SSpS
Missionary Sisters
Servants of the Holy Spirit
WORLDWIDE E-NEWSLETTER
SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER 2025

# Mission with Women : From Invisibility to Dignity

In countless societies, women remain the invisible architects of society—their labor unseen, their voices muted, and their dignity challenged by systemic inequality. This reality is not merely a social issue; it is a profound human and spiritual crisis that demands a response grounded in presence and action.

Our mission with women are not isolated efforts but a tapestry of emancipation. We invite you to explore these narratives of tangible hope that accentuate accompaniment as a transformative force that makes the invisible seen, the unheard heard, and the marginalized restored to their God-given dignity.

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# Solidarity and Dignity on Mexico's Streets

**For 38 years, SSpS sisters in Guadalupe have walked alongside women in situations of extreme vulnerability, offering companionship and tangible tools to reclaim lives of dignity.**

Sr. Selvi visits the women living near Revolución metro station.

Through training provided by the SSpS, the women gain new skills that bring hope for future self-reliance.

The SSpS community in Mexico City continues to confront harsh realities near the Revolución metro station, where countless women face the brutal forces of trafficking, prostitution, violence, profound neglect and abandonment. This is being done after an urgent call 38 years ago to help women in the Our Lady of Guadalupe Region who were most vulnerable.

For now, solving the entire overwhelming problem is not the goal, as much as it is to intimately walk alongside a significant number of women, mostly aged 35 to 75, whom government and society seem to have forgotten. The work can be carried out only on a bedrock of constant proximity, attention, active listening, and unwavering acceptance. The ministry seeks to actively share in the women's stories, hold their hands, and celebrate even the tiniest hard-won victories.

A woman puts up food stall with the help of the Sisters.

For abiding transformation, the Sisters provide crucial integrated support that covers the women's legal, medical, psychological, spiritual, and social needs. This holistic approach goes hand in hand with economic empowerment via specialized training and micro-projects like sewing and knitting.

The end goal is to see every one of the women become self-assured, aware of her inherent rights, and fully capable of seizing new opportunities for herself and her family. Four tenets will see this vision through: holistic support, integral formation, economic empowerment, and a safe community environment. Delivering all the women under the mission's care may not be immediately achievable, but every single one of them who reclaims her autonomy will certainly be a beacon of success.

***Sr. Selvi Selva Raj, SSpS – Region of Mexico***

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# Accompanying Korean Women into the Light

ASIA-PACIFIC

**Shutting down a sex trade hub requires more than padlocks; permanent closure calls for an exit path. Paju City, in partnership with the Women's Human Rights Center Shigo, is building such a path with concrete support, vigilant advocacy, and a relentless commitment to human dignity.**

Sr.Johann and Sr. Venia hold placards with other mission workers during an Owl Campaign silent vigil in Yongjugol's hotspots.

With Mayor Kim Kyung-il (Thomas) at the helm, Paju City, northwest of Seoul, is advancing a multi-year project to halt operations at the Yongjugol sex trade zone in Yeonpung-ri. The initiative started in 2023 and continues till the end of this year. It goes beyond bolting doors, offering suitable exit programs for women determined to leave the profession. These include critical living expense support, housing assistance, and vocational training— all running parallel to sustained anti-trafficking campaigns and preventive measures.

Our Paju community, through the Women's Human Rights Center Shigo (affiliated with EcoGender), is at the heart of this effort. Sr. Johann Teresa and Sr. Venia Kim are active members who provide essential psychological, medical, vocational, and legal support to women seeking new beginnings. Their advocacy takes tangible form in both the Daytime Journey and the nocturnal Owl Campaign, where they stand with civic groups in silent vigil.

At daytime, the Sisters engage in community awareness and offer support and resources to women on the streets.

Daily work can stretch into late nights of responding to urgent calls when some of the women need escorting to safety. Occasionally, the profound pain of rejection has to be dealt with, when deep-seated wounds overtake all offers of help. Through all these struggles, the community's recourse is to seek God's will. Sr. Venia finds a divine purpose that deepens her relationship with God. Sr. Teresa entrusts everything to the Holy Spirit's guidance. As missionaries, we continue to pray fervently and discern how to walk alongside those in the shadows.

***Sr. Johann Theresa – Province of Korea***

# New Book Amplifies Voices of Empowerment

ASIA-PACIFIC

**Sr. Herdiana Randut, SSpS, missionary and founder of the grassroots movement Puan Floresta Bicara in Flores, Indonesia, has launched her new book that highlights the vital role of women in building just and peaceful communities, offering practical and reflective insights into creating spaces where women's voices lead transformation and solidarity.**

The book is a transformative work, advocating for women's leadership and justice in Indonesia.

As a resource person, Sr. Herdiana educates people through insights from both faith and frontline experience.

A powerful new voice for women's empowerment emerges from Flores, Indonesia, with the recent launch of "Women as Architects of Change: Dignity, Voice, and Empowerment in Eastern Indonesia" by Sr. Herdiana Randut, SSpS. A passionate social activist, educator, and pastoral leader, Sr. Herdiana is renowned for her grassroots movement, Puan Floresta Bicara, which addresses gender inequality and violence in East Nusa Tenggara.

Rooted deeply in the SSpS charism, the book focuses squarely on the dignity and pivotal role of women in society. It delves into the creation of safe spaces—both physical and digital—where women's voices are not just merely heard, but regarded as essential to community transformation. The work champions the mindset that women are fundamental architects of a more just and peaceful world, and advocates for their active participation in dialogue, education, and leadership.

Sr. Herdiana maintains that empowering women is the cornerstone of sustainable development and intercultural solidarity. Her words serve as both a reflection and a practical guide, inspiring readers to recognize and activate the profound agency of women in building communities where justice and peace prevail. This book is a vital contribution to faith-based activism.

"Women as Architects of Change" is a bold testament to what is possible when faith is translated into fearless action. It is more than a publication; it is a call to conscience, an invitation to solidarity, a reminder that the journey toward justice begins by listening to those too long silenced. Through her writing and witness, Sr. Herdiana challenges us all to build a world where every woman's dignity is honored, every voice amplified, and every community transformed by the courage to hope and act together.

***Sr. Elaine Faith Taneo, SSpS – Rome, Italy***

# Bringing Hope to Ukrainian Women in the Heart of War

**Amid the devastation, SSpS missionaries walk with women like Lyubov Litovchenko , exemplifying hope through faith and the healing power of companionship.**

Joy and hope in friendship: Sr. Maria Slezak and Lyubov exchange warm smiles during one of their regular visits in the latter's Boryspil home, near Kyiv.

A moment of hope: Lyubov's baptism at her local parish.

God continues to work in the hearts of the suffering in Ukraine. In the midst of war, death, and pain, sometimes a chance encounter, a word of encouragement or, simply, quiet presence is enough to awaken hope where only despair dwells.

One SSpS Sister relates the story of Lyubov Litovchenko, a 76-year-old woman from Boryspil, near Kyiv. For more than two and a half years, the Sister visited Lyubov, who had endured profound loss. She had fled her hometown of Bakhmut, leaving behind everything she owned. When they first met, Lyubov was broken and fearful, with little hope left in her heart.

Lyubov had been to church only once, as a child. During the Sister's visits, they got to talk about the meaning of suffering and where to find the strength to keep going. Gradually, Lyubov began reading and reflecting on the word of God. In time, she asked to prepare for Reconciliation and the Eucharist—a true miracle and testament to Divine direction.

When she went to Confession and received Holy Communion for the first time, she was transformed. Her face beamed with peace and joy. Now, fear and despair held at bay, she has started to trust and hope again. While she never recovered what she had lost, she no longer feels forsaken.

SSpS Sisters continue to walk as pilgrims of hope for those who suffer, to help reopen shattered hearts to God's healing.

***Sr. Maria Slezak, SSpS – Region of Ukraine***

The scars of war on Lyubov's hometown.

# Women Religious of the Philippines Joins Anti-Corruption Protests

**On the 53rd anniversary of the declaration of Martial Law, thousands of Filipinos, including the SSpS Sisters of the Philippine North and South Provinces, marched for a new kind of a peaceful rally: a fight for integrity and accountability.**

The Sisters carry a clear message for government accountability: “Taxes we pay, use them the right way.”

Raising the Philippine flag, SSpS sisters march in solidarity with the Filipino people's call for a just government.

On September 21, 2025, the streets of Manila and cities across the Philippines echoed with a powerful, unified cry for justice. Marking the 53rd anniversary of the declaration of Martial Law—a day symbolizing a dark chapter of nine years of oppression—citizens transformed it into a beacon of hope and resistance. The nationwide "Laban sa Katiwalian" (Fight Against Corruption) protests saw thousands gather at historic sites like Rizal Park and the People Power Monument in Metro Manila, as well as in Tagbilaran, Bohol. They voiced their outrage over alleged massive corruption in government flood control projects.

Among the thousands were the SSpS Sisters of the Philippine North and South Provinces, who joined this peaceful rally for integrity and accountability. In a powerful witness to their missionary commitment, the SSpS answered the call to be in solidarity with the suffering. The Sisters stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the people, affirming that a stand against corruption is a stand for the Filipino people. The demonstration was a collective demand for transparency and a future where public funds serve the public good, especially the most vulnerable.

Sr. Leoncia Pregunta leads a prayer at the rally in Bohol, Philippine South.

Reflecting on the experience, Sr. Eden Panganiban shared: “*It was a touching experience. Nothing could stop the flow of this dignified exercise of nonviolent protest. It was a day of exercising our democratic rights across the country. Deep in our hearts, we felt that it was not just a single event, but the beginning of a long journey. Something deeper had to change. And this is where our MISSION as SSpS assumes greater weight.*”

***Edited by Sr. Rosario Tayson, SSpS – Province of Philippines North***

# Uplifting PNG Victims of Sorcery Violence

ASIA-PACIFIC

**Remaining resolute after 126 years of dedicated presence in this historically troubled country, the SSpS continues its vital mission, standing with women, children and families against the devastation of Sorcery Accusation-Related Violence.**

Sisters Milliana, Dorota, Faustina and Emerinciana attending to a patient with burns.

Health Workers at the Migende Rural Hospital posted for picture after the focus group discussion. Research conducted by the Melanesian Institute on the Role of Healthcare in Addressing Sorcery Accusation Related Violence.

Women, children and the elderly, the most vulnerable sectors in Papua New Guinea, continue to be disproportionate targets of Sorcery Accusation-Related Violence (SARV). This grave contemporary challenge has become the critical focus of SSpS Sisters in the Southwestern Pacific country after 126 years of sustained service.

In hospitals and health centers supported by the mission, the devastating consequences of SARV are witnessed daily. Physical wounds are constantly being treated. Far beyond medical care, the mission provides safe refuge for survivors, offers trauma counseling, and works relentlessly to heal deep social fractures within communities.

Missionaries exemplify the massive task. Sr. Milliana Wangusawo, SSpS, a nurse at the remote Yampu Health Centre in Enga Province, has administered to survivors for years, and with massive resolve. “No matter how serious the injury,” she says, “we don’t give up. We fight for every life.”

This hands-on care is a hallmark of the SSpS commitment to the marginalized. By educating communities, fostering dialogue, and promoting justice, the Sisters challenge superstitious beliefs at the core of the violence. They empower women, protect families, and vigorously advocate for a society where no one lives in fear. Surely, the SSpS mission in PNG is a testament to faith in action—a relentless, compassionate pursuit of peace and human dignity for all.

***Sr. Arnolda Kavanamur, SSpS – Region of Papua New Guinea***

# Solidarity and Dignity for Women

Healing Accompaniment

Integral well-being

Transformative Education

Empowered Voice

Circle of Sisterhood

Strength and resilience

Prophetic Presence

Breaking the cycle

# Bringing the Church to Australia's Indigenous People

ASIA-PACIFIC

**The SSpS on Palm Island initiated monthly outdoor masses and yarning circles at Butler Bay, creating accessible sacred spaces for healing and connection while honoring the cultural significance of the land to the Manbarra and Bwgcolman people.**

The basketball court in Butler Bay transforms into a sacred space during the SSpS community's monthly outdoor Mass, bringing worship directly to the people

Sisters and community members gather in a yarning circle, creating a solemn encounter where faith and culture meet with respect and a shared purpose.

When the SSpS sisters began their Indigenous Mission on Palm Island a few years ago, the hope was to bring the Church into the heart of the community, where the people were most at ease. On May 14 this year, that prayer was realized with the mission's very first outdoor Mass held at the basketball court in Butler Bay.

It was a moving event. People of all ages gathered— children, elders, whole families. Local teachers joined the celebration as well. The basketball court became a space that hummed with prayer and song, and radiated the presence of the Holy Spirit. After the Mass, one of the community aunties remarked, "Thank you for bringing the Church to the people!" Her words conveyed a deep sentiment reminiscent of fulfillment from memorable community interactions.

Palm Island holds deep cultural and spiritual significance for the Manbarra and Bwgcolman peoples. Among them, the missionaries tread gently, listening and learning as they go. The outdoor Masses—and the yarning circles that soon followed— are not just social events. They have become reverential encounters between faith and culture on one hand and, on the other, respect, humility, and openness.

Since that first outdoor Mass, the community has been gathering in the first week of each month for Mass and the yarning circles, The monthly meetings have become occasions for reflections and connection as well as opportunities to exchange stories, deepen relationships, and share hopes and dreams.

One young mother said of the landmark Mass: "It felt like home. I never thought I'd feel that way." This is an affirmation that God is not confined to buildings and rituals; He dwells in everyday places and ordinary moments, in the hearts of people and the love they share.

***Sr. Mere Ranuku, SSpS – Region of Papua New Guinea***

# Together in African Mission, Sisters Forge Paths of Transformation

**From Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Uganda, 28 SSpS sisters convened for the annual assembly, uniting in prayer, purpose, and shared commitment to their mission despite ongoing challenges.**

The SSpS of the Ethiopia-South Sudan-Uganda Region pause for a souvenir photograph, a moment to remember during the annual assembly and a memorial to their mission.

"Journeying Together Towards Transformation" was the theme of the annual regional assembly of the SSpS from Ethiopia, South Sudan and Uganda hosted by the Consolata Spirituality Center in Mojo. From August 30 to September 3, 2025, 28 sisters gathered in prayerful solidarity and joy, to deepen their spiritual bonds and reinforce their collective mission.

The Sisters cut the cake together as a symbol of breaking the bread, fellowship and sustenance.

Every annual assembly is a vital time for both inner enrichment and community strengthening. This year's event featured focused input on congregational spirituality by Sr. Marian Herrera, practical guidance on finances by Sr. Regina George (General Treasurer), and essential safeguarding protocols led by Sr. Maria Cristina Avalos (Arnold Janssen Spirituality Network Member). Sr. Lovely Thomas (Regional Leader) provided updates from the earlier provincial meet, ensuring that all members were aligned with broader congregational directions.

Amidst the complex realities of the mission—from limited resources to widespread social instability—the sisters shared joys, challenges, and experiences from their local communities. These moments of listening and mutual encouragement renewed their passion for, and commitment to, serving with courage and kindness.

The assembly concluded with reflections from community leaders and coordinators that emphasized unity and forward-looking strategies. On September 4, the community leaders extended the dialogue into planning and implementation.,

Through gatherings like this, the SSpS sisters in Africa affirm that their missionary charism is not only sustained, but deepened, by solidarity. Thus, together, they continue to transform challenges into opportunities for grace and growth.

***Sr. Elaine Faith Taneo – Rome, Italy***

# Creative Discipleship: Shaping Narratives of Hope in the Digital Age

ASIA-PACIFIC

**A recent Communication and Media Training in Guwahati, largest city in India Northeast, focused on turning digital spaces into instruments of mission. The event brought together SVD and SSpS members seeking to advance their skills.**

Missionaries from the SVD and SSpS convened at the SVD Guwahati Regional House for a training session on Creative Discipleship and using media for mission.

The SSpS participants gather in a group meeting.

The compelling theme, "Creative Discipleship in the Digital Age— Media for Healing and Hope," was a cohesive factor for the recent Communication and Media Training conducted by the Indian Sub-Zone of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), alongside the Generalate Communications Office. The training, held from Augusut 18 to 20, 2025 at the Regional House in Guwahati, largest city in India Northeast, gathered 42 SVD and 11 SSpS..

Echoed throughout the workshop was the SSpS Manual for Communication and Technology, which declares, "Producing content for evangelization is a specific missionary activity that requires skilled people." This underscores that communication is not merely about tools; it is about authentic presence, and shaping how the mission is seen, understood, and lived."

For women religious, the call carries a particular depth. Their task is not to match dominant voices, but to reframe the narrative, thus offering new perspectives. Through their witness, media becomes a space where the invisible is made visible—stories of outreach, hidden peace work, and the dignity of the marginalized. Their lens are shaped by relationship; their stories are grounded in truth. Commitment to Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) as a way of life thus finds its natural voice.

Sr. Elizabeth Rani (third from right) presented on the topic Photography in Mission during the media training.

To change the narrative is to relay overlooked occurrences— to speak from presence, not power. It is not about louder voices, but deeper ones. As the only woman religious among the resource persons, I carry deep gratitude for the gift of representing the SSpS family and for the quiet grace of making visible a ministry that is already reshaping the narrative.

***Sr. Elizabeth Rani SSpS – Province of India Northeast***

# One Family, One Mission: SSpS Joins Global SVD 150th Celebration

Ghana

**The SSpS worldwide joined the SVD in celebrating 150 years of mission, united by the theme "From Everywhere to Everyone" as one spiritual family.**

The entire St. Arnold Janssen Family recently marked the monumental 150th anniversary of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD). As integral members of this spiritual family, the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit (SSpS) worldwide joined SVD priests, brothers, and lay mission partners in thanksgiving. Held last September 8, the commemoration reflected on a legacy built together, highlighting the profound universality of their shared mission.

Philippine South

Mozambique

“From Everywhere to Everyone,” theme of the global event, resonates deeply with the congregation’s charism. Just as SSpS co-foundresses, Blessed Maria Helena Stollenwerk and Blessed Josepha Stenmanns responded to the needs of their time, the Arnoldus Family’s mission has always reached outwards from local communities to the entire world. The anniversary served not only as a retrospective but as a potent reminder of unity as one family on a shared mission. Commitment to evangelization, education, justice, peace, integrity of creation (JPIC), health, and socio-pastoral service is nourished and fortified by deep bonds of collaboration and spiritual friendship.

Inspired by St. Arnold Janssen, this familial spirit calls the entire congregation to ever-deeper unity. Moving forward, they are bound to uphold "From Everywhere to Everyone" theme as a call to break boundaries, not as separate congregations, but as one united family. Together, in a spirit of mutual support, they doubtless continue to bring the light of the Gospel to all corners of the earth, irreversibly becoming a gift from God to the world.

***Sr. Elaine Faith Taneo, SSpS – Rome, Italy***

# A Historic Gathering: Joint SSpS-SSpSAP Tertiate Program

EUROPE

**A landmark formation program of the two sister congregations held in Steyl, Netherlands and Italy offered a profound opportunity for spiritual renewal and strengthening the SSpS missionary identity.**

The Sisters gather around the sarcophagus of the co-foundresses, Blessed Maria Helena and Blessed Josepha.

These are the three SSpSAP Adoration Sisters who participated in the tertianship

In a historic event for the Steyl family, the motherhouse welcomed 13 sisters from Poland, Slovakia, and Ukraine on September 9, 2025, for a unique tertianship program. The group included three cloistered Adoration Sisters (SSpSAP) from Poland - Sr. Immaculata Stepa, Sr. Estera Sitarz, Sr. Maria Weronika Plata and ten SSpS, guided by directors Sr. Aleksandra Huf,, SSpS and Sr. Dolores Zok, SSpS.

Held at the Sacred Heart Convent  (Motherhouse in Steyl, Netherlands), the program provided a profound opportunity to deepen the spirituality of the Triune God and the missionary charism. The program integrated personal and communal prayer, thematic lectures, and pilgrimages to significant sites, including the graves of the founding generation. This journey of "relearning" from the founders' attitudes aimed for a transformation that expands the circle of love to those on the margins.

Simultaneously, a workshop for 27 SVD confreres in formation and vocation ministry was held at the St. Michael Mission House. The Arnoldus Family celebrated this international convergence with a joyful gathering on September 15 at the Sacred Heart Convent. The event featured fellowship and culminated in a communal Eucharist

The program included a pilgrimage to the birthplace of St. Joseph Freinademetz in Oies, Northern Italy and concluded in Rome, Italy on October 16, 2025.

***Sr. Antonia Schmid, SSpS – Province of Germany***
(Extracted from the www.steyler-missionsschwestern.de)

# Women Forging Harmony: Indonesia-Holy See Diplomatic Relations

**SSpS sisters participated in a historic Vatican audience with Indonesia's religious community, demonstrating women's crucial role in faith-based diplomacy during celebrations of 75 years of bilateral relations.**

Six SSpS joined the historic celebration of 75 years of Indonesia-Holy See diplomatic relations..

Pope Leo XIV engages with the members of the Indonesian community during the special audience.

In a significant event at the Vatican on Monday, September 22, 2025, Pope Leo XIV welcomed a special audience of approximately 135 members of the Indonesian community, including the Association of Indonesian Religious in the Eternal City (IRRIKA), the REHAT community, and the extended family of the Indonesian Embassy to the Holy See. Among the participants were SSpS sisters, whose presence underscored the vital role of women religious in building bridges of faith and diplomacy.

Held in the Clementine Hall, this extraordinary meeting strengthened the friendship between Indonesia and the Holy See. In his remarks, Pope Leo emphasized the Holy See's accompaniment of Southeast Asian nations since Indonesia's independence in 1945, a relationship built on respect, dialogue, and a shared commitment to unity and peace. The audience commemorated three key milestones: the first anniversary of Pope Francis' visit to Indonesia, the 75th anniversary of Indonesia-Holy See diplomatic relations, and the first-ever audience for all Indonesian Embassy staff and families.

The Pope highlighted that the Holy See was the first European entity to recognize Indonesian sovereignty in 1947. He expressed hope that the national motto, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity), would continue to inspire efforts to promote harmony. The participation of the SSpS sisters embodied this principle, demonstrating how women are central to weaving the fabric of peace and understanding in the nation's realities and on the global stage.

***Sr. Yosefrida Manek, SSpS – Rome, Italy***

# Generalate News

## Activities of the Congregational Leadership Team

(Left to Right) Sr. Natalia Tothova, Sr. Mikaelin Bupu, Sr. Miriam Altenhofen, Sr. Tressa Sebastian, Sr. Kreti Vidal, and Sr. Mariana Camezzana.

Sr. Miriam Altenhofen attended two events in Europe: in Vienna on October 10-12 for the SSpS European Election discernment gathering and the 25th-anniversary celebration of Vivat International in Geneva on October 17.

Following her General Visitation in Kalimantan, Indonesia, which concluded on September 25, Sr. Tressa Sebastian next visit was Zambia for the Regional Chapter from October 16-28.

Sr. Kreti Sanhueza Vidal completed her General Visitation in Brasil South and then travelled to Rome for the SSpS Constitution Commission meeting from October 16-20.

After attending the Finance Commission meeting in Timor (September 24-25), Sr. Mikaelin Bupu next travel was to India East to conduct the General Visitation from October 13 to November 17.

Sr. Natalia Tothova attended the PANAM Assembly for Education and JPIC in Encarnación, Paraguay on September 25-29. She then proceeded to conduct the General Visitation of the province.

Sr. Mariana Camezzana concluded her General Visitation in Brasil South before traveling to Rome and then to Congo for a meeting of the missionaries on October 24-26.


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***SSpS Worldwide***
***E-Newsletter***

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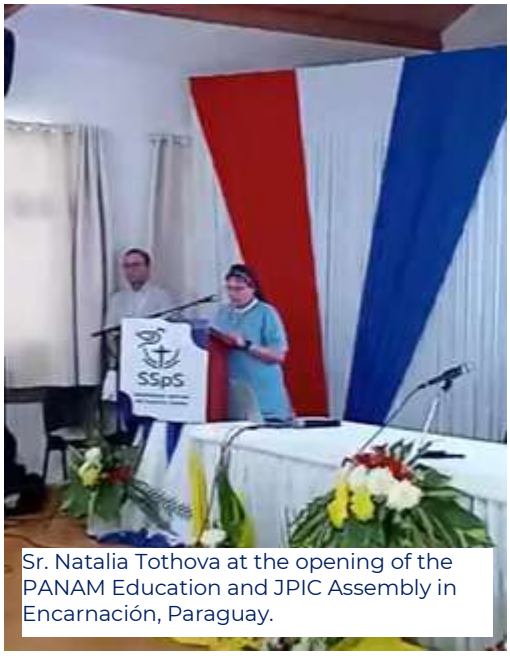
***Thank you!***




Sr. Natalia Tothova at the opening of the PANAM Education and JPIC Assembly in Encarnación, Paraguay.

Sr. Mariana during a General Visitation Nossa Senhora da Luz Hospital and Maternity Clinic in Brazil South.

Sr. Tressa Sebastian visited the community of scavenger families at Km. 14 Palangka Raya – a project supported by the SSpS JPIC Team in Kalimantan.

Sr. *Kreti Vidat at Colégio Espírito Santo, Brasil South.*

Sr. Mikaelin Bupu (fourth from left) during the meeting of the Finance Commission - Timor Province.

Sr. Miriam Altenhofen is the current President of VIVAT International.