



January 2016

Message for New Year 2016

Recently, I came across a new book of one of my favourite authors, Fr. Ronald Rolheiser, O.M.I. The book is about the ***“Core Elements of Mature Christian Discipleship and a Deeper Generativity within our Adult Lives.”*** I found it very interesting, practical and helpful. Allow me to share with you these core elements which, I hope, could also serve as a map for our own personal growth and transformation.



First, live in gratitude and thank your creator by enjoying

your life. “Father Chevalier exhorted us to have a genuine spirit of poverty that will dispose us to live in gratitude and joy...” (Const. #27). Let us be like Our Lady of the Sacred Heart who accepted all as gift from God.

Second, be willing to carry more of life’s complexities with empathy. In life, things are not clear-cut. Let us learn to live with limitations and imperfections. Let us not be carried away by negativity. Let us widen our window of tolerance.

Third, transform jealousy, anger, bitterness, and hatred, rather than give them back. Like Mary, who pondered things in her heart, let us hold, carry and transform tension rather than give it back. “Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of the ideal of fraternal love!” (EG #101)

Fourth, let suffering soften your heart rather than harden your soul. We all get hurt – that is a reality that we, as members of families and communities experience. Pain and suffering are realities in our daily lives but how we respond to them will reveal the level of our maturity. “The experience of our limitations, difficulties and failures enables us to recognize and accept our personal poverty with peace and humility of heart. We come to realize that God’s power is able to work in and through our weakness. Sickness and ageing, accepted with patience and courage, are precious opportunities for growing in abandonment to the loving providence of God” (Const. #32.D).

Fifth, forgive. “...We show compassion for our human weakness in a spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation” (Const. #38D §1).



Sixth, bless others and be a blessing to others. Cardinal Walter Kasper describes God’s mercy as “God repeatedly creating new space for life and for blessing.” Together, let us create “new space” in our communities where others, especially the lonely, the poor, the displaced and the homeless can experience “life and blessing.”

May love and mercy be our guide and source of inspiration in everything we do. May we be witnesses of hope and mercy in the midst of suffering and tragedies. May we encounter Christ in the poor and like Him, be the “face of the Father’s mercy.”

Marife Mendoza fdnsc



A Christmas full of blessing in the Generalate

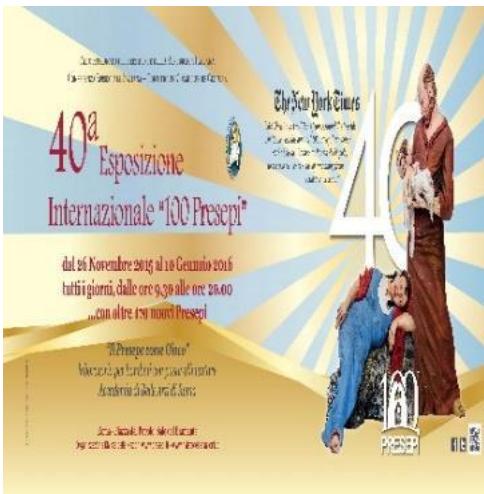
As Generalate Community we celebrated our second Christmas together. Looking back on the first one, there was one thing that we all missed: last year we all went at different times to different churches to celebrate Christmas Eve in our own language. So we didn't celebrate together as community.



We decided that this year we would attend the Eucharist together, because as Bing Crosby said: "Unless we make Christmas an occasion to share our blessings, all the snow in Alaska won't make it white!" So we went together to the Church of Saint Xavier, also known as the Oratory of Caravita. Sr. Gerardine, who stayed with us over Christmas, went with us. The celebration started at 18.30 with the singing of Christmas Carols and at 19.00 was the Eucharist. After a festive celebration in the church, we went to our own chapel where Sr. Laurentia laid baby Jesus in the crib while we were singing "Silent Night." Then we had a delicious meal, followed by an exchange of gifts. We all wrote down on a card five facts about ourselves that are not so well known by the others. Before giving the present to our *kris kringle*, we had to find her card. That was not always easy, but we discovered some new things about one another. It was already midnight when we went to bed.

The First Christmas day everybody had the opportunity to go to a Eucharistic Celebration of her own choice and at 13.00 we had lunch with our Italian Sisters. To thank them for their invitation we sang some Italian Christmas songs. We enjoyed our time with them.

The Second Christmas day we went to an exposition of 100 Christmas cribs from all over the world, followed by a walk, visiting Churches and looking at their Christmas cribs. Grateful for all the blessings of this Christmas time, we are encouraged to start the New Year with enthusiasm.



Introducing our new General Archivist



Hi Everyone. I am Sr. Linda Strayer, a member of the Irish province. Many of you may already know me from Cor Novum or the IFT. I was born in 1948 in Philadelphia, PA, in the USA, the eldest of 7 children. I entered our congregation in 1969 and after completing a degree in nursing, worked 18 years as a nurse either in the US or in South Africa. In 1990 I began studies in formation and spirituality and was asked to join the Cor Novum team in Issoudun in 1997, where I remained until its closure in August 2015. Sr. Marife then asked me to become the general archivist and I came to Rome in September 2015.

This is a very new ministry for me and although much work remains to be done, I'm grateful to have come to an already well-ordered archives, thanks to the diligent and professional work of our past recent archivists, Sr. Mary Venard Pettit (1975 – 1993), Sr. Immaculata van Wijngaarden (1993 – 2005), and Sr. Bernadette Koning, who although very occupied as general secretary, also accepted the responsibility of being general archivist beginning in 2006, until my arrival here in September 2015. Soon I hope to do a course for beginning archivists, so that I too can be better prepared for the challenging work of safeguarding, and now digitalizing, all the documentation regarding our congregational history.

Wake up the World Gospel, Prophecy, Hope

About 5000 young consecrated men and women from all parts of the world gathered in Rome from the 15th -19th of September to take part in the World Meeting for Young Consecrated Men and Women organized by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life as part of the Year of Consecrated Life.



Four of our young sisters (Sr Sylvie Mengue from Cameroon who is currently finishing her doctorate in Rome, Sr Etera Toaia from Kiribati who is currently missioned in Slovakia, and Srs Rabunateiti Moote and Mariteiti Tooto from Kiribati who are currently missioned in France) participated in the meeting. There were also two young MSC Sisters. All of them found the meeting really enriching. Below, Sr Mariteiti shares with us her personal reflections.

Our young sisters in front of St Peter's Basilica after the vigil on 15 Sept. Standing, from left to right: Sylvie, Etera, Stephanie (MSC), Brito (MSC); sitting: Rabunateiti and Mariteiti.

Before being called to something, I am called to Someone; before being called to do, I am called to be. I am Sr Mariteiti Tooto from Kiribati and I have been missioned in France since 2008. Regarding the “World Meeting for young consecrated men and women” in Rome in September 2015, I really felt deep insight. To be there was for me an extraordinary and remarkable moment.

There were words and phrases from our Holy Father that really touched my heart and brought tears to my eyes. Prophecy, closeness, memory and adoration are the key words for consecrated life mentioned by Pope Francis. He said “*The Lord calls you – and calls all of us – to the 'prophetic way' of freedom, that is the freedom that is to be united with witness and fidelity... Prophecy, the capacity to dream, is the opposite of rigidity. And observance must not be rigid: if it is, it is personal egoism.*”

He further said: “*I would like to give thanks for the witness of consecrated women. You always have the wish to go to the front line, as you are mothers, you have the maternity of the Church that brings you close to people. ... You are the icons of the Church's tenderness and love, of the maternity of the Church and of Our Lady.*” When the Pope said these words I had mixed feelings, a kind of feeling that I can't explain and at the same time it really touched my heart so tears came out.

My sincere thanks to our sisters in Rome, the Mother General and her councillors for their great support and also to the French provincial superior, Sr Raymonde, and her councillors for giving me this opportunity to participate in this gathering. “*We should pray as though everything depends on God and work as though everything depends on us. Praying for the Lord to guide our footsteps will be ineffective unless you are willing to move your feet*” (St Augustine).

Faith, trust and maturity will deepen and make us grow into the women God needs for the mission He has chosen for us through our Founder's charism. Ametur!!!



Sr Madeleine and Sr Laurentia visit Congo and Angola

From August 19 to September 19, Sisters Madeleine and Laurentia visited our sisters in Congo and Angola to meet them, see how they are doing and have some time for personal sharing and some meetings. In Congo, we have 43 sisters, 30 of which are temporarily professed. A very young, vibrant and fast growing Region indeed! In

Angola, on the other hand, we have 3 sisters, Sr Mary from PNG, Sr Susan from the Philippines and Sr Goretti from Indonesia. We accompany them with our prayers as they continue their challenging mission in Cazombo!



Visiting the Americas

In the last four months of this year, Sr Marife had the joy of visiting the Americas. In September (from the 1st to the 19th), she went north to visit our sisters in New Jersey. Later, she travelled south with Sr Elly to Brazil from October to November and to Venezuela in December.

In the USA, she was accompanied by Sr Mairead, Provincial of our Irish Province, and they were warmly welcomed by our nine sisters in New Jersey and by some MSCs and OLSH Lay Associates. While in the USA, Sr Marife was also able to visit her brother who lives in Texas with his family. Sister came back home to Rome inspired by the lives of our sisters and the “bigness” of everything in America...especially the bigness of the hearts of all those she met!



Our sisters in New Jersey, 2 MSC Sisters and an MSC Father giving Sr Marife a BIG welcome !

Let us include in our prayers the following CANONICAL VISITATIONS FOR THE FIRST HALF OF 2016:

4-25 February – South Africa

- Sr Marife and Sr Laurentia

11-20 March – Italy

- Sr Marife and Sr Madeleine

April (tentative) – France

- Sr Marife and Sr Madeleine

1-26 June – The Netherlands

- Sr Marife and Sr Elly

27 June – 10 July – Belgium

- Sr Marife and Sr Elly



Visitation to Brazil and Venezuela

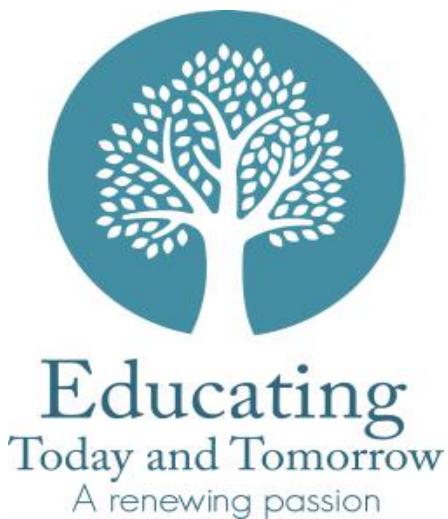


the 5th biggest country in the world (8,514,877 km²) whereas the Philippines is number 72 on the list of largest countries with 300,000 km² and the Netherlands is only 134th on the list with 41,543 km².

From 7 October until 9 December Sr. Marife and Sr. Elly visited Brazil and Venezuela. Two questions were asked of them frequently. The first one was: What do you think of Brazil or Venezuela? The second one: What do you think of the Brazilians?

Of course, their first impression was that both Brazil and Venezuela are very big countries. You can imagine how they marvelled at the vastness of these countries, when you know that Brazil is and Venezuela the 33rd (912,050 km²)

Both sisters also immediately experienced that the Brazilians are a mixed race people. They form one of the most culturally diverse groups on the planet. Another significant character of Brazilians is that they are outwardly expressive people. Sr. Marife and Sr. Elly never have had so many “abraços” (hugs) as during their stay in Brazil. They enjoyed visiting our Sisters in the 15 communities in Brazil and the community in Venezuela, grateful for the encounters with our sisters, with the people they serve, with the Associates and with family members of our Sisters. They enjoyed the hospitality and friendship of our sisters and the beautiful nature of the countries. They were proud to hear how much our Sisters are appreciated in the schools and the parishes and they admired the courage of our missionaries in Venezuela. All this really gave them the feeling of unity in diversity! A big “Thank you” to our Brazilian Sisters! You can read more about this visit in the Visitation Report.



World Congress for Educators

18-21 November 2015, Rome

From 16 to 23 November, we had the pleasure of welcoming here in the Generalate, three guests from PNG, Sr Mary McCarthy, Catherine Nongkas and Tita Kavanamur (one of our Lay Associates from Rabaul). They were here to attend the World Congress for Educators organized by the Congregation for Catholic Education. This is in celebration of the 50th anniversary of Vatican II's declaration *Gravissimum Educationis* and the 25th anniversary of the apostolic constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. On

the 21st, at the closing of the Congress, the participants had an audience with Pope Francis. Two of our sisters here in Rome, Srs Madeleine and Sylvie, who are educators themselves, also attended the audience. All came home inspired and energized especially our associate Rita who had a chance to touch Pope Francis when he went around greeting the participants. The theme of the Congress was “Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion”.





Opening of the Holy Year of Mercy

(8 December 2015)



"In a few moments I will have the joy of opening the Holy Door of Mercy...This Extraordinary Year is itself a gift of grace. To pass through the Holy Door means to rediscover the infinite mercy of the Father who welcomes everyone and goes out personally to encounter each of them. It is he who seeks us! It is he who comes to encounter us! This will be a year in which we grow ever more convinced of God's mercy... In passing through the Holy Door, then, may we feel that we ourselves are part of this mystery of love, of tenderness. Let us set aside all fear and dread, for these do not befit men and women who are loved. Instead, let us experience the joy of encountering that grace which transforms all things."

(Pope Francis, Homily on 8 Dec 2015)

Five of our sisters had the honour of attending the opening of the Holy Year of Mercy at St Peter's Square last December 8, Srs Dain and Sylvie from our Italian community and Srs Madeleine, Laurentia and Merle from the Generalate. In spite of the fact that it was a cold and wet morning and the threat to security was high because of the recent terrorist attacks in Paris and elsewhere, thousands of people gathered at Piazza San Pietro to join the Pope as he declared the Holy Year of Mercy opened and physically and symbolically opened the Holy Door of Mercy at St Peter's Basilica. It was a very touching ceremony...an experience of God's loving mercy raining down on each of us present. As one MSC puts it, we must remember that "mercy" is the nature of Jesus' heart and thus this holy year of Mercy is actually a jubilee year of the Sacred Heart. Still filled with the mercy of the Heart of Jesus, we proceeded to a nearby restaurant to celebrate Sr Madeleine's birthday. We thanked God for the gift of life...a gift of God's never-ending mercy.



Annual Tri-Generalate meeting

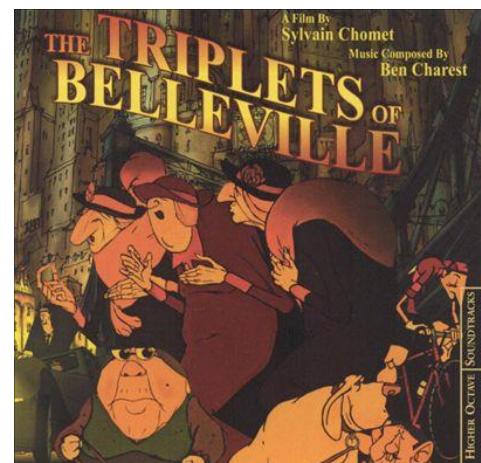
From 16 until 18 December we had our annual Tri-Generalate meeting (General Councils of MSC, MSC Sisters and Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart) in the Generalate of the MSCs. It was good to hear at the beginning, that everybody had been looking forward to this meeting. This means that we really experience the support of one another.



Rita Cleuren and Hannie Jansen of the International Lay Committee of the Chevalier Family joined us for one day. They shared with us their plans for the International meeting of the Lay-Associates in 2017 in Brazil and about their attempts to make the International Lay Committee more international, because until now it consists only of European members. We had some lively discussions and we hope that we can be a support also for them, because they do a tremendous job!!

We also spoke about the local formation teams, Cor America and APA. The latter will start in January 2016 in Manila and Sr. Merle will go there to help them set up their office.

Because “We will be more successful in all our endeavours if we can let go of the habit of running all the time, and take little pauses to relax and re-centre ourselves and because we'll have a lot more joy in living”, as Thich Nhat Hanh said, we also took time for relaxation. As usual we had our film evening complete with the traditional popcorn. We watched the film “The Triplets of Belleville” and the second night we had our Christmas party, with a real Father Christmas as a special guest. It was really good to be together as Brothers and Sisters of one big Chevalier Family.



APPOINTMENTS

GENERALATE

- Sr Linda Strayer
General Archivist

PNG Provincial Councillors

- Sr Paula Bunene
- Sr Josepha Nebos
- Sr Rosaleen O'Brien
- Sr Erica Peni
- Sr Freda Saura



Commencement of mandate: 01/01/2016.

PROFESSIONS

KIRIBATI

FIRST PROFESSION

5 September 2015:

- Sr Maretia TAKENTEBWEBWE
- Sr Tekiata AKAMATANG
- Sr Tikoruru TARAA



AFRICA

Sr Angèle SENE

PERPETUAL PROFESSION

9th January 2016 in Kaolack, Senegal