



SSpSWW E-Newsletter

Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit

Congregational Newsletter

November – December 2024

No. 209



***"Mission is not only about what we do;
it's about who we are becoming together
as a community of faith."***

The concept of mission has evolved; it is not solely about service. It is a shared journey of becoming, where compassion reshapes lives and communities.

As we share stories from all corners of the world, we witness how our sisters and mission partners are not only serving those in need but are also fostering resilience, promoting social justice, and cultivating hope among marginalized communities.

Through the ministries with indigenous peoples, farmers, and urban and rural communities in the various SSpS mission areas in different continents, a tapestry of lives are enriched and transformed in meaningful ways that touch hearts and change peoples and communities.

The Lepers' Pilgrimage of Healing in Angola

Sr. Vasanthi Sebastian SSpS
Region of Angola



The Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit in Angola brought a long-held dream to life for former lepers by guiding them on a transformative pilgrimage to the Marian shrine.



Many of the pilgrimage participants were in wheelchair, walking canes, and one is visually impaired. Joy and gratitude was the deep sentiment of the group.



In front of the Mamã Muxima shrine.

The Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit in Angola have dedicated over more than 40 years to various ministries, including education, healthcare, women's support, particularly, to lepers. Supported by the SVD Projects and local donors, the sisters meet the spiritual and physical needs of lepers, restoring dignity to those who are often abandoned by society. Despite challenges, especially during the Civil War, the sisters' unwavering commitment to this mission has brought hope and a renewed sense of belonging to many.

On October 5, 2024, former lepers experienced a long awaited milestone: a pilgrimage to Mamã Muxima, Angola's revered Marian shrine. Many of these individuals are in wheelchairs, and one is blind, so travel required extra support. After a two and a half hour journey, the group was warmly welcomed by the Shrine's Rector and enjoyed a moment of profound connection to God. Their joy and gratitude were palpable.

The pilgrimage revealed a collective transformation not only for the lepers but also for those who supported the journey. A small act of compassion from the people who helped change a flat tire, symbolized the presence of God's care in everyday struggles. The sisters' work is a reminder that service, no matter how small, is met with blessings, and that God appreciates acts of love and service.



Water Project Empowers Philippine Indigenous Peoples

*Sr. Nimfa Seranias, SSps
Province of Philippine South*

The Higaonon Water Project has provided safe water access to an indigenous community in the Philippines. Through the support of the SSps mission and donors, the project empowers the community.

The Higaonon Water Project has been a long-awaited dream fulfilled for the Higaonon Indigenous People in Sitio Bayawa, Malitbog, Bukidnon, Philippines. Before the project, the community faced shortages during the dry season and murky water during heavy rains. The Higaonon, a mountain tribe whose name means "people of the wilderness," rely on farming and maintaining a strong connection to their land.

Accessing their remote, mountainous community is difficult, especially during the rainy season, but the SSps mission has remained active there since 2011. The water project became a reality through the generosity of an alumna of the College of the Holy Spirit, Class of 1973.

The project, benefiting 52 households, has fostered cooperation among the Higaonon who eagerly transported materials from the water source, navigating challenging terrain

for hours without pay. The local government provided a dump truck to help deliver essential supplies. Despite delays and limited skilled labor, the project is nearing completion.

Facilitated by Ma. Consolacion Matnao, the community has taken ownership of the project through cultural mapping and establishing guidelines for water source management. Representatives, known as "Kadakolon," oversee its maintenance.

The congregation has served the community for 13 years, supporting the Indigenous People School for a decade bringing lasting change, strengthening the school's governance and addressing health needs through a feeding program. The water project and continued educational support reflect the mission's impact on community transformation.



Sr. Maria Virgo Sesfao and an the community leader during the prayer-ritual blessing of the water source.



The women of the community fetch water from the well for the needs of the family.

Transforming Futures Through Education in Kalimantan

*Sr. Maria Fatima, SSps
Province of Kalimantan*



A program in Kalimantan, Indonesia equips children in scavenger communities with essential skills like literacy, hygiene, and economic awareness. This initiative empowers vulnerable children to aspire for a future beyond poverty.

Children growing up in scavenger communities like those at Kilometer 14 in Palangka Raya, Kalimantan, Indonesia, face daunting barriers to education and personal growth. Many, unable to attend formal school due to the pandemic and limited resources, were left to join their parents in scavenging.

In response, Sr. Maria Fatima, SSps, as JPIC Coordinator for Kalimantan, launched an initiative to provide non-formal, creative education as a path of transformation and hope for these vulnerable children. Starting in May 2021, she established a dedicated space for lessons, snacks, and storytelling, later expanding with support from SSps Kalimantan and Vivat Indonesia, to build the Non-Formal Creative Education Program.

Launched in September 2024, the program provides literacy, hygiene, gardening, and cooking skills to foster personal growth, resilience, and economic awareness. Supported by government and local collaboration, the initiative is empowering these children with essential skills to envision and work toward a brighter, more stable future. This mission-driven program reflects a commitment to compassionate transformation, breaking cycles of poverty and opening new pathways to opportunity for the scavenger children and their families at Kilometer 14.



Sr. Maria Fatima and the SSps with the students beneficiaries of the Non-Formal Creative Education Program.



The wholistic program provides education for academics, skills, personal growth, and values formation for the children of scavenger families.



Mission of Faith and Renewal in South Sudan

*Sr. Marian Herrera, SSpS
Region of Ethiopia*

The SSpS have returned to Yei, South Sudan, to rekindle their mission work amidst challenges. With roles in healthcare and capacity building, they are dedicated to serve the South Sudanese.

Sisters Benigilda Ladia, Kavita Paulose, and Josepha Sun met for a day of reflection on August 27, 2024, at the Regional House in Addis Ababa. They recognized the "sandals" they needed to shed as they prepared on their new mission and expressed their hopes for personal and communal growth. With reassurance from God, they embraced both their dreams and the inevitable doubts that accompany such a journey.

On September 1, the sisters accompanied by the Regional Leadership Team members Sr. Judyta Ligieza, SSpS, and Sr. Marian Herrera, SSpS, arrived in Juba. The next day, they traveled to Yei where they were warmly welcomed by Bishop Alex Lodiong Sakor Eyobo, Fr. Emmanuel Lodongo Sebit, and local clergy and laity.

On September 8, during Mass at Christ the King Cathedral, Bishop Alex introduced the sisters encouraging support for the sisters' mission. A memorial Mass was held on September 10 at Sr. Veronika Teresa Rackova's tomb, where the Bishop shared updates on the ongoing court case regarding her tragic death. In prayer, the sisters reaffirmed their commitment to her mission.

A welcoming program organized by the Bishop gathered parishioners and clergy announcing that Sisters Kavita and Josepha would serve at St. Bakhita Health Center, while Sr. Benigilda would focus on capacity building for pastoral agents in the Diocese.

As they begin their mission in the region affected by conflict, let us support them in prayer.



Sr. Josepha Sun, Sr Kavita Paulose, and Sr. Benigilda Ladia during the send-off in the regional house.



The Sisters were welcomed by Bishop Alex Eyobo, the clergy, and the local community.

Cultivating Hope: The Farm Project in Ghana

*Sr. Ernestina Mortu, SSpS and
Sr. Dorota Sojka, SSpS – Province of Ghana*



A small backyard initiative by the SSpS Sisters in Kwahu Tafo has grown into a thriving farm that provides organic produce, creates jobs, and supports the community and the SSpS Ghana Province.



Sr. Ernestina Mortu and Mr. Richard harvested plantain.



Selling goats to a customer.

Since Ghana gained independence in 1957, efforts to improve rural development have made limited progress. Many rural communities still rely on small scale agriculture, constrained by outdated technology, low productivity, and unreliable income, leaving economic and social conditions largely unchanged.

The Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit (SSpS) established the St. Joseph Clinic and Maternity Home in Kwahu Tafo as a crucial healthcare provider for the area. In 2018, the sisters expanded their mission by utilizing the clinic's land for agriculture, starting with a modest flock of poultry to supply the convent. This initiative grew during the 2020 pandemic, when the sisters expanded production to provide protein and vegetables to the local community. They also launched the Sisters Tasty Bite Catering Services to serve the clinic's needs and offer meals to nearby residents.

By 2023, the farm had grown significantly, housing over 2,000 layers, a variety of poultry breeds, livestock, fish, and a thriving vegetable farm, all of which now serve both local and commercial customers from Kwahu South District to Greater Accra. The project has created jobs, offered agricultural internships, and enhanced the community's food security. With organic produce trusted by institutions and markets alike, the farm supports both the local economy and the SSpS Ghana Province's mission.

This project has flourished thanks to the Congregation's support and the sisters' dedication to serving humanity and caring for creation.



Bringing Relief to Displaced Families of Chiapas, Mexico

*Sr. Luzia Domingas da Costa, SSpS
Region of Mexico*

In response to devastating floods in Salto de Agua, Chiapas, Mexico, the Sisters mobilized to bring urgent relief to displaced families. Their timely support underscores a commitment to compassion as a transformative mission.

Compassion draws individuals into the heart of transformation, inspiring a deep engagement with the pain and challenges others face.

On October 20, after heavy rains led the Tulija River to overflow, the town of Salto de Agua, Chiapas, Mexico, faced a threat of severe flooding. To assess the situation, Sr. Eleonora Kase and Sr. Luzia Domingas da Costa visited the area after the World Mission Sunday celebration on October 27. Civil protection staff warned them of the rising waters and imminent serious flooding, and by evening, the town was submerged, forcing many families to evacuate to temporary shelters set up in two local schools. They received basic care and protection.

The Sisters' community quickly organized to meet urgent needs, preparing food, coffee, and water for the shelter residents. Arriving as the first responders with warm drinks and nourishing food on a cold, rainy day, their presence brought comfort as they listened and shared in the flood survivors' burdens. The municipal DIF (Integral Development of the Family) and Civil Protection staff supported them with transportation to deliver these supplies.

This experience renewed the Sisters' dedication to compassion as a mission of transformation, underscoring that serving others in their most vulnerable moments brings both hope and healing.



Sr. Eleonora Kase, preparing hot meals for the flood survivors.



Sr. Luzia Domingas de Costa and the Families gather to partake of the food.

25 years of SSpS Transformative Mission in Zambia

*Sr. Malgorzata Baczewska
Region of Zambia*



The SSpS Sisters have empowered communities in Zambia through education, child protection, spiritual care, and environmental advocacy uplifting vulnerable populations, fostering resilience and sustainability, while inspiring mutual growth and compassion.



Sr. Stephanie with the pupils of Blessed Josepha School during Career Day. The children are dressed in various profession uniform.



Sr. Benedikta and Sr. Charlotte visiting the sick on Livingstone Hospice.

Since 2019, the SSpS Sisters in Zambia have brought positive change through justice, peace, and environmental stewardship. Their work impacts lives and the natural world, especially through child protection, education, spiritual care, and environmental advocacy.

The Youth Alive program promotes strong policies in schools, engaging students, parents, and teachers through workshops and radio programs to help young people develop life skills and positive behavior, preparing them for responsible adulthood. The Sisters also coordinate vocational training for youth and vulnerable women, equipping them with practical skills to improve their quality of life.

Their mission includes pastoral care, Bible workshops, and faith formation programs, which nurture values and moral development in the communities. The Sisters are also committed to protecting Zambia's environment, addressing urgent climate and ecological issues. They teach sustainable practices in schools and parishes, such as farming, tree planting, and recycling, fostering ecological awareness and responsibility.

By working with children, youth, women, and communities, the Sisters find themselves

transformed as well-growing in empathy, patience, and humility through these encounters. Witnessing the resilience of those they serve strengthens their commitment and deepens their faith, turning each experience into a lesson in solidarity and compassion.

As they continue their journey in Zambia, the SSpS Sisters remain dedicated to bringing hope, knowledge, and care, empowering individuals to shape a dignified future and building a brighter, more sustainable world for generations to come.

Embracing Mission and Culture in Congo

*Sr. Radzik Teresa, SSpS
Community in Democratic Republic of Congo*



The Sisters in the Democratic Republic of Congo continue to immerse themselves in the culture and traditions of the mission place marked by a commitment to service and collaboration.

In the heart of the Democratic Republic of Congo (RDC), the new SSpS community began their mission on December 8, 2023, immersing themselves in local culture and traditions. The sisters in Bandundu are studying French and Kikongo, while those bound for Kinshasa are learning Lingala. Over the past months, they've worked with SVD seminarians to strengthen their French skills, dedicating two hours daily to Kikongo, and preparing for Lingala studies in Kinshasa.

Sr. Angelina Vachia Jamba has taken on an internship with the Programme National de Lutte Contre le Paludisme as a malaria supervisor. Malaria is the leading cause of death, especially in children under five years old. Sr. Angelina, alongside two medical biologists, has visited four hospitals, facing common challenges with laboratory materials and microscopy.

The sisters' presence has also inspired new vocations. Four aspirants are interested in joining the congregation in Bandundu-ville, with five more in Kinshasa.

On September 20, 2024, the community celebrated a thanksgiving Mass for those departing for Kinshasa. The Mass, led by Father Godé Naniakweti, SVD, was followed by a shared meal. The sisters set off for Kinshasa on September 24 in two groups: Sisters Diana Wilrrorr, Pauli Wisang, Estrela Mari Busson, and Juliette Leena Rego traveled by boat, while Sisters Kristina Wolla and Catherine Horimbari by plane.

The sisters remaining in Bandundu await the return of Sr. Radzik Teresa, who is in Poland for treatment.



Sr. Angelina Vachia Jamba, SSpS, started her internship as supervisor of malaria at Programme the Lute Contre Paludism (PNLP) anti- malaria program.



The Bishop of Kengue, Jean Piére Kwambamba visited the Sisters.



Missionary Honored With Freedom Award for Service

*Sr. Liz Valdez, SSps
Province of USA*

Sr. Francisca Raquel Peralta, received the "Torch of Freedom" award for her dedicated work defending the rights of indigenous peoples, marginalized communities, and the environment in Paraguay and South Sudan.



Sr. Raquel receives the award from Dr. Benjamín Fernández, Director of Radio Libre.

On September 21, in commemoration of the 27th anniversary of Radio Libre in Paraguay, the prestigious "Torch of Freedom" award was bestowed upon a dedicated missionary sister. This recognition honors her commitment to defending the rights of indigenous peoples, advocating for the marginalized, and protecting nature. The award, a sculpture designed by iron poet Hugo Pistilli, is held aloft by two hands, symbolizing the collective effort required to achieve true freedom.

Born in Coronel Oviedo, Paraguay, this Missionary Servant of the Holy Spirit has devoted her life to serving the Ava Guaraní people, focusing on cultural revitalization and defending their ancestral lands. Her transformative work has helped preserve the identity of these communities and empowered them to reclaim their rights. Beyond this, she has coordinated Indigenous Pastoral efforts nationally, collaborated with the Paraguayan Episcopal Conference, and advocated for human rights in significant platforms.

Her mission expanded to serving in a refugee camp in South Sudan, offering comfort and hope to those affected by war. Her service has helped restore dignity to the most vulnerable and brought a message of peace and healing under extreme conditions.

This award not only celebrates her tireless work but also highlights the importance of continuing the fight for justice, dignity of indigenous peoples, and protection of our shared environment. "Freedom," she says, "is only achieved when we all commit to the common good."



Advocating for the rights of indigenous people in Paraguay. Sr. Raquel joined street rallies.

General Treasurer's Inspires Flores West Province Sisters

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



Sr. Regina George, General Treasurer of the Congregation, spent ten days visiting the Flores West Province, offering insights and inspiring the sisters with how to manage resources and implement projects.

Sr. Regina George, General Treasurer of our Congregation, visited the Flores West Province for ten days. She arrived in Labuan Bajo on October 17, where she was warmly welcomed by the Provincial Leadership Team, the sisters, and students from the schools in the region.

During her stay, Sr. Regina visited all the units and communities in Labuan Bajo, Cancar, Ruteng, Reo, and Koko. She also reviewed financial reports from various units, including schools, dormitories, hospitals, health clinics, and foundations, except those located on Sumba and Bima islands.

On the day before concluding her visit, leaders from the communities, schools, dormitories, hospital, and the Provincial Leadership Team gathered for a full day meeting at the Yosefa Mission Center. The day was divided into three sessions. The first focused on the congregation's financial realities, with Sr. Regina as the main presenter. The second and third sessions addressed the congregation's policies and guidelines for proposing and implementing projects.

Sr. Regina's visit was a meaningful and inspiring experience for the sisters. Her presence brought new energy, and her insights deepened their understanding, especially in managing finances and adhering to regulations across the province and its various units. On October 26th, Sr. Regina continued her visitation to the Timor Province.



Sr. Regina George visited the treasurer's office of the Junior High School of Yosefa.



Sr. Regina George, Sr. Maristella, & Sr. Kristin at the St. Arnoldus Janssen community.



Strengthening Finance Management in Timor Province

*Sr. Regina George, SSps
General Treasurer, Rome, Italy*

Sr. Mikaelin and Sr. Regina George met with sisters and stakeholders in Timor Province to review financial practices, discuss key recommendations, and plan for the province's financial sustainability.

During the visit, several meetings and discussions reviewed the progress, addressed financial management, and planned for the future.

On October 28, the team met with the Provincial Leadership Team (PLT) to review the status of previous recommendations, focusing on progress made in centralization, financial transparency, and accountability. They also discussed the implementation of provincial financial policies and the establishment of an internal Finance Commission. Later, a meeting with the auditor, PLT, Finance Commission, and Provincial Treasurer reviewed internal and external audit recommendations, analyzed current financial practices, and proposed annual audits with the external auditor serving as a mentor and supervisor.

On October 29, the team visited the New Marianum Hospital to inspect its location and construction progress, and explore future possibilities. They met with the contractor and supervisor to discuss the work completed, total estimated cost, funds spent to date, and future construction needs.

From October 30 to November 2, further meetings were held with the Finance Commission, Provincial Treasurer, Provincial Leadership Team, and the Foundation Team. These focused on reviewing land and property documents, studying contracts with dioceses for land use, and assessing the implementation of financial recommendations from the General Treasurer and CLT. Discussions covered centralization, transparency in accounting, and the establishment of committees for construction and financial management.



On November 3-4, around 60 sisters met to discuss financial planning and strategies for continued growth and sustainability.

A Grace-Filled Retreat and Mission Call in Congo

*Sr. Julie Rego, SSpS
Community in Democratic Republic of Congo*



The SSpS community in Congo and the SVD brothers participated together for the annual retreat held in the Diocese of Kenge.

For the first time, the SSpS community in Congo held from October 28 to November 1, 2024 their annual retreat in French, joined by their SVD brothers. The group consisted of four SSpS Sisters and 24 SVD priests and brothers. Bishop Emery Kibal, CP, from the Diocese of Kole, led them in a grace-filled retreat. The atmosphere of silence and prayer left the participants renewed and refreshed, ready for their mission in Congo-Kinshasa.

During the retreat, Jean-Pierre Kwambamba Masi, Bishop of Kenge, also invited the community to visit various locations and three parishes, where the need for religious sisters was felt. The bishop and priests of the diocese expressed their anticipation for the Sisters to begin their mission in Kenge. The

local people-young and old, women and children-welcomed the Sisters with enthusiasm, requesting that they stay and serve among them.

The Gospel of St. Luke resonated deeply: "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray, therefore, to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." The need is clear, and now the call to action is being answered.

As Roy T. Bennett wisely said, "Life is about accepting the challenges along the way, choosing to keep moving forward, and savoring the journey." The Sisters surrender to God's will, trusting that His plan will unfold in the beautiful land of the Congolese people.



The joint retreat of the SVD and SSpS family in the Diocese of Kole.



The local people welcomed the Sisters with great enthusiasm.

Devastating Volcanic Eruption in Indonesia

*Sr. Yasintah Ota, SSpS
Province of Flores East, Indonesia*



The eruption of Mount Lewotobi in East Flores, Indonesia, caused devastation of lives and property. The sisters in Hokeng fled, with many displaced by the disaster. The community continues to provide aid to those affected.

At midnight on November 3, Mount Lewotobi in East Flores, Indonesia, erupted unexpectedly catching the sisters by surprise as they slept. Without prior warning from authorities, the sisters initially mistook the thunder and lightning for a passing storm. However, when ash, hot lava, and volcanic debris began falling, they quickly realized the danger and rushed to safety.

As the eruption intensified, the sisters of the Hokeng community made their way to a designated safe area near the clinic. Sr. Nikolin Pajo, the community leader, was unable to escape. Sr. Nikolin was known for her strong leadership, kindness, and commitment to the mission. When the first eruption happened last year, she sent the young formees out of Hokeng and said, "You are the successors of the congregation so you must be safe. I will stay here and live with the sisters with the people of God who are suffering."



Sr. Nikolin Pajo was the community leader of the Hokeng community.

After the eruption, the sisters and formees were evacuated safely to Kewapante, about two hours away from Hokeng. The community continues to receive an outpouring of support, including donations of money and essential goods. More than 8,400 people have been displaced by the eruption, and the sisters are committed to helping the victims as they continue their work in the area.



The SSpS receive donations and various support to respond to the needs of the survivors.



The destroyed sisters' convent.

Activities of the Congregational Leadership Team



Sr. Miriam Altenhofen and Sr. Mikaelin Bupu in Flores East, Indonesia after the volcano eruption.



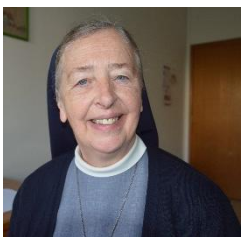
"Sr. Mikaelin and I had the opportunity to visit our sisters on-site and stay with them for a week in this challenging situation. We held various meetings where the sisters could share their experiences. We also visited affected villages and camps with other victims. However, we could not visit Hokeng itself, as the situation there remains highly dangerous. The people of East Flores need our support. This can be in the form of prayers, compassion, or donations, which can be used to buy essential supplies and provide relief in this dire situation, helping them rebuild a new life in the future." Sr. Miriam (Hokeng, November 16).



Sr. Tressa Sebastian in India Northeast for the General Visitation.



Sr. Mariana Camezzana in Steyl with the Indonesian Formator's Course.



Sr. Andrea Maria Maier from Austria arrived in Rome to assist with the digital archiving of the records for the General Administration.



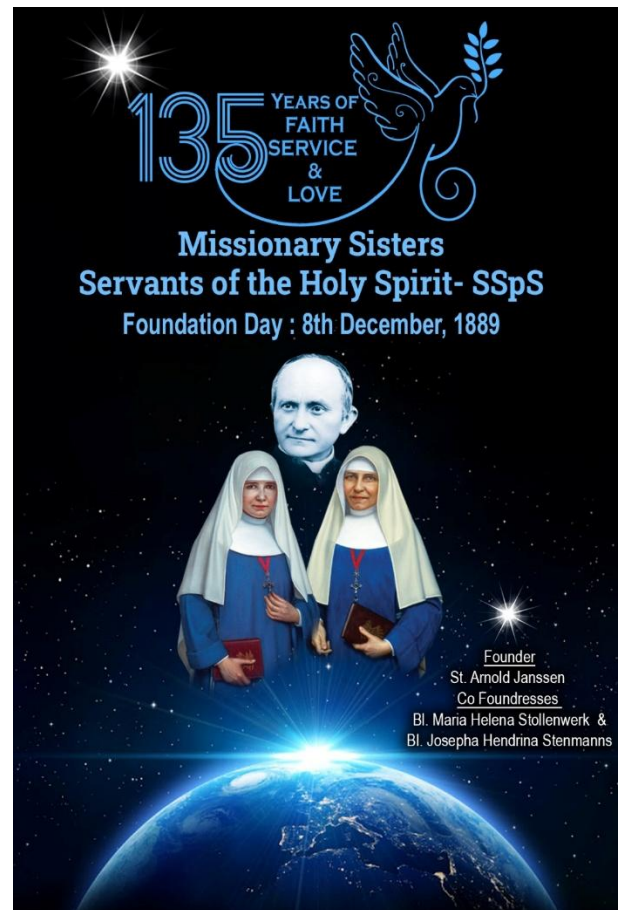
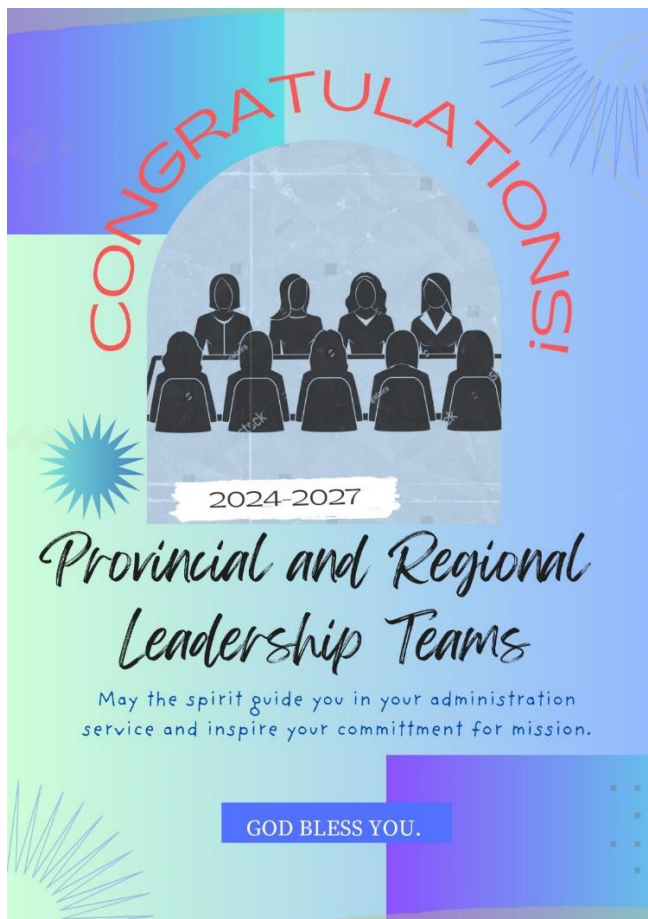
Sr. Scholastica Benedicta Jenau has been appointed Mission Treasurer of Timor and is spending three months in Rome to enhance her skills for the role.



Sr. Kreti Vidal in Steyl, Netherlands for the meeting of RCI (Resource Commission International). Sr. Miriam, Sr. Mariana with the Arnold Janssen Spirituality Network were also in the meeting.

Facts & Photos





SSpS Worldwide ***E-Newsletter***

Thanks to all the Sisters,
Provinces and Regions who
contributed to the SSpSWW
E-Newsletter No. 209.

Contact:

sspsww@worldssps.org

Thank you!

SSpSWW Team

Main Editor:

Sr. Elaine Faith Taneo, SSpS

Leticia Boniol

Proofreading:

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

Translation:

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

Formatting:

Sr. Maria Yosefina Neno, SSpS