



FDNSC GENERALATE – NEWS UPDATE

January 2017

From the desk of the Congregational Leader

As I write this message for the first issue of the Generalate News Update this year, I am thinking of every member of our Congregation, across the world, across cultures, across ages, across generations, those I have met face to face, and those I will still meet, sooner or later. Using the words of St. Paul, I want to say to each one “I thank my God each time I think of you, and when I pray for you, I pray with joy.” (Phil. 1:3)

I am truly grateful for this wonderful gift and opportunity to travel and to personally encounter our sisters in the places where they live and work. So far, I have visited 14 countries: Japan, Cameroon, Indonesia, USA, Brazil, Venezuela, South Africa, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium, Ireland, England, Philippines, and Vietnam. Visiting our sisters in their own social and cultural context is always an enriching experience, one that allows me to see and experience the realities of their lives, participate in their community activities, be immersed in their ministries, share their joys, struggles and dreams, and together discern how and where God is leading us.

Every visitation leaves me with a sense of gratitude and admiration and deepens my conviction that we have been gifted with a “sublime” mission. Fr. Jules Chevalier articulated this so beautifully when he said, “*If only we could understand the sublimity of the mission entrusted to us - May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be loved everywhere.*” (Jules Chevalier MSC, 1900 - *Analecta III*, 60)

We exist; we are in this world, not for ourselves, but for a mission. Pope Francis calls us to live “permanently in a state of mission.” (EG #25) He often reminds us that our mission of “being in the heart of the people” is not an “extra.” Rather, it is part of our very being - “I am a mission on this earth; that is the reason why I am in this world.” (EG #273)

“...in this world.” This world is the context of our mission today. And our world of today is being shaken by seismic events: dehumanizing poverty, armed conflict and violence, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, human trafficking, ecological degradation, etc. These *mal moderne*, these social problems, are global in nature. Consequently, a global response is needed. They call us to global solidarity. There is an urgent call to “pay attention to the global as we look to the local, which keeps our feet on the ground.” (*Proclaim: To consecrated men and women, witnesses of the Gospel among peoples*, #70) Each of us, each community, each province/region, is called to reflect on these global realities and to search, and to discern together for appropriate and realistic responses.

Our Constitutions invite us to be “attentive to emerging needs, particularly those resulting from poverty, violence, oppression, the degradation of the environment and the dislocation of peoples...” (#59)

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From the desk of the Congregational Leader

The following quote from Sr. Mary Sujita SND is worth pondering:

“We humbly acknowledge that, in the face of all the global issues of injustice that beset us, we can do very little as individuals or even as communities and congregations. But imagine, if each woman religious individually and we together as congregations, would reach out even to a few persons on the margins, how the margins would be transformed into islands of hope!” (Solidarity for life on the Periphery, Talk given at the UISG Plenary Assembly, May 2016)

Sr Marife Mendoza, fdnsc

Canonical Visits to the Philippines (9-28 October 2016) and Vietnam (30 Oct – 6 November 2016)

Sr Marife Mendoza and Sr Madeleine Ngoy travelled to the Philippines and Vietnam in October and November to visit our sisters in their communities and ministries in the two countries. In the Philippines, in addition to the 20 Filipina sisters working in the country, they were also welcomed by the eight FDNSCs from other countries who are in Manila for studies or ministry (4 Indonesians, 2 PNG, 1 Kiribati and

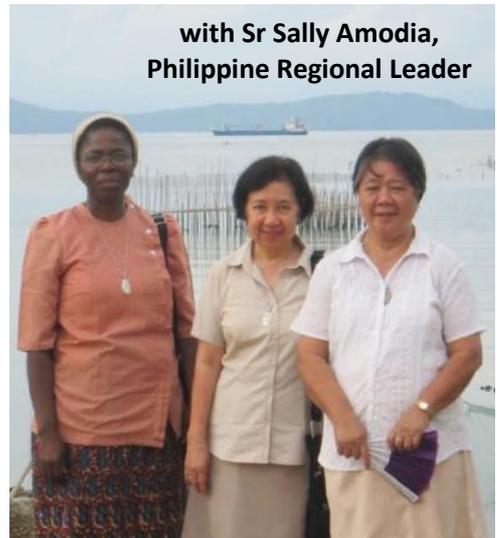
1 Cameroun). Although we have only one sister in Vietnam at the moment, Sr Precy was not alone in welcoming the visitors for she has a network of friends within and outside the Chevalier family. After a

full month of visitation, Sr Marife spent time with her family while Sr Madeleine returned to Rome to prepare for her next trip. Both were full of admiration for all the sisters they have encountered, for their hard work and steadfastness in living our mission of making the Love of Jesus known everywhere. Check out the visitation reports for the details and photos of the Visitations.

with Sr Precy Peralta
in Vietnam



with Sr Sally Amodia,
Philippine Regional Leader



THE MEMORIAL OF 109TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDER AND THE LAUNCHING OF “COR VITAE” FORMATION TEAM OF THE CHEVALIER FAMILY

(by Sam Maranresy MSC and the *Cor Vitae* Team)



At 5pm, on 21st October 2016, we, the Chevalier Family celebrated the Memorial of the 109th Death Anniversary of our Founder, Fr. Jules Chevalier in the MSC Scholasticate, Quezon City, Manila. The Mass was presided by Fr. Alwin Malto MSC and was attended by more than 200 members of the Chevalier Family. Sr. Marife Mendoza FDNSC, Congregational Leader, and Sr. Madeleine Ngoy FDNSC, General Councillor, both attended the Mass. They were on a canonical visit to the members of the congregation in the Philippines. The Chevalier Family in the Philippines consists of three religious congregations (MSC Men, MSC Women and FDNSC Sisters) and Lay Associates.

All preparations for this celebration were done by the MSC Scholastics and Collegians. They cleaned and decorated the chapel beautifully. In front of the altar, on the right side, there was a big picture of Father Jules Chevalier and on the left side there were two banners of *Cor Vitae* and in between these two banners, beautifully framed copies of the Logo and Vision-Mission-Goals of *Cor Vitae* were displayed.

The Mass continued very well, accompanied by the beautiful voices of the MSC Scholastics and Collegians. They sang together in a choir, conducted by Fr. Aerts Mateo MSC. During the Penitential Rite, while the choir was singing Lord Have Mercy, the lights went off! Thus the organist could not play the organ. Yet the choir could still sing the song, accompanied by violin and guitar. The chapel became hotter due to no electricity and of course the electric fans were not functioning. The *Cor Vitae* members were a bit anxious at this time for, according to the plan, the launching of *Cor Vitae* and its Formation Programs would be after the concluding prayer.

We were lucky the lights went on again during the Alleluia. Everyone was amazed as if this was a trans-migration from the death to the resurrection. Everyone felt at ease since the electric fans were functioning again. The Gospel could be read using the microphone and the homily was delivered by Sam Maranresy MSC, the director of *Cor Vitae*, and it was beautiful. After the concluding prayer, it was time for *Cor Vitae* to launch the Name and Logo, Vision-Mission-Goals of the team and Formation Programs.



Cor Vitae Team Members with Sr Marife



The *Cor Vitae* Team: Sr Cathie, Fr Sam & Sr Sophy

The APA Execom: Sr Sally, Sr Carol & Fr Gene

Sr. Carol Terpstra MSC, on behalf of the APA Execom, called and welcomed the *Cor Vitae* team to the altar. Then, Sr. Sophy Francis MSC, *Cor Vitae* member, introduced the team members and thanked all who have been working hand in hand with the *Cor Vitae* Team, especially the three Generals and their Councils and the APA Execom, to actualize its purpose. After the short introduction Sr. Cathie Mwagioidi FDNSC gave a brief history of *Cor Vitae* by a Power Point Presentation. This included the Name, the Logo, the Vision-Mission-Goals of the team and the Formation Programs that the team had designed for the Chevalier Family. The presentation lasted not more than 15 minutes.

The Mass and the launching of *Cor Vitae* were concluded by the final blessing. Before leaving the MSC Scholasticate, all the participants had dinner together as one family.

PREPARATION FOR FINAL VOWS IN CONGO



Just a few days after she arrived in Rome from Vietnam, Sr Madeleine packed her bags again, this time to go to her home country, the Democratic Republic of Congo, for her retreat and to help in the preparation for Final Vows of the young sisters in Congo. Upon the invitation of the Region of Congo, Sr Madeleine gave sessions to five young Congolese sisters. There were actually eight sisters in the program but, due to sickness and studies, three were not able to attend the sessions which were held in Iyonda from 24th November to 4th December 2016. In their letter to the General Council

dated 5 December, the five participating sisters expressed their deep gratitude and appreciation of Sr Madeleine's sessions with them. They said "We are very happy for your attention and your desire to form the young sisters as manifested by the fact that you sent Sr Madeleine Ngoy despite her multiple occupations.

She has given her whole self, body and soul, to make us real Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, witnesses of the love of Christ. We are very delighted with the sessions which were rich for our integral life and which allowed us to review the life of our founder, our charism and spirituality as well as community life." Together



The sisters on retreat: Sr Léa KPOYABUMU, Sr Judith IKUMA, Sr Chantal MULENDA, Sr Sandra NDIOBO & Sr Bibiane BAIMBELO.

With thanking us, the sisters also asked us to support them with our prayers so that they will be able to apply in their daily living the beautiful lessons they have learned. And so we congratulate Sr Madeleine and our young sisters from Congo. We also promise them our prayers especially for their nation in this time of political unrest.



Sr Mary Fyfe Memorial Education Fund

Sisters, we would like to let you know that, during the latter part of 2016, we established the **Sr Mary Fyfe Memorial Education Fund**. The naming of the Fund reflects the involvement of Sr Mary in the apostolate of education over many years, and the importance she placed upon the continuing education of our Sisters in order to prepare them for ministry. Each Provincial Leader received more detailed information than we have space for in this bulletin, but you will find the basic details below.

The purpose of the Fund is to help Sisters access an undergraduate qualification which will lead them directly into a ministry of the Congregation. The Fund will be administered through the Generalate. Applications to the Fund will be submitted by Provincial Leaders, with supporting documentation from the Region (where there is one) and the individual Sister concerned. You will be pleased to know that already we have been blessed with contributions to the Fund by Provinces and individual donors. May this initiative bring many blessings for the good of the Congregation!

Our Journey to the Pacific

When it was decided that we, Sr. Merle and Sr. Elly, would attend the APA meeting in Kiribati, Sr. Beneteta invited us to use the opportunity to give some input to the Kiribati Sisters and to visit their new mission in Samoa. Our journey to the Pacific which started on 2 November and ended on 9 December was full of different activities and left us with many different impressions.



From Rome we travelled, via Hong Kong to Fiji,



Srs Merieti & Toaki from Suva

where we visited our Sisters in Suva. We arrived in Nadi and then took the bus to Suva where we stayed with our sisters for three days. In this little time, we celebrated with them the birthday of Sr Merieti and the end-of-year activities of the MSC and Kiribati seminarians in Suva as well as visited the different MSC communities and ministries. We also met an MSC Sister who studies in Suva and who stays with our community on weekends. The quick stop turned out to be a meaningful time spent with our Chevalier Family! Thank you, dear sisters and brothers, for your hospitality and generosity! On 6 November, our sisters and brothers brought us back to Nadi where we spent the night for our early morning trip to Tarawa.

We finally arrived on Tarawa in Kiribati on 7 November. All the communities in Kiribati were involved in the APA meeting (from the preparations to the completion). The meeting started on 8 November. Each community took a turn to prepare our meals, while the elderly sisters made beautiful decorations for the veranda where we had our welcome and farewell



The Indonesian Sisters being welcomed to Tarawa by our Kiribati Sisters



Sr Teneiti busy making decorations

party. In addition to the APA Conference about Climate Change (about which you can read in our JPIC Bulletin) we had additional items on the agenda. We spoke about several matters including an action plan for Kiribati in connection to Climate Change; *Cor Vitae*; the FDNCS Mission in Japan; policies and practices to prevent child abuse; policies on the responsible use of technology and finally we looked towards the future and decided on the theme and venue of the next APA Meeting.

On 17 November most participants of the APA meeting went home. On 18 November, we visited the archives of our Kiribati Province, which are very well kept by Sr. Margaret Sullivan, Provincial Archivist. Because the mission of Kiribati forms part of the early history of our Congregation and because of the enthusiasm of Sr. Margaret, we found this visit very inspiring and interesting.



Sr Margaret showing us the FDNCS Archives in Kiribati



On Saturday 19 November Sr. Merle gave a conference, which was open to all the sisters, about “Mary, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart”. Her presentation was very well received. From 22 until 24 November we gave a Workshop about Leadership with Sr Elly as the main presenter. It was attended by 38 sisters who expressed deep appreciation for the 3-day workshop. After these days of really hard and fruitful work, it was time for a little outing and we went by speed boat to Taborio to see the community and the school. The sisters had put nice chairs for us in their boat, but on our way back the waves were so strong that the

chairs tended to fall backwards and so we thought it would be wise to sit on the floor of the boat, like the sisters who accompanied us. We arrived home very wet but safe and joyful after a really exciting and enjoyable trip on the open sea!

On 28 November we left Tarawa for Apia in Samoa, where we arrived on 29 November and stayed until 6 December. Then it was time to return to Rome, where we arrived safely on 9 December after a 2-night stop in Nadi, Fiji. We carried home with us many impressions and nice memories. We are sincerely grateful to the Kiribati Province for this great experience. It really has broadened our view of our Congregation and the world!



The Leadership Workshop in Kiribati



From 22 until 24 November, we held a Workshop on Leadership in Tarawa. All the 38 participants came with their own experiences in leadership, whether it was in a working group, a community, a parish, a school or at the provincial level. It was very enriching to share these experiences with sisters of different ages as well as with sisters who hadn't met up for a long time, because they had been working on the outer islands.

We discussed two styles of leadership: the authoritarian style and the participative leadership style. Even though we all were in favour of participative leadership, in practice we saw, like Mother Marie Louise, that “the commonest fault of young superiors is to make their authority felt”. Most of us had experienced the fact that it is not always easy to involve everybody in decision-making. We realized that leadership is not about a set of characteristics, but is a social process between the leader and the members of the group. The leader and the group members all share the responsibility for the good of the whole. It is possible to learn to lead a group by practice and by reflecting on your experiences!





All agreed that leadership within the Congregation is quite different from leadership in, for example, a business organization. In the texts of Acts 20: 17-21 we identified the following 4 characteristics of a good religious leader: 1) having an attitude of service, 2) having integrity and showing this through an attitude of transparency, 3) having genuine humility, loving concern, compassion and steadfastness in trials, and 4) being faithful in following Christ according to the

Gospel. After this, we read Constitutions numbers 87 to 91 and tried to recognize those same characteristics as expressed in the texts. This was quite a big task, but the sisters worked very hard and did not even take their break time. A real workshop!!

This all was followed by a “test”: a group of 28 sisters were asked to form a circle and then each was blindfolded. Then they were asked to form a perfect square. In the beginning, there was a lot of chaos. There was no leader... who was going to take the lead? Was she being listened to? Were other suggestions accepted? Would the group be able to complete their task? This exercise caused a lot of discussion, even long after the workshop had finished. On the last day we gathered the fruits of our workshop: the participants shared what they had learned, what they wanted to change in their style of leadership and they asked the questions they still had. To demonstrate what they had learned, the sisters got into groups and presented a role play of a situation that one of the sisters had experienced. The other sisters gave their opinion about how the leader had solved the problem and what other solutions may have been possible.



In the same way as a leader is dependent on the community, a teacher is dependent on her students and the Kiribati sisters showed themselves to be excellent students. Therefore, for both the teachers and students, this was a very instructive experience. At the conclusion of the Workshop all the participants were given a certificate testifying to their hard and enthusiastic work!!

The New Mission in Samoa

As we reported earlier, the Kiribati Province had opened a new FDNSC Mission in Samoa in January 2016 and Sr. Merle and I were invited to visit this mission after our visit to Kiribati. Sr. Maata of the Provincial Council of Kiribati went with us.

The Kiribati sisters were invited by Archbishop Alapati L. Mata’Egliga of the Archdiocese of Samoa-Apia to manage the St Peter’s Primary School in the Sacred Heart Parish in Fale Fa.



Srs Maata, Tuue, Vita, Elly & Mariateretia inside the Parish Church in Fale Fa

Sr. Mariateretia Babetara, Sr. Tuue Kantabu, a junior sister, and Sr. Vita Anitelea, who is a Samoan, were chosen and sent for this mission. They arrived in Samoa on 21 January 2016. So, when we arrived there, the sisters had been in Samoa for nearly one year.



The Sisters' Convent in Fale Fa, Samoa

Sr. Mariateretia and the parish priest met us at the airport in Apia and on the way to the convent we enjoyed the beautiful scenery. The diocese has provided a nice convent for the sisters. On one side of the convent is the house of the parish priest and the church, and on the other side of the convent is the school. In the community sharing that we had with our sisters, it became clear that



Prize giving at St Peter's Primary School

they have grown into a strong community during this first year of preparations to take over the school, which until now has been led by a lay principal. It also appeared that we were there just at the right time, because the school year was drawing to an end and it was being announced everywhere that the FDNSC were going to manage the school from the beginning of the next school year. Our presence at the official prize-giving to the best students and the formal closing of the school year once again emphasized the handing over of the school to FDNSC administration.

Many people assured us that they were very happy to have the sisters in the school and in their parish. The people of this parish have the custom of providing food for the priest, the deacon, and the Catechist every Sunday. Ever since their arrival, the sisters have been included in this group of grateful recipients. The members of Sr. Vita's family, who live in Fale Fa, are also a big support to the sisters. They also have a friend, a laywoman, who every day came to help the sisters in their daily activities.

In the past year the sisters have built up good relationships among themselves and in the parish. Sr. Mariateretia and Sr. Tuue also started to learn the Samoan language. Now a new exciting step will follow at the beginning of the new school year as our sisters take over the administration of St Peter's Primary School with Sr Mariateretia as Principal! Two more sisters will also join their community soon. We wish our missionaries all the best in their first school year and we assure them of our prayers and support.



Our pioneer sisters in Samoa: Vita, Mariateretia & Tuue



We're Going Back To School





2nd International Symposium of General Treasurers in Rome: “In the Light of the Charism: Rethinking the Use and Management of Goods of the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life”

From 25 to 27 November 2016, General Treasurers from different congregations of men and women gathered in Rome for their second international symposium organized by the Congregation



Fr Hans, Sr Blanca, Sr Laurentia
& Sr Nicola

for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Apostolic Life (CICLSAL). This was a follow up to the first International Symposium in March 2014. The symposium was held at the Auditorium of the Pontifical University Antonianum. Our Chevalier Family was well represented in the symposium with four of our members attending: Sr Blanca Modino, General Bursar of the MSC Sisters, Sr Nicola Sprenger, General Councillor of the MSC Sisters, Fr Hans Ngala, General Bursar of the MSCs and our very own General Bursar,

Sr Laurentia Piranti. Through listening to the presentations and participating in the discussions, the participants were brought to reflect on their own charisms as a basis for the use and the management of their temporal goods.

Sharing of our History from the Archives

On Tuesday December 13th, Srs. Jenny and Linda participated in a meeting of English speaking archivists in Rome. The theme of the meeting was a sharing of something from our congregational history during wartime from original archived records. During WWII, our Sisters, the MSC Sisters and the MSC Fathers and Brothers working in Rabaul were interned by the Japanese for nearly four years from January of 1942 until the armistice was signed in August of 1945. In our Generalate Archives, we have several original letters in handwritten French and one typed in English, dating from just after the liberation by Allied troops. We also have original photos of their liberation. Another account, written 40 years later by Sr. Berenice Twohill, who recently turned 100 years old in Kensington, divided their internment into 4 stages:



This photo was taken immediately after the sisters were released from Ramale camp in 1945.

- The first six months under house arrest, having no contact with the MSCs or MSC Sisters.
- Their expulsion from the convent to live in the native boys sheds.
- The total destruction of the mission by Allied bombings which forced them to live in trenches under the mountain.
- The last 18 months spent in Ramale, “a deep gorge far into the bush where no one had ever lived.”

We shared copies of the letters and photos with the archives group in

Rome and they were very moved. We had also brought along a copy of “Sisters of War,” the 2010 ABC film that was inspired by these events. The other congregations present were interested in obtaining a copy of the film, and fortunately we were still able to obtain copies from Amazon UK.

LOOKING AT INTERCULTURALITY AS CHEVALIER FAMILY

On December 14, 15 and 16, we had our annual 3-day Tri-Generalate Meeting at the MSC Generalate in Via Asmara. This year the meeting was facilitated by Sr Barbara Winkler MSC Superior General with Sr Gratia Kim MSC as secretary. Twelve of us were in attendance and, as in previous years, we spent the meeting days discussing projects and concerns common to the three congregations, we had a movie and a Christmas party in the evenings and we shared all our meals and liturgies with the MSC Generalate community whose hospitality never fails to impress us. This year too, our meeting had a particular focus: intercultural living and mission. We invited



Fr Tesfaye Tadessa, Superior General of the Comboni Missionaries, to be with us in the morning of the 15th to share with us some of his ideas and insights about interculturality. For this part, other members of our Generalate communities were invited to join. Fr Tesfaye's sharing resonated with most of us, as like him, we live in multicultural communities who endeavour to live inter-culturally. We also had a chance to go into dyads or triads and share our own experiences and learnings around the topic. As Fr Tesfaye said, interculturality "is about making our hearts bigger and bigger." For us, who live the spirituality of the Heart, interculturality then is not an option, it is the way we are called to be, now and into the future!



Fr Tesfaye MCCI

Upcoming Visitations and other Activities

**13 to 17 February – Canonical Visit to Senegal
Srs Marife and Madeleine**

**19 February – Opening of the *Cor Vitae* Formation Program for Formators,
Tagaytay (Philippines), Sr Merle**

**1 to 9 April – Annual Visit to Japan Community
Srs Marife and Madeleine**

**15 May to 5 June – Canonical Visit to France
Srs Marife and Madeleine**

**24 to 31 May – Session on OLSH with the Dutch Sisters
Srs Elly and Merle**



Christmas 2016 in Rome

Christmas in Rome this year was colder than usual with a number of sisters, both in the Generalate and in the Italian Community, getting the flu one after another (and some at the same time). Fortunately, Christmas is one of the few times when our community is complete so there was enough warmth to go around. In December, the sisters in the Generalate were not only busy with meetings but also with shopping for gifts, decorating the house for Christmas, getting the Chapel ready for the Lord's coming and of course visiting the different "presepi" (manger scenes) in and around Rome. On Christmas Eve, we attended Masses according to our language groups with 2 attending the French Mass, 2 attending the Dutch Mass, and 4 attending the English Mass. On Christmas day, we had our traditional Christmas Lunch with the Italian Community and in the afternoon



Taking a selfie at St Peter's Square, 26th December



After visiting the *presepio* inside Santa Maria in Traspontina, 1st January 2017

our much-awaited community Christmas party. With this year's games prepared by Sr Linda, we had our bodies, minds and spirits tested! Although not all passed the tests, we all had fun and enjoyed Christmas in the love and company of

each other in community. This year, there was also a "presepio vivente" (a manger scene with live characters) just 15 minutes from our convent which we visited on the 26th. This day, we also had the chance to visit the Christmas tree and manger scene at St Peter's Square and Basilica. On New Year's Day, we had a special community meal followed by visiting more *presepi*. Before we knew it, it was time to bring the statues of the

magi in our own chapel *presepio* to mark the feast of the Epiphany. Just the Sunday after, we celebrated the Feast of the Lord's Baptism and the Christmas season ended.

The new year 2017 came, bringing with it very cold air and fear in the hearts of many as terrorist attacks and wars and violence in many places continue. Yet, in the midst of this cold and darkness, we take up our bags and walking sticks, ready to journey on for we know that Immanuel, the God who is with us, is a God of love! He is the Prince of Peace who has called us to be, like him, bringers of hope and life. And so as we begin this year, we again recommit ourselves to our call, our mission of making the Heart of Jesus known and loved everywhere and forever!



Presepio Vivente

One of the aims of the "Presepio Vivente sotto il Cupolone" is to promote a "Cultura dell'Accoglienza" (a culture of welcome and encounter) in our society today.