



# SSpSW E-Newsletter

*Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit*

**Congregational Newsletter**

**July – August 2024**

**No. 207**

## *Compassion Leads Us to the Heartbeats of the World*

The SSpS missionary presence is a call to witness the compassionate love of God and Jesus, which humanizes, restores, and includes all people while protecting creation. We share our life and mission with everyone, especially those in the peripheries.

Sr. Joan Chittister reminds us, "Compassion takes us beyond ourselves to the beating pulse of the world," urging us to extend our hearts and hands to the suffering and forgotten. Meister Eckhart states, "The best name for God is compassion."

This guides us to recognize and alleviate the struggles of those in need, reflecting God's love and mercy in every act of kindness and solidarity. We aim to see the world with compassionate eyes, fostering inclusion and participation.

By listening to the pain of people and Mother Earth, we strive to create healing relationships, promoting a humanizing movement that supports dignity, transformation, resilience, and sustainability in our common home.



## Empowering Vulnerable Women in India East

*The SSpS supports vulnerable women in Odisha through empowerment programs, leadership training, and helping them set up sustainable livelihood programs.*

The poor are always with us, even in a hi-tech city like Bhubaneswar, the capital of Odisha, India. Alongside luxury apartments, there are dingy slums where daily wage workers struggle to survive. The SSpS India East Province, traditionally focused on rural areas, has started working with domestic female workers in the metropolitan city. These women, an unorganized and vulnerable labor force, face challenges such as unscheduled work hours, domestic violence, debt, poor living conditions, and the burden of supporting extended families.

Our initiatives among them have been progressive. Over time, we've identified various issues and implemented new plans. We support them with empowerment initiatives, awareness seminars, leadership training, and tuition for their children. Recently, we discovered widows and physically weaker women unable to do hard labor. Thus, we planned income-generating activities, mainly helping them set up petty shops. These small-scale shops sell groceries, cosmetics, clothing, and other daily-use commodities. Initially, the Sisters assist with purchasing goods and finding suitable locations. Deserving women receive loans to sustain their businesses, creating a rotating economy that keeps them active and hopeful.

The stories of these beneficiaries are heart-wrenching. Widowed at an early age, they've managed with meager incomes for decades, doing various jobs to survive. The consumer-driven economy has pushed them to seek other income sources. Running a petty shop doesn't guarantee an easy life, but it makes their multi-tasking more resourceful and challenges them to think creatively and become competent businesswomen.

*Sr. Sophia Maryanayagam, SSpS - Province of India East*



*One of the women in the program sewing dresses to support the family.*



*Sr. Sophia (far right) with the women learning income generating programs.*

# Transforming Lives: Aiding Distressed Women in Austria

## *The mission with Solwodi offers vital support to women and children facing adversity in Vienna.*

Sr. Maria Notburga Reichegger dedicated more than 30 years as a nurse at Vienna-Speising Orthopedic Hospital and 10 years caring for elderly sisters at St. Koloman, Stockerau. She now provides vital support to women in need at Solwodi (Solidarity with Women in Distress) in Vienna, Austria. Founded in 1985 in Kenya, Solwodi has expanded to Germany, Romania, and Austria, uniting six women congregations, including the SSpS.

Sr. Maria Notburga says "I discovered Solwodi Austria at an event and felt compelled to join. Solwodi offers swift, compassionate aid to women exiting human trafficking, ensuring support for as short or long as necessary."

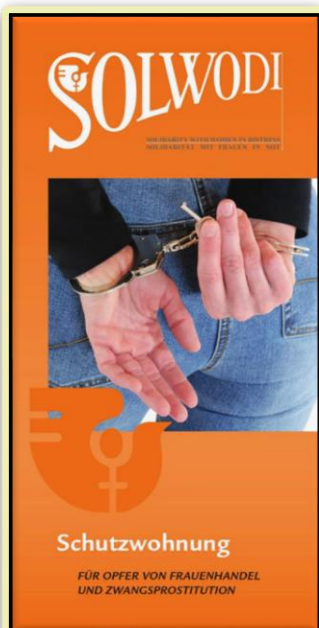
Nine women and two children from Hungary, China, Brazil, and Tunisia now reside in a confidential location. At daytime, they receive guidance from social workers, while at night, volunteers oversee them. Sr. Maria Notburga contributes five shifts monthly, offering assistance, particularly for the children.



*Sr. Maria Notburga interacts with women at Solwodi center for women in distress.*



*Sr. Magdalena Eichinger (far left) with the members of Solwodi, Austria.*



Communication relies on translation apps as the women learn German, fostering easier interactions over time. The children, showing remarkable progress, reflect the stability and care they receive. Despite their traumas, Sr. Maria Notburga witnesses their resilience and spiritual yearnings, such as one woman requesting holy water for her child.

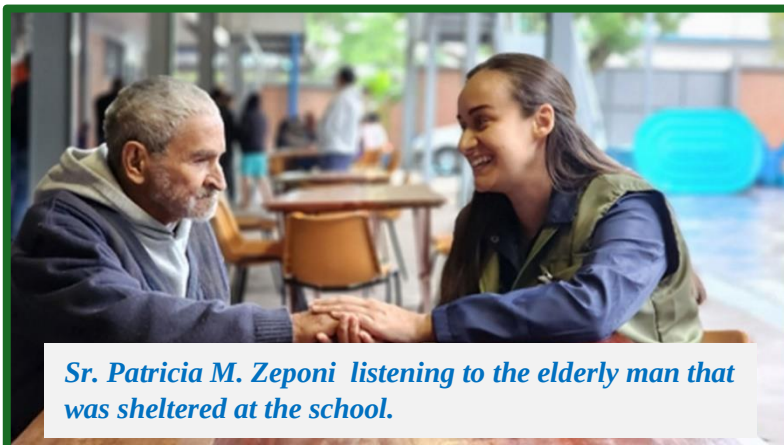
Sr. Maria Notburga finds solace in witnessing their journeys, reinforcing her belief in God's boundless compassion for all. "God is much bigger than he fits in my head. He has ways for everyone, for every single one. Let my soul magnify the Lord."

*Sr. Christa Petra Ahrer, SSpS  
Province of Austria*

# School Shelters Flood Survivors in Brazil

*The SSpS mission launched a campaign to rebuild homes for families and brought hope to the victims.*

Since April 27, 2024, Rio Grande do Sul, a southern part of Brazil, has been suffering from a rare combination of climatic factors that have caused a long period of heavy rains. This combination included a mass of warm air located in the southeast and central west of Brazil that blocked the movement of a cold front in the south of the country. Additionally, two corridors of humidity, from the Pacific Ocean due to El Niño, and from the Amazon, boosted the rainfall in Rio Grande do Sul.



*Sr. Patricia M. Zeponi listening to the elderly man that was sheltered at the school.*



*Sr. Roseclea V. dos Santos sorting out donations of clothes for the people.*



*Sr. Maria Sônia Muller carrying donations of water.*

In Canoas, a city in Rio Grande do Sul, the Mother Josefa Educational Center, which cares for almost a hundred children, was completely flooded. The four Sisters who live there had to be rescued by boat. From May 4 to 18, the sports gymnasium at Colégio Espírito Santo became a shelter for flood survivors. The school accommodated 192 people at the height of the calamity. Many volunteers organized donations of food, clothing, linen, medicines, etc.

Amid the destruction, solidarity stood out. The SSpS and SVD communities in Brazil carried out various actions. The SSpS Brazil Provinces (Stella Matutine and Divine Wisdom) launched the Compassion for Rio Grande Campaign. This partnership and collaboration with many other donation initiatives continue to support the affected families, and the community is uniting to rebuild and move forward, with the hope for better days.

*Marcos Vinícius Merker  
Journalist at Colégio Espírito Santo in Canoas-RS,  
member of the SSpS Brazil Communications Team*

# Mission Journey to End Human Trafficking

*Sr. Fransiska reflects on her experiences at the Second Talitha Kum International General Assembly, highlighting the urgent fight against human trafficking and inspiring global compassion.*



"Journeying Together to End Human Trafficking: Compassion in Action for Transformation" was the theme of the Second Talitha Kum International General Assembly, held in Sacrofano, Rome, Italy, from May 18 to 24, 2024. It was participated by 200 delegates from 90 countries including members from men and women congregations, laity, young people, and survivors.



Sr. Fransiska Imakulata shares her experience during the assembly: "I am deeply grateful for the extraordinary opportunity to attend the international meeting representing the SSps and Indonesia. As a religious missionary, I feel a calling to listen to the cries for help from those who suffer due to human trafficking, sexual violence, domestic abuse, and discrimination. I am invited to

immerse myself in their reality and fight alongside them.

Through my work with the Volunteer Team for Humanity (TRUKF), I know that compassion in action demands sacrifice and self-denial. God instills the grace of sacrifice and love, and I feel like an instrument of His mission. Sharing experiences with people from various countries and listening to speakers provided new insights and a better understanding of the challenges faced by those fighting human trafficking. I was encouraged to reflect deeply on the roots of human trafficking, such as gender inequality and climate change.

I learned to find concrete ways to empower survivors, ensuring they do not experience the same trauma again. Helping them requires everyone to work together, and I must continuously learn to see God's will in every decision and action. I believe God is always on the side of those who fight for justice and truth because He is the source of love, justice, and truth. This belief strengthens me in the journey alongside those striving for healing, justice, and truth."

*Sr. Fransiska Imakulata, SSps  
Province of Flores East, Indonesia*

## Until All Are Free

***International Justice Mission (IJM) and the SSpS are partners in protecting the vulnerable. Ms. Mary Girlie Glen Tupas, an IJM representative, was a resource person in the Talitha Kum Assembly.***

IJM protects people living in poverty from violence. They are uniquely vulnerable because local justice systems are not equipped to protect them. Every day, many are at risk of brutal violence such as trafficking and slavery, violence against women and children, and police abuse of power. These are the forms of violence that IJM focused on across 16 countries since it was founded in 1997.



The organization networks with government, civil society, and churches to rescue victims, restore survivors to safety and strength, prosecute traffickers and abusers, and repair justice systems to protect the most vulnerable.

In 2015, the SSpS partnered with IJM Philippines to open the Survivor Center, the first post-rescue sanctuary in Luzon where newly-rescued victims of sex trafficking, including children and women, are brought for safety, comfort, and care.

For nearly a decade, SSpS and IJM have worked closely to fight human trafficking and exploitation. They are active members of the Philippine Interfaith Movement Against Human Trafficking (PIMAHT) and Talitha Kum Philippines, both dedicated to ending modern slavery.

Sr. Evelyn Jose, SSpS, currently coordinates these efforts, providing leadership and direction. In the Philippines, IJM's mission focuses on tackling the online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC) and forced labor slavery. Through this enduring collaboration, IJM and SSpS continue to protect and restore the lives of the most vulnerable



***Ms. Gigi Tupas with Sr. Miriam Altenhofen during her visit at Casa Generalizia, Rome.***

SSpS and IJM will keep working together, fighting the scourge of modern slavery and forging new partnerships in other places until all are free!

*Mary Girlie Glen “Gigi” M. Tupas  
Head, National Activation and Partnerships (Philippines) [ijm.org](http://ijm.org)*

# Healing with Love: Caring for Lepers on Sumba Island

*Sr. Daniela Motu, a missionary and a nurse, journeys tirelessly to deliver compassionate care to leprosy patients in remote regions*



*In her role as a doctor, Sr. Daniela tends to their feet, hands, and arms with great care, and she also administers injections and medication.*

The SSpS mission of the Flores West Province has been established in Sumba for many years. Due to the high incidence of leprosy on the island, the mission faces numerous challenges. Some individuals affected by leprosy live in isolation, without the support of family.

Sr. Daniela Motu, a nurse, walks long distances to reach and care for leprosy patients. She tenderly cleans their feet, hands, and arms, administers injections and medication with compassion. Affectionately known as Sister Daniela, she also spends time listening to their stories and sharing her own. Hailing from Timor Island, she finds joy in serving these individuals, believing that everyone should experience God's love.

In an interview, Sr. Daniela recounted a moment when a patient, ostracized by his community, found comfort and hope through her care.

Despite the isolation and stigma her patients face, she finds strength and

motivation in their resilience and gratitude.

Sr. Daniela described a typical day in her life, detailing the challenges of crossing difficult terrains and dealing with limited medical supplies. She shared how one patient's perseverance despite severe physical limitations profoundly impacted her perspective on life and faith.

She hopes to expand the mission's reach and resources to better support leprosy patients. Through her work, she has learned valuable life lessons from her patients and aims to inspire others to serve marginalized communities.

Sr. Daniela's story underscores the transformative power of love, compassion, and faith in addressing human suffering.

*Sr. Herdiana Randut, SSpS  
Province of Flores West, Indonesia*

## Beyond Borders: Care for Polish Migrants in the Netherlands



*Sr. Celine and a volunteer dedicate their time to serve the walk-in visitors for the walk-in visitors.*



*Community volunteers distributing food.*

*In the heart of Brabant, Netherlands a mission is transforming lives, offering hope and support to Polish migrants and local families facing hardships.*

Since Poland joined the European Union in 2004, an increasing number of Polish migrants have settled in the Netherlands, typically working in agriculture, logistics, construction, and hospitality. Most have settled in North Brabant, Flevoland, Limburg, and South Holland, regions known for their agricultural and industrial sectors.

The primary motivations for these migrants to seek work in the Netherlands include the pursuit of a better life, higher wages, and the political climate in Poland. However, their journey has many challenges. Majority struggle to

secure employment and face periods of homelessness, sometimes sleeping outdoors for weeks before finding suitable accommodation.

In response, a mission in Tilburg supports the poor, including many Polish migrants. It provides hot meals, food packages, clothing, and toiletries. Notably, 80% of walk-in visitors are Polish.

The mission shares 160 meals weekly with visitors and assists in Tilburg Noord 25 impoverished families (106 individuals) through food distribution. Last Christmas, 160 special packages were distributed to various groups in need.

A crucial aspect of this mission is the personal connection fostered by the Sisters. They dedicate time to engage with the people, listening attentively to their stories. This compassionate approach allows the Sisters to understand the unique circumstances and struggles of those they serve, providing not just material aid but also emotional support and a sense of dignity to those who often feel marginalized.

The ongoing endeavors are made possible through the continued generosity of benefactors, whose contributions fund these vital support services for the community's most vulnerable members.



*Hot meals for the visitors.*

*Sr. Veronika Lili Purwanti SSPS – Province of Netherlands*

## Birthday Surprise: A Tale of Compassion in Cebu

*The mission of compassion can be as simple and deep as celebrating a birthday occasion with the anawim of God.*

Felix is an early morning sight in front of our convent in Cebu City, Philippines. He used to gather scraps to sell to recycling shops for a living. Occasionally, the Sisters would hire him to clean the convent gardens. Nowadays, Felix cleans the pavements, a 'job' given by a local official to support his family. Every morning, when the Sisters head to Mass, Felix greets them warmly, often hinting at his work.

In early April, Felix reminded the Sisters of his birthday on April 10. Every day, he would say, "Sisters, my birthday is fast approaching." The Sisters assured him they remembered. On his birthday, he beamed with joy and announced, "Today is my birthday!" The Sisters invited him inside the convent grounds, sang him a Happy Birthday song, and gave him cake. It was the first birthday cake he had ever received. Before blowing out the candle, he closed his eyes and prayed,

"Thank you, God, for this day. Today I am 65 years old. It is your blessing that has allowed me to reach this very day."



*Sr. Paulina Alawolo gives a birthday cake to Felix.*

Felix enjoyed a simple breakfast with the Sisters before taking the cake home to share with his family. That day, the Sisters celebrated the gift of friendship and witnessed the impact of a small act of kindness. Truly, a piece of cake became a symbol of compassion shared.

*Sr. Maria Elizabeth Ello, SSps  
Province of Philippine South*



*The community of Sisters in Cebu preparing a simple birthday celebration.*

# Engaging Hearts at the North Somerset, England Show

*At a prominent agricultural show, the SSpS made an impact by engaging with the community, fostering connections, and sharing their mission and values.*

The members of the SSpS England/Ireland region attended the 2023 North Somerset Agricultural Show to explore having a Christian stall the following year. Inspired by a religious television program, we thought of promoting vocations as we do at the National Ploughing Championships in Ireland, where we display religious cards and engage with attendees.

In England, we decided to sell homemade items to attract visitors. After a May 2023 meeting, we planned for each community to make bags, jam, marmalade, and cards. Throughout the year, we stayed in close contact, preparing together.

As the event neared, the Bristol (England) Sisters advertised it to parishioners. In Ireland, a craft club helped by providing elaborate cards and assisting with bag-making. Sr. Ewa Teresa Pliszcak arranged our stall's position under a large tent.

We stayed in the Bristol convent and set up the stall on Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, with tables and a poster. On the event day, 14 of us participated. It was an engaging day, and we were pleasantly surprised by the interest people showed in who we were. They took our Holy Spirit booklets and the 125-year jubilee booklets, which shared our stories.

Working together for this event was wonderful, and it was a joy to introduce the SSpS to that part of England.



*North Somerset Show is a famous agricultural event in England.*

*Sr. Carmen Lee, SSpS – Region of England/Ireland*



*The Sisters showcasing the SSpS mission with exhibit of religious*



*(Far Right) Sr. Joan Quirke, Regional Leader, with the members of the SSpS England-Ireland Region during the North Somerset Show.*

# Changes and New Beginnings in the German Province

*The Convent of the Holy Spirit in Wickede-Wimbern closed, leading to heartfelt relocations and inspiring transformations for more than 50 Sisters.*

On March 31, 2024, the Convent of the Holy Spirit in Wickede-Wimbern (*photo*) closed its doors forever. More than 50 sisters in Wimbern had to say goodbye to a place where some had spent their entire religious lives. Twenty-five of them moved to the Motherhouse in Steyl. The rest relocated to Laupheim. This left the German province with two large communities, primarily housing older sisters and those in need of care, and four smaller ones.

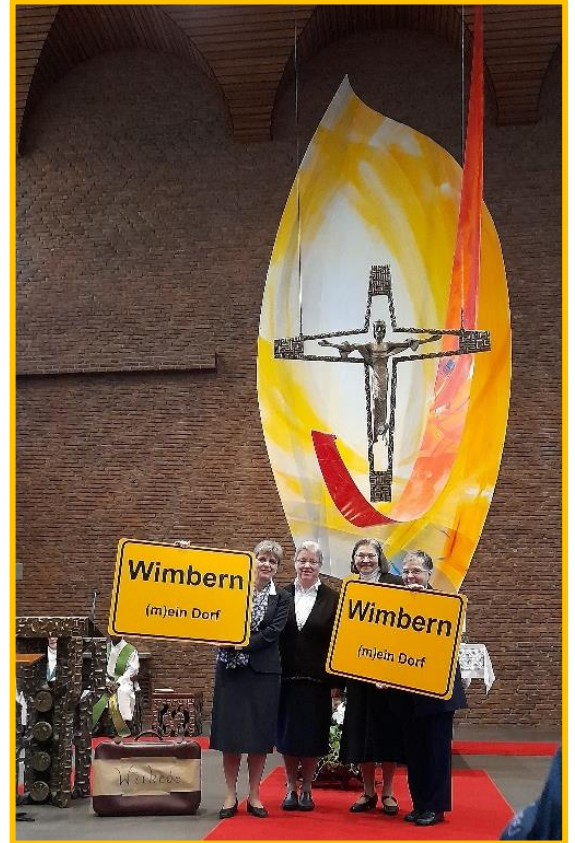
Changes have also occurred at the Trinity Convent in Laupheim. The regional Caritas association has built a modern senior center next to the old convent. The Sisters from Laupheim and Wimbern now live in the new senior center and will live in community with the center's residents.



*Sisters bid goodbye to the home they have lived for many years.*



*The entire convent will be demolished except for the chapel.*



The entire Trinity Convent is being demolished, except for the chapel. Sr. Theresia Eberhard said: "The chapel, the center of our house, is a place of light, blessing, and peace that influences our everyday lives and those of all residents."

Part of the Steyl building also had to be remodeled: new living rooms were built, and the dining rooms were extended and modernized. The Sisters have now settled in well and are finding a new routine. They have also come to terms spiritually with the new situation and continue to live out their mission in the new constellations.

*Ms. Steffi Mager – Province of Germany*

## *Activities of the Congregational Leadership Team*



*The CLT at the celebration of the Arnoldus Family Day during the 19<sup>th</sup> SVD General Chapter. The SSps shared about the congregation realities.*

**Sr. Miriam Altenhofen** attended the UISG board meeting, planning, and workshop from July 14 to 18. She facilitated a workshop for the participants of the International English Tertiate program on August 28 to 31 at the Motherhouse, Steyl, Netherlands.

**Sr. Kreti Vidal Sanhueza and Sr. Tressa Sebastian** travelled to India South for the General Visitation from August 6 to September 22.

**Sr. Jana Pavla Tóthová and Sr. Mariana Camezzana** conducted the General Visitation of India Central from August 7 to September 13.



*The CLT with the outgoing SVD General Superior, Fr. Budi Kleden, and the newly elected SVD General Council.*

# Facts & Photos



*Congratulations to the  
newly elected  
SVD General Council  
2024-2030*



*The SSps Sisters attended  
the opening of the 19th SVD General Chapter  
on June 16, 2024 at SVD Centro Ad Gentes, Nemi, Rome.*



*The delegates of the 19th SVD General Chapter visited Casa Generalizia on June 30, 2024 .*



*The celebration of the Arnoldus Family Day (SVD, SSsP, SSsPAP) at the SVD General Chapter.*



*Sr. Raquel Perlata (PAR) and Sr. Jaisa Antony (INS) at the SVD General Chapter as invited observers.*



*Sr. Maria Raquel Arri, SSsPAP General Councilor, presenting the life and mission of the Pink Sisters.*



*The Generalate Community enjoying the fellowship with Fr. Budi Kleden before his departure to Indonesia. His installation as the new Bishop of the Diocese of Ende, Indonesia will be on August 22.*



*The Golden and Silver Profession Jubilee celebration of Sr. Juliana Kondelova (Slovakia) and Sr. Marieta Melburan (Flores West) was held at the Casa Generalizia, Rome, Italy on July 7, 2024.*



*The SSps International English Tertiate 2024 (photo with Sr. Miriam Altenhofen, Sr. Mikaelin Bupu, and Sr. Kreti Sanhueza), started their program in Rome at the Casa Generalizia from June 1 to 15, 2024. The twenty-three participants continued their three-month renewal program in the Motherhouse, Steyl, Netherlands under the coordination of Sr. Maria Jose Rebelo and Sr. Aloisia Teti.*



*Students and teachers from Fu Jen Catholic University in Taiwan visited Casa Generalizia on their way to Ghana, Africa.*

*Sr. Maria Cristina Avalos transferred to the Motherhouse, Steyl, Netherlands as Coordinator of the Arnold Janssen Spirituality Network Team.*



*Sr. Maria Christina Avalos*

*Sr. Ana Elidia Neves returned to Brazil North after her mission in Rome as Congregational Communications Coordinator.*



*Sr. Ana Elidia Neves*

*Sr. Joana Soares traveled back to Timor Leste. She completed Licentiate in Psychology at the Pontifical Gregorian University.*



*Sr. Joana Soares*



*Sr. Cecilia d Souza*

*Sr. Cecilia D Souza returned to India North East after defending her Doctoral Studies on Dogmatic Theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University.*



*Sr. Svitlana Matsiuk*

*Sr. Svitlana Matsiuk, formator of the Europe novitiate program, transferred to Ireland where the new formation community will be opened.*



*(Left)Sr. Bernadette Dere (Ghana) and Sr. Quintinah Dinis (Angola) completed the Safeguarding Diploma Course.*

*(Right)The Generalate Community welcomed a Syrian family to the Mother Josepha House with Sr. Mikaelin Bupu and Sr. Francisca Garete are (L-R) Tony, Maria, Laila, and Bassam.*



## **SSpSWW Team**

**Main Editing:** Sr. Elaine Faith Taneo, SSpS

**Copy Editing:** Ms. Leticia Boniol

**Proofreading:** Sr. Frances Grace Solis, SSpS (*English*)  
Sr. Carmen Elisa Bando, SSpS (*Spanish*)

**Translating:** Sr. Margaret Anne Norris, SSpS (*Spanish to English*)  
Sr. María Eugenia Ojeda, SSpS (*English to Spanish*).

**Layout Formatting:** Sr. Maria Yosefina Neno, SSpS

## **SSpS Worldwide E-Newsletter**

Thanks to all the Sisters, Provinces and Regions who contributed to the SSpSWW E-Newsletter No. 207.

**Contact:**  
[sspsww@worldssps.org](mailto:sspsww@worldssps.org)  
**Thank you!**