surabaya from 1997 to 2002.

In 2003, she took her final vows and was assigned a mission in Timor Leste. There she served as a nurse at a clinic, caring for tuberculosis and leprosy patients. She then collaborated with Timor Leste's NGO and government to assist those affected by HIV/AIDS and establishing a REST HOME and care center for HIV/AIDS patients.

She has a fondness for fresh beginnings. Many sisters are well aware of her dynamic and innovative nature. They can attest to her constant readiness for any mission. Her joy as an SSpS missionary stems from the multitude of destinations, alongside supportive sisters who consistently aid, uplift, and push her to enhance her service for God by serving others. Her aspiration revolves around increasing her usefulness to those around her.

When news of the Congo mission's start circulated, she turned to God for direction. Through daily prayers at Mother Josepha and Maria Helena's chapel, during her Tertiate in Steyl, she expressed her readiness, ultimately surrendering to God’s will. She did not have any bigger expectation, she is ready to be there and share her knowledge as a nurse and to attend to those in need.

In relation to Congo, her current challenge lies in mastering the French language. She consistently dedicates time each day to online learning and converse with acquaintances from France. She diligently practices despite the challenges of pronunciation and comprehension. Occasionally, she reminds herself, "your mission awaits; your language skills will improve there, so don't worry!"

Being a pioneer for the Congo mission, she expresses gratitude to both God and our congregation for their belief and trust in her participation. Her prayer is for divine assistance in fostering collaboration and mutual understanding among her fellow pioneers.

Euro Assembly in Slovakia

Sr. Mikaelin Bupu, representing the CLT, Sr. Francisca Florentin Garcete, for the Generalate Community, Sr. Regina George as General Treasurer and Sr. Svitlana Matsyuk for formation, met with all the SSpS leaders of the provinces and regions of Europe. One of the topics was finances, in preparation for the future, when Europe will be only one SSpS province.

The meeting was held in Slovakia from August 18 to 23.

General Visitations in Bolivia and Indonesia

Sr. Miriam Altenhofen with the Sisters in Bolívia during their 4th Regional Chapter (18 to 20 of August), and in front of the SSpS Regional House, in Cochabamba.

Sr. Kreti Sanhueza and Sr. Jana Pavla Tothová at St. Gabriel Community, Kewapante – Maumere, Flores East - Indonesia.

Sr. Mariana Camezzana and Sr. Tressa Sebastian in Flores West - Indonesia, during ceremony of welcome.

Facts & Photos

These are some of the novices who are preparing to give their lives to God and to the mission throughout our Congregation. Let's accompany them with our prayers.

Asia Pacific

Facts & Photos

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SSpS Worldwide E-Newsletter

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Thanks to all the Sisters, Provinces and Regions which contributed to the SSpSWW E-Newsletter No. 200. For the next issues, kindly send articles to sspsww@worldssps.org