



FDNSC GENERALATE – NEWS UPDATE

Year-end 2017

From the desk of the Congregational Leader

As I write this message I am conscious of the recent series of typhoons and floods that wreaked so much havoc in Mindanao, the southern part of the Philippines. Hundreds of people were buried in landslides and thousands have been left homeless. In addition, a terrible fire inside a shopping mall in Davao, also in Mindanao, took the lives of 37 call centre employees, mostly young workers trying to earn a living for their families. Around the world we continue to hear of violence, wars, hunger, discrimination, natural disasters, etc.

As I walked around the streets of Manila, decorated with Christmas lanterns and multi-coloured Christmas lights, I saw exhausted and famished children and mothers begging for food and money at crossroads and traffic lights, and at every street corner.

In such a messy and broken world it is sometimes difficult to see and feel the joy that Christmas brings for all of us. In Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, the words of Haldir give us hope: *"The world is indeed full of peril, and in it there are many dark places; but still there is much that is fair, and though in all lands love is now mingled with grief, it still*



grows perhaps the greater." In the midst of so much pain and sorrow, love still grows.

In the Incarnation, love became flesh, love became enmeshed in our humanity. Love became a little child. Notice what happens to you when you are in the presence of a child. A child makes us less selfish. A child invites us to go beyond our ego and to reach out in love to a vulnerable human being. A child makes us see what we, as adults, tend to overlook – the sense of awe and wonder.

As we end the year 2017, let us allow ourselves to be filled with awe and wonder at the "great things the Lord has done for us." As we welcome the New Year 2018, let us embrace it with hope and with trust.

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A quick look at the year that was...

January – Initial preparations for the General Conference, first meeting with Sr Piluca, conference facilitator.

February – Canonical Visitation of the Region of Senegal, Sr Marife and Sr Madeleine; Opening of the first Cor Vitae nine-month formation program for formators, (Tagaytay, Philippines); 109th Death Anniversary of Mother Marie Louise Hartzler.

March – Approval of Revised Formation Handbook and meeting with Sr Tiziana Merletti, Canon Lawyer.

April – Annual visit to the Japan Community, Sr Marife and Sr Madeleine

May – Canonical Visitation of the Province of France, Sr Marife and Sr Madeleine; SEDOS Seminar: *Economy at the Service of Mission*; Preparations for the General Conference continue; Indonesia holds its Provincial Assembly; Members of the Generalate community attend the celebrations of the Feast of OLSH in Rome, France, the Netherlands and the USA.

June – Canonical Visitation of the community in Angola, Sr Marife and Sr Elly; Council reviews the draft Provincial Administration Handbook and Handbook on International Mission Experience; OLSH Seminars in Merauke with Sr Merle, (Indonesia)

July – 3rd International Meeting of the Laity of the Chevalier Family (São Paulo, Brazil), Alison McKenzie is elected General Secretary with Doris Machado as her deputy; Australia and Brazil hold their respective Provincial Assemblies; OLSH Seminars in Ambon and Langgur, (Indonesia)

August – Ireland holds its Provincial Assembly (Ballybay); Final preparations for the General Conference; Kiribati opens its Provincial Assembly which then ends in early September; 143rd FDNSC Foundation Day.

September – MSC General Chapter and election of Fr Abzalón Alvarado Tovar from Guatemala as the new MSC Superior General; Opening of the 11th FDNSC General Conference.

October – General Conference and welcoming Sisters and friends to Rome; France holds its Provincial Assembly; 110th Death Anniversary of Fr Jules Chevalier.

November – Canonical Visitation of the Australian Province, Sr Marife and Sr Elly; Ongoing formation for Sisters of the Italian Community; Culmination of the Cor Vitae Program for Formators

December – Christmas and the end of the year... **Goodbye 2017!!!!**

Looking forward to 2018

We remember in our prayers the Sisters of the PNG Province who will be having their Provincial Assembly from January 2.

We are present in 28 countries around the world. So far, Sr Marife (usually accompanied by one councillor) has already visited 18 countries as at the end of 2017. Ten more to go!

Hello and welcome 2018!!!!



Ongoing Formation of the Italian Sisters

As part of ongoing formation, our Italian Sisters have always had opportunities to participate in various spiritual and theological conferences. The community leader, Sr Silvia Soldà, often organized these conferences. However, given the current realities of an aging community, a human-centred conference was needed.

Therefore, on October 26th,



The Italian Sisters with Sr Madeleine

Sisters were able to participate in a conference organized by Sr Madeleine Ngoy in collaboration with Sr Silvia. The goal was to help our Sisters increase their resources on all levels in order to age well with their heart and body - without remorse, without fear, without regrets, without a fixed look on time - but rather with pride in having white hair and keeping a healthy body, to be beautiful both inside and out. At each age, there is happiness, and death is not related only to age.



Prof. Laura Salvo

With this in mind, Prof. Laura Salvo, Professor in the Department of Psychopedagogy and Training for Religious Life at the *Regina Apostolorum* University in Rome, presented a lecture entitled "*Community Dynamics and Problems: Cure and Prevention*". She touched on several points: emotions, relationships, community dynamics and the specificity of the life cycle. The main objectives of

this conference were self-awareness, mutual listening and mutual assistance for aging well and having a beautiful and harmonious community life.

On December 7th, Sr Merle led a reflection on the history of our congregation. The Sisters were very happy to remember once again our common history.



Reflecting on our FDNSC Story with Sr Merle

On December 12th in the afternoon, Father Armando Genovese MSC also made himself available to present the different roles of the great figures we meet in the biblical readings of Advent time.



Attentively listening to Fr Armando MSC

This presentation was a preparation for the Sisters for the festivities of the nativity of Our Lord Jesus.

The commendable effort of our Sisters to revitalize themselves is admirable. I congratulate them for the desire and the interest that they have to be spiritually refreshed despite their age and numbers. – Sr Madeleine Ngoy

CULMINATION OF THE COR VITAE FORMATION PROGRAM FOR FORMATORS – 14 NOVEMBER 2017

The nine-month Program for Formators which began on February 15th and was organized and run by the Cor Vitae Team in Tagaytay, in the Philippines, had its closing ceremonies last November 14th. All 15 participants (9 MSC men, 1 MSC Sister and 5 FDNSCs) successfully graduated. By the time you read this article, the participants are already back in their respective countries where most of them are now engaged in the ministry of Formation. We congratulate the team, the participants, the APA Executive Committee and all those who were involved in the program.



At the end of the program, the participants wrote their reflections about their experience. Short excerpts from the reflection papers of our Sisters follow:

Sr Korete Terimoa – Kiribati

- My general impression of this nine month programme is that it was excellent...The modules given were in line with the theme of the programme, “Rediscover within the source of living Water”...
- For me it has helped me to journey deeper into my own self and discover the potentials that lie within...It also helped me to understand deeply that whatever happens in life, God allows it to happen for a purpose ... he let it happen in order that God will reveal his love to me and for me to experience his unconditional love. In undergoing this process... my knowledge and my understanding of myself, my own spirituality and my personal relationship with Christ deepened and was nourished...

Sr Kolumba Eni Suyanti - Indonesia

- Personally I feel very lucky and grateful to have been part of the Cor Vitae Program and to have participated in its activities. Thanks to my beloved Congregation...the Cor Vitae Team...Lecturers/facilitators...the Augustinian Sisters and staff...and all the participants, especially my beloved friends in my small group.
- I also learned to live and relate to others more freely and the way in which we can become compassionate human beings, specifically as members of the international missionary Chevalier



Family... Challenges are part of this journey because of different backgrounds, cultures, languages, countries of origin and the personalities of each individual...but from this wealth of diversity there opened a unity among us in our spirituality. Openness, understanding, and acceptance of differences has a wealth of its own that ultimately enriches and develops our relationships with one another.

Sr Betty A. Baroro - Philippines

- This program is true to its theme: “Rediscover within the source of living water”...
- There were some concrete experiences in these nine months that taught me to see and open myself to the lesson that it offers. I learned to have a healthy questioning of myself. I tried to

review and reconsider life events with the eyes of Love and Faith. I realized that I need to do my part, not to close my eyes but rather to awaken my awareness of being part of the whole. I need to do this, first for myself, and then for others, even if in the process it causes pain. I asked why I need to do the things I do. The question led me to further reflection and discovered that it is because of LOVE...

Sr Marie Louise Hau - PNG

- I haven't worked in the area of formation before, and when I was asked by my Provincial and her Councillors, I had my doubts and fears, but as Mary did, I accepted because personally I was convinced that this program was "The Formation for Formators". One of my expectations of this program was, first and foremost, to be formed personally and then to be formed to be a good formator in the future. The other was to learn and gain qualities and skills to be a formator and also to rediscover more of myself...I would say that my expectations were met, especially the formation and rediscoveries and discoveries of myself and at least I have learnt some skills for Formation Ministry.
- Another of my expectations in the beginning was to be able to know each other, understand and accept others' differences and cultures as we were living in an international community, coming from 8 different countries. It has been a very good experience for me, coming from different countries and cultures, but for the one purpose as one family (The Chevalier Family). I have been enriched by each one's giftedness and talents and sharing during our discussions.

Sr Tabera Kakiabo - Kiribati

- My general impression of the 9 months program was good. It was interesting and enriching, being the first program of this kind for the three congregations. This gave me the opportunity to experience the common sharing of the Charism and the Spirituality of the Heart that we have in the Heart of Christ. Though I have come from a different part of the world, culture and personal background, I still felt at home in the common life we shared in the Heart of Christ
- I wish and pray that this 9 months program will continue into the future. Thank you, for the great opportunity of being in the first group to be in this 9 months program for formators in the Chevalier Family.

All the 15 participants share the same wish and prayer - that this 9-month Formation Program for Formators would continue into the future. We thank and congratulate the whole Cor Vitae Team and the speakers and facilitators. Special thanks to the leaders of the three congregations in the Philippines who make up the APA Executive Committee - Fr Bogey Cabrera, Sr Carol Terpstra and Sr Sally Amodia. To all, thank you and congratulations!



VISITATION OF THE PROVINCE OF AUSTRALIA

From November 10 until December 13, 2017 Sr Marife and Sr Elly visited our oldest Province: Australia! Within this vast country the two Sisters travelled many kilometres by plane to visit our Sisters in the 4 different States and one Territory where they live and work. Sr Marife and Sr Elly were received everywhere with enormous hospitality. It was great to meet each sister personally, and also to see the apostolates and the way in which they are continued by lay partners in our mission. There was always only one complaint: "The time was too short!"



At St. Bernard's Primary School in Botany, which is the first school that our Sisters ever started in the world according to the pupils, one boy said: "Was it not your Founder who said: "There will be no strangers among you"? Sr Marife and Sr Elly were very grateful for the opportunity to get to know so many Sisters, communities, MSC's, associates and lay partners more deeply. They also appreciated all the nice experiences that they had during this visitation. Together we continue our Mission to make the Sacred Heart of Jesus everywhere loved. You will be able to read more in the visitation report that you will receive soon.

NEWS FROM SOUTH AFRICA

Recently I had the opportunity to spend some weeks with our Sisters in South Africa. I stayed in Tzaneen and from there was also able to visit Holy Family Care Centre, Ofcolaco, as well as Nzhelele.

Since my stay was during the lead-up to Christmas, there were a number of special activities scheduled and I was fortunate to be able to attend some of them.



Orphans and Vulnerable Children Day in Nzhelele

There was a special day for approximately 80 children who are orphans. Each one was picked up by bus and brought to the place of the gathering. During this day, the children had lots of fun activities, including dancing, sport, talks. The lunch was a hearty chicken meal, which is always a favourite.

At Nzhelele in late November there was a much appreciated retreat day for those who work as Carers. This was facilitated by Sr Rotee and included input, times of quiet and times of sharing. During lunch there was joyful singing and dancing.

Meanwhile, in Tzaneen, during the lead-up to Christmas, parcels of clothes and food were being organized for orphans and families in need. At Ofcolaco, many of the children were farewelled as they returned to relatives for the holiday break.

In addition, I was able to attend a pre-Christmas thanksgiving celebration, including Mass and lunch, for those who work in the Diocese of Tzaneen; this was hosted at Ave Maria Pastoral Centre.

I was fortunate to be in Tzaneen at the time of the South African celebration of Sr Helen Armstrong's Golden Jubilee, a blessed and joyful occasion for all who attended.



Guardians' Retreat Day

I found a warm welcome in South Africa, and great appreciation of all that our Sisters have contributed in the past and for all that they continue to contribute today. May each one be blessed!

– Sr Jenny Christie

November and December...Advent and Christmas in Rome!

So, how did we spend the last two months of the year here in Rome? There were seminars and meetings to attend, days of prayer and Christmas gatherings, Christmas shopping and gift giving...probably very similar to the way you spent the same two months in your own countries and communities. Here are some activities and photos...

On November 3 Sr Merle attended on behalf of Sr Elly, our JPIC Coordinator, a meeting of the Network for West Papua in Rome. The meeting was held at the Generalate of the Augustinians and 10 representatives from different congregations were present. The Network is planning to join an ecumenical visit to West Papua in 2018.



On November 18, Sr Madeleine participated in a seminar at the Pontifical University *Regina Apostolorum* in Rome. There were 150 men and women religious participating. The theme of the seminar was “**The reasons of the heart: To form oneself in Affectivity.**”

The purpose of this meeting was to reflect on the formation of the heart in all its magnitude and to allow consecrated persons to cultivate the riches of an integral affectivity (fully human and entirely devoted to God). In the contemporary doctrine of formation in the consecrated life, the theme of affective maturity is devoted to the psychosexual field and to the formation of chastity or sexuality. That is also very good. However, affectivity is wider than that. There is indeed a set of affective states: feelings, emotions and passions of a person. This set constitutes the most fundamental part of the mental life, not only the base from which the inter-human relations are built, but also all the links uniting the individual to his/her environment.



The speakers invited the participants to continue promoting holistic formation in formation houses - a formation that takes account of the human and spiritual aspects of the person to avoid affective immaturity. Formators are called also to help their candidates understand that religious consecration does not separate humanity from the spiritual. We are a unity: we are not cut into slices like a sausage; the two areas are integrated into the person. To this

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end, formation in emotional maturity fits into this context as an important and decisive element - the true outcome of formation enabling us to have true and responsible love in our communities.

On December 2, Sr Margaret, Sr Laurentia and Sr Merle attended the annual Advent Day of Prayer for English speaking Sisters in Rome. As in previous years, it was held at the Generalate of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. This year, the speaker was Fr Mark Attard OCarm. He said, “*We know when, where and even how we were born but we do not know when, where and how we will die. BUT we have the assurance that Jesus will call us to himself at the exact moment when we are most prepared to meet him, not a moment before, not a moment later...such is the kindness of our God.*”

On December 6, Sr Laurentia and Sr Merle attended a meeting about the Catholic Divest Project of the Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM). The GCCM endeavours to implement *Laudato Si* and one way is by encouraging institutions to divest from companies that contribute to the destruction of the environment.



On December 9, Sr Laurentia hosted the *REHAT* meeting. *REHAT* is an Indonesian word which means break or relax. In Rome, the *REHAT* group is the group of Indonesian religious who work in the Generalates of their respective congregations. The group started in 2001 and the pioneers of this group are Fr Wardjito SCJ, Fr John Mangkey MSC, Fr Tan Tian Sing MSF, Br Mammouth OSC, and Br Adrian FC. In the beginning, the members were only priests and brothers but sometime later they invited the Sisters to join. The first Sisters who joined *REHAT* were Sr Caroline Sudarwati FDNOSC, Sr Kornelia FCJM, Sr Dolorosa OSU, Sr Sesilia Indah SSps, Sr Yoseta OSF and Sr Yasinta SND. As expressed in its name, the purpose of the *REHAT* group is to provide a venue for the sharing of experiences of each member and discussing the social and political situation in Indonesia. At the same time, it is a break time or time to relax from the members' regular responsibilities. Through this venue, the members learn how the different congregations participate in the ministries of the Church in the entire world. At the same time, as Indonesians, they try to be involved in the concerns of their country as Christians.



Members of REHAT who were present on 9 December

The members who were able to come to the December 9 meeting were Fr Agustinus Purnama MSF, Fr Frans Lee Hendarto MSF, Fr Paulus Budi Kleden SVD, Fr Benny Phang OCarm, Fr Laurentius Tarpin OSC, Fr YB Rosaryanto OSC, Fr R Sumarwata MSC, Fr Hans Ngala MSC, Sr Rosalia Pakpahan FCJM, Sr Emmanuella Pane FCJM, Sr Moekti OSU, Sr Nurhayati OSU and Sr Veronica Endah MC.

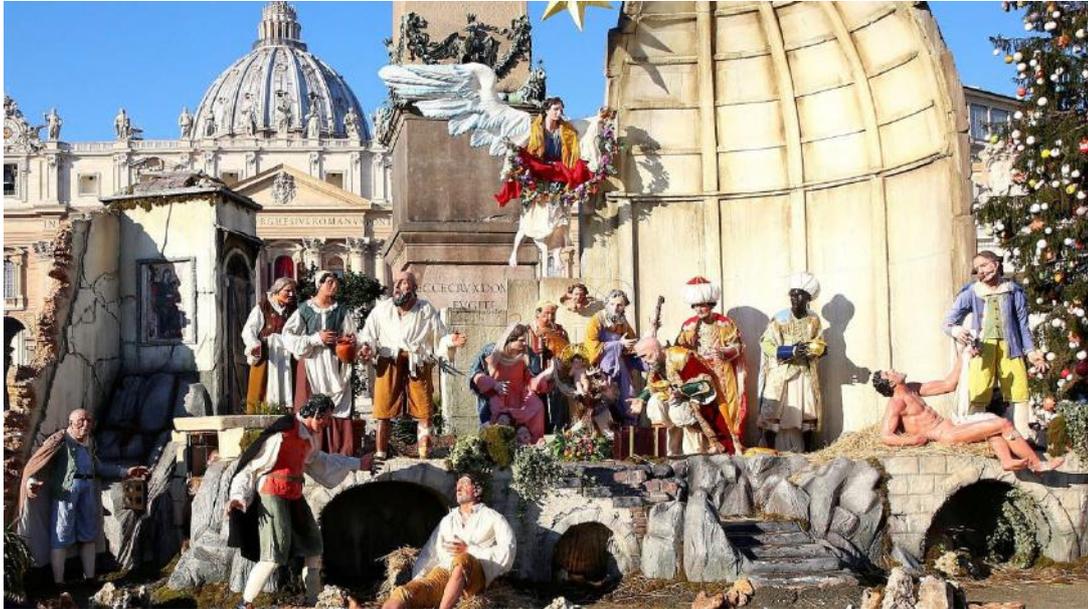
After the meeting, the group treated our Generalate Community to a sumptuous Indonesian meal.

On December 21 and 22, we had our Christmas morning tea with our friends who work in our Generalate. These include Sr Elena, one of our Italian Sisters, Vittorio and his wife Marcella, Marjeta and Veronica. We also had a quick Christmas visit from Fr Abzalón, the new MSC Superior General. He was accompanied by Sophy, one of their lay staff at the MSC Generalate.

For the Christmas Eve Mass, our community was spread out attending masses in Dutch, French and English. On December 25, Christmas Day, we had our traditional lunch with our Italian Sisters. This shared lunch only happens on Christmas day, Easter Sunday and the Feast of Our

Lady of the Sacred Heart. It is a time when we enjoy a meal together and each other's company. In the evening of Christmas Day, we have our little party as a Generalate Community. This year, Sr Margaret and Sr Jenny prepared the program and the games. As in previous years, the party ended with the distribution and opening of gifts!

December 26 is still a holiday in Italy. It is on this day that we, as a community, go out to a restaurant for lunch and walk around Rome visiting churches and enjoying the many Christmas cribs in the city. This year, the crib at St Peter's Square is high tech! To be able to get a



description of it, one has to download a code reader and connect to their *Wifi*. Luckily, such high tech things are peanuts for Sr Laurentia!! So we did not only enjoy seeing the crib, we also enjoyed listening to the audio! And we really needed an audio guide! Looking at this year's crib in St Peter's square (see photo), one wonders...who are all these characters? What is a naked man, a man in prison, even a corpse, doing in a Christmas crib?! It is interesting to note that the different characters represent the seven corporal works of mercy – feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, visiting the sick, setting the captives free and burying the dead. The people from Naples who made this year's crib, did not want us to forget that a real celebration of Christ's birth is one that puts into practice the very essence of Christ, the very meaning of Christmas...**MERCY!**

We missed Sr Marife throughout the Christmas celebrations as she was in the Philippines but she was very much united with us in spirit!

SO FROM ALL OF US....

