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Please send your articles on or before 5th of
January, March, May, July, September and November.

JANUARY - FEBRUARY
Central South US
Peru
Eastern Central Africa
(Kenya, Congo, South Sudan, Uganda)
Italy-Malta
North Mexico
Indonesia

MARCH - APRIL
West Africa (Senegal, Burkina Faso)
New York-Toronto
Europe-BFMN
(Belgium, France, Hungary, Netherlands)
Southeast Latin America (Brazil, Paraguay)
Great Britain
Egypt-Sudan
Ecuador
Colombia-Venezuela and Cuba

MAY - JUNE
Montreal, Canada
Philippines-Japan
Angola-Mozambique
Central America
(Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala,
Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Puerto Rico)
Argentina-Uruguay
South Africa

JULY - AUGUST
Mid-North America
Lebanon-Syria
West Mexico
Australia/Aotearoa-NZ
Eudist Family
East Asia
(Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam)

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER
Bolivia-Chile
Northeast Asia
(China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, South Korea)
Germany-Albania
The Isles (Madagascar, Mauritius, Reunion)
Portugal
Austria-Switzerland-Czech Republic
Singapore-Malaysia
Spain

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER
South West India
Central East India-Nepal
Ireland
Sri Lanka-Pakistan
Transformative Communities: Culture of Discernment
From Community Works, INC Website

By Mark Clarke

Contemplative Action:
Courage and perseverance are the two cornerstones of contemplative action. The courage to risk the shared direction by testing each step and being receptive to continual adaptation. It means nurturing the collective will to persist and trust the mysterious unknown as the plan begins the implementation stage. Any action will have a mixture of missteps and success. The transformative community commits to individually and collectively remain in a discerning mode.

Communities tend to spend more time in the creation of the vision rather than the arduous work of implementation. The excitement of developing the vision and direction often becomes muted or dissipated in the daily struggle to implement. The implementation process is rooted in testing and adapting which matures and gains clarity over time. Transformative communities realize contemplative action takes tenacity to walk the path to achieve the aspiration. When we reflect on the great scientists, founders, and foundress, it was not their holding onto a vision but their resolve to see the aspiration become actualized that made a difference.

The foundation for understanding the emerging future is in the implementation phase. Transformative communities embrace the pilgrimage that tests the visionary and strategic assumptions, beliefs and mental framework. Perseverance is critical because the community cannot foresee spontaneous disruptive events like an economic downturn, losing key staff or funding that impacts achieving the vision.

The core elements of contemplative action are measurable action steps that establish accountability and responsibility. Hallmarks of the implementation phase are always recognizing the changing needs of others and adapting the plan. The complexity of the world makes collaborative relationships vital to build the necessary capacity and investment to solve the most pressing issues.

Collaborative relationships often have inherent tension with various visions of the future. These relationships invite the transformative community into deepening their understanding of mutuality, shared visioning and moving beyond one’s tribe. In theory, while the concepts are high-minded in practice, they invite the group into deep soul work around their desire for control, being self-righteous, and other hidden bias that blocks true mutuality.” …

To continue the reading Click here
To a deeper consciousness of God's presence:
God's presence is within us.
God's presence is around us within the nature we set our eyes on.
God's presence is in those whom we form a community with
God's presence is in our companion partners in mission.
God's presence is in the women and children we minister to in our Shelters.
God's presence is in those whom we minister to in our Parishes.
God's presence is in our benefactors who support our mission in one way or another.
We ask God for the grace To Open Our Eyes and our Hearts to this myriad of persons
- who have a face
- who have a name
- who have life story
- who have been entrusted to our love, care and attention.

We place before God their facial expressions very often distorted through their total pain due to the physical, spiritual (loss of meaning in their lives), psychological and social pain which they endured day in day out for some reason or other. We pray for them so that we can encourage them to lift up their eyes to the ever faithful and merciful God who reaches out to them through each and every one of us. We pray that through us they can feel Gods embrace so warm, so tender with its reassuring and healing power as it heals gradually their life's wounds and bruises. We pray that God fills their empty hearts with abundant love and their minds with the real peace that comes from God alone.

The energy of Love at the heart of the Universe.

The people we minister to are very often individuals and families whose love has been either cheated, mistreated and/or abused on various levels. The visible marks of abuse visible to our human eyes or worse still their unseen and un-tangible marks which at times are more painful than those that are apparent to our eyes. We pray that God fills us and those we minister to with the energy of love. A love similar to that which St Paul referred to as "a love that pushes us" to fight against the social and political barriers of inhumanity, of injustice, of incomprehension, of the lack of sympathy and understanding.

Called to grow in awareness of this Love,

A growth in the awareness of God's love has to be like the tree which is planted close to the river banks and has its roots constantly soaked with the waters of Gods love. Our river bank is our daily encounter and reflection with God's Word as it is celebrated and imparted to us ideally via in the daily liturgy of the Eucharist or the quite time that we make space for it in our daily routines.

Called to experience and reverence our fundamental interconnectedness to each other and to all created life.

Only in experiencing and revering those whom:
- we are called to minister to
- we share our community with
• our co-partners in mission with whom we share the challenges and toil with, we come to experience the fundamental interconnectedness to each other and to all created life. We are and need to continue becoming aware that it is the persons, we minister to who bring as all together and remind us of the love, the care, the skills, the ability and the expertise that we accumulate along the years as we strive to serve in the best way possible.

Created life is not only the new life that very often we come to wonder at when we witness to the birth of a new born child as happens occasionally in our Shelters or in our parishes. It is created life every time we see a woman picking up the pieces of her life and try her utmost to start afresh away from those who harmed her dignity on all levels. Created life is when a child can resume his/her normal daily schooling and playtime which in turn heal him/her emotionally as he/she strives to follow his/her mother into a new way of life away from the person who opted to violate their daily sacred space - their home. Created life is when we witness to needy parishioners we serve who through us have access to food and clothing, a decent job from where they can earn their living and as Pope Francis says, their human dignity.

_Called to be Drawn by this Love,_

God the creator of all beings draws us to this love. Unless God draws us to love, our labour and toil would be in vain, as the psalm goes.

_Called to spontaneously flow outward in zeal,_

It is this love that draws us constantly and that fuels and sets fire to a spontaneous flow of zeal, the fourth vow that the SGS profess to. Zeal for the reconciliation and salvation for all those we interact with be it the persons we minister to, the community we are called to live in and the partners in mission alongside we are called to serve. Called to that same zeal which filled St John Eudes and St Marie Euphrasia to the point of working relentlessly as we establish safe havens through our Shelters and the parish communities we serve in.

_Called to be impelled to be passionate for justice to challenge the prevailing structures of injustice_

This same zeal fuels our passion for justice, which is often trampled upon on various levels in various scenarios. The women and children in our Shelters on a daily basis await justice to be served - as they denounce the crime brought about through Domestic Violence. They await social housing justice to be given a roof over their head - they have no home to go to or the one they have is not safe enough to return to. The parishioners that we serve on a daily basis await justice to be served - as they expect decent daily wages from their jobs, social benefits when in need, social housing once they cannot compete within the ever rising high rental market, timely hospital appointments for when their health is challenged.

_Called to live in right relationship with humankind and all creation_

God calls us to live in right relationship with humankind with each other and all creation. Let us welcome this call with an open heart and an open mind aware of the fact that God will be there to sustain us in this endeavor, which is no easy feat. Let us ask for the grace to support this call by nourishing ourselves with constant meditation and contemplation, the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist and allow them to sustain our relationship with God, humanity and all created things. Let us never stop asking for the grace to be worthy shepherdesses and watch over the persons we minister to in our shelter and the parishes, the community we were called to live our communion with, and the partners in mission with whom we are called share the pastures with.
After 5 months of being in the programme, dare we say interculturality – sharing life with others from different culture is the essence of our experience? We are a cohort of 33 women religious from 25 Countries and 23 Congregations. What a variety of uniqueness, diversity and richness of cultures and personalities, yet we are all the same – God’s created beings, sharing this same experience of formation training together here in Rome.

It was quite a journey to move from just facing each other’s differences to what was emphasized by Sr Lynn Levo, CSJ, in her Human Development and Sexuality sessions. She stressed that the way to wholesome relating of self and others is through mutual respect, accepting differences, inclusiveness and to foster the ‘both/and’ attitude and perspective. To rub shoulders with the others while working together on small group tasks and big projects like Cultural Day really brought our differences to the fore and put what Sr Lynn taught to the test.

Fortunately, we had monthly Integration Days, meeting with our Spiritual Directors and small group sharing to help us along. However, it would have been a richer programme if growth assessments were also implemented to have hands on experience of feedback, evaluation and assessments after we have finished with our respective assigned leadership roles whether as small group or big group leaders.

We had a wonderful 8-day retreat in the Ad Gentes Centro, up in Nemi, run by the SVD (Society of the Divine Word) fathers. We enjoyed the cool mountain air, the scenery of Lake Nemi and its’ spectacular sunset, the flora and fauna of the place and space to walk in the property. What really made a difference was that the liturgy was tailored to suit the theme of each day and where we were in our Spiritual journey. We greatly appreciated the respective sharing by both the priests and the religious sisters after each day’s Gospel reading. It was an occasion to balance our feminine and masculine energy within us, that we are both created and honoured by God.
The resource personnel who presented their talks to us, religious women and men were specialist in their field. Most of their inputs were rich, relevant and thought provoking as they presented from perspectives that stretched our minds and touched our hearts. What was most impressive was that we could ‘catch’ their love for God, their passion for Formation as their mission and their generosity in sharing whatever they know with us.

A special session was organised for us to visit the International Novitiate at the Generalate of the Servants of the Holy Spirit Sisters. The Novice Directress of the School Sisters of Notre Dame and the Order of St Ursuline shared on their learnings in managing the International Novitiate. Their sharings broadened our perspective on shared resources and interculturality in the International Novitiate. They also shared that past Novices had given good reviews on their experiences of living in an International Novitiate. With the lack of formators and small number of vocations around most parts of the world, that seemed to be the way forward in initial formation.

Coming from Asia and living in Rome was another intercultural experience. We braved the cold as we travelled early every day to UISG and Angelicum for our classes. Now we suffer the heat as Rome gets hotter in June. We learnt what it was like to run after Roman trams and public buses to get to our destinations. We cultivated our palette for pizzas, pastas and potatoes while sometimes thinking of curry, chillie and rice. We navigated through Italian Masses and by and by learnt how to respond in Italian as well. We even mastered some basic Italian words and phrases to get by. We understood better what it meant that ‘when you are in Rome, do as the Romans do.”

Aside from going for classes, we included as part of our learnings to ‘roam’ Rome. We experienced how pilgrims felt when we visited well-known Basilicas, Churches and other Holy Sites. We also became tourists when we visited historical sites and delighted in seeking out the best gelato in Rome.

“Gratitude is the memory of the heart.” So we thank UISG for reviving this Formation Course after a lapse of 10 years. We thank our Congregation for sending us to this course. And we thank Rome -San Giovanni Eudes’ Community for hosting us. Together with the community members, we are 9 comprising of 6 nationalities. It was challenging at first due to a lack of common language and different cultures, yet eventually we could relate through the language of the heart and focus on our sameness, family members of St John Eudes and St Mary Euphrasia. That ultimately, is what interculturality is all about. Grazie Milie!
This year the feast of Jesus the Good Shepherd was particularly festive and joyful. Our senior Sisters in the Community of Reggio Emilia had the joy of meeting the eight pre-novices staying in St. John Eudes Community in Rome. They arrived in Reggio Emilia on Saturday, May 11 around noon, together with Sisters Marcelina, Ester and Ersilia.

We welcomed them with a typical Reggio Emilia meal. After a little rest, our young people visited the city center and especially the Baroque Basilica dedicated to the Virgin Mary of Ghiara, whose 400th anniversary we are celebrating this year for which the Holy Father has given the opportunity of obtaining a plenary indulgence from April 29 to December 8, 2019.

Sunday morning our visitors participated and animated the Eucharistic celebration with music and songs on the Solemnity of the Good Shepherd and the Day of Prayer for Vocations. The celebrant, a very energetic 92 year old, asked each of the pre-novices to introduce themselves. He congratulated them for their generous response to Jesus' call and assured them of his prayer.

What joy the presence of these young people, the hope of the congregation, has aroused in each Sister, especially the most infirm! The visit was organized with a specific purpose in mind. When the sisters of the Reggio community learned of the arrival of the pre-novices in St. John Eudes community in Rome, they expressed the desire “to adopt” each one of them, remembering them in their prayer. That is why, during our community meeting, the names of the "adopted" pre-novice and the "adopting" Sister were chosen. Sister Louisa of Enfant Jésus prays for Véronique; Sisters Angela and Gabriella pray for Bellarmine; Sisters Maria Pia and Anne-Marie pray for Delphine; Sisters Elena and Immacolata pray for Lucia; Sisters Assunta and Maria Grazia pray for Adulce; Sisters Giuseppina and Raffaella pray for Eugenia; Sisters Elena and Immacolata pray for Ana; Sisters Ancilla and Elisa pray for Lana.

And we also committed ourselves to pray for Sister Marcelina and for the future formation team.

After lunch, each pre-novice wanted to take a picture with their two "adopting" sisters and this request was accepted with joy and to the satisfaction of all. By 2:30 pm, they were ready to begin their return journey.

We bid goodbye and promised to see each other again soon!
**To visit nine villages is to acquire ten wisdoms!**

*By Monique Tarabeh and Rita Lourenço*

Sr. Rita Luis Lourenço was recently at the Generalate to attend the Good Shepherd International Foundation (GSIF) meeting. Sr. Rita’s visit gave us an opportunity to catch up after she had earned her Master of Arts degree in International Development in Ireland. We were interested to hear about the impact of her studies on her present ministry.

**Monique: What is your current ministry?**

**Rita:** As the Director of the Mission Development Office in Angola, I work with a team. We use the Project Cycle Management process to review all the ministries in the Unit. The process involves needs assessment, strategic planning, monitoring, and evaluation. Along with our local stakeholders, I visit all the projects to see how they are progressing, using a new set of eyes to assess them. We address global issues through empowerment programs including skills training, sustainable livelihood, and agricultural endeavors. Our strategies flow from and strengthen our mission.

**Monique: How did your studies in Ireland affect your confidence and zeal for mission?**

**Rita:** An Angolan philosophy says, “Kwenda o divwa dya diembo, kuva dykuny dya ungimo!” Translated, “To visit nine villages is to acquire ten wisdoms!” My studies in Ireland gave me another village to visit and empowered me to work in social development, with skilled zeal and best practices that involve stakeholders as key partakers for mission effectiveness. The knowledge and skills I learned through my studies for a Master’s in International Development have given me the confidence to advocate on behalf of the most vulnerable, especially women and girls. My new learning is having a positive impact on the mission, in the improvement of our professionalism by introducing new policies and networking with other NGOs to achieve together our common development goals. I am very grateful to the Province of Ireland for their support and I am deeply grateful to the community where I lived for creating an encouraging and peaceful space for my study.

**Monique: What is helping you and what is still a struggle for you?**

**Rita:** The knowledge I gained in international development has been helpful and has given me an overview of management and administration. I learned how to handle some of the challenges facing our mission by networking and by engaging with new partners and donors, some of whom I would not have been able to engage with, if I did not have the knowledge gained from my studies in international development. I face many struggles working in underdeveloped countries. Often, I cannot use what I have learned in my studies because the resources needed to implement my knowledge are not available. For example, without electricity or computers, we cannot provide IT training. In the face of so many challenges, we need to be very creative in order to accomplish the mission of responding to poverty on so many levels.
Testimony of Sister Annie

By Sr. Annie Kahwajian

With the offer of a sabbatical year -2018/2019- given by my province, I wished to make this a period of grace and to be enriched by the life and spirituality of St. John Eudes. In this synthesis, I would like to give witness to my discoveries and invite others to be blessed by the richness of our spirituality.

"My ultimate goal this year is "heart to heart with Jesus". The Lord not only comes to restore my life through the writings of our founder Saint John Eudes, but he comes to make all things new: "Behold, I make all things new." (Rev 21:5). I believe that God has planned this year to change me and transform my mind, my soul and my heart in order to "love him, serve him, glorify him and adore him", because each transformation is a step forward towards holiness. God completes his work of creation, then it ends with a beginning.

Unearthing the riches of the writings of our founder helped me to know myself, to understand my origin as a human being, as a Christian and as a consecrated person.

God is the source of my life, it is He who carries me in his womb from all eternity, He who gives me life, who created me for this encounter of love with Him, who seized me and drew me out of nothingness to be His. John Eudes helped me to understand this more easily with his saying: "God created me, he looked at me with an eye of mercy, of love. He thought of me before the creation of the universe, he thought of me seriously and carefully..." (O.C.II, 135)

Through baptism, the sacrament very dear to the heart of John Eudes, I have become a new creature, I remain forever in the bosom of the Father, this is my second creation, this is my place on this earth and in eternity. My home, my new world therefore is in God, with Jesus; my life on earth has become a communion and an adherence to the Trinity.

Through the continuation of Jesus' life in us, John Eudes seeks a quality of Christian life that goes beyond the imitation of Jesus Christ, in order to become a participant in what Christ is: Communicating and adoring Jesus Christ, sharing his intimate relationship with the Father, living his life and entering into his feelings and attitudes. It is a central theme of John Eudes' spirituality, and it is an excellent life project that every person is invited to exercise; it is the basis of a personal relationship with Christ Jesus, it is about living with Him, staying with Him, letting Him seize you and letting Him transform you from within. It is a call from God, who questions my personal, community and missionary life. It is a priority to put in my daily life, to let Jesus be formed in me, in my community and in my mission, by the grace of the Holy Spirit. To continue and accomplish the life of Jesus in us, our founder, proposes a spiritual process that passes through the knowledge and contemplation of the mysteries and States of Jesus, and to live in communion and adherence to these contemplated mysteries. For me, contemplating the mysteries and states of Jesus through the Gospel is a call to transformation in my inner life. Contemplation of the mysteries of Jesus is not a gathering of information at the intellectual level, it is a participation on my part in the humanity of Jesus, it is an adherence and communion with his inner dispositions. These mysteries work and transform my inner life. There is on my side the will, but this effort is a fruit of God's grace. This grace of God makes me like Christ, it is an act that transforms me to continue his life on earth.

It is the united heart of Jesus and Mary that John Eudes gives us as his testament so that devotion to this heart, a strong symbol of communion, may also foster communion among members of the same family. So I am called to have one heart with Jesus and Mary, to have one heart with my sisters and brothers all over the world. Adherence to this heart transforms me in the same way as the mother's transformation in her union with her Son. The united Heart of Jesus and Mary is given to each of us to become the Heart of our heart. Jesus shows us the way to love the Father and the Spirit in truth, and to love one another as He has loved us. I give thanks to God, for his love manifested through this spirituality, through my fellow Eudists who have accompanied me throughout this personal experience, for all the people I have met during this year. My deep desire is that this spirituality be incarnated and enlivened in our lives, in the formation of young people and in living our mission throughout the world.
Mission With You
Living Out Good Shepherd Charism in Montréal

At the initiative of Sister Rita Bou Abboud, herself an immigrant from Lebanon, the Province of Montreal established Mission With You in 2015. Located in Montreal, the service assumes a global responsibility towards women who, like Mary, have experienced the difficult reality of being exiled.

The question, “What are you doing for her?” is a call to open the doors of our hearts and encourages sisters and volunteers to live in solidarity with the most vulnerable, resource-poor women, to support and love them as they are. This solidarity can be expressed in many ways!

Mission With You provides the necessary support for the first steps of integration of new immigrants. The service offers individualized assistance to facilitate integration into the host society. At the same time, the new immigrants acquire and develop professional and social skills to prepare them to enter the job market.

It may seem like we offer considerable assistance. However, we can always do more. Mission With You is housed in a large building. In a spirit of mutual support, the sisters residing there made the joint decision to welcome women asylum-seekers for temporary stays of 12 to 24 weeks, giving them time to gain a foothold in the host society. In a spirit of complementarity, we entered into a partnership with the Community Services for Refugees and Immigrants (SCRI).

From January to the beginning of March 2019, five women of different nationalities (Haiti, Burundi, Cameroon, Rwanda, Congo) took refuge in Mission With You. They had two things in common: they were asylum-seekers and had no one to rely on in Canada, their new adopted country.

The partners of Mission With You respond willingly when asked to get involved. They participate in the celebration of Christian holidays, fundraising for humanitarian trips in conjunction with IFHIM* (Montreal Integral Human Training Institute), and other activities available to migrants. The partners are available and committed to help and support as needed.

Sister Rita Bou Abboud said, “Mission With You is the expression of the desire of the hearts of our sisters and the reflection of our charism in today’s world. With the support of the Province of Montreal and the prayers of our dear sisters, we continue to keep the lamp of the mission lit, to trace the path while leaving footprints and shoots of life in their hearts.”

To learn more about Mission With You, we invite you to visit the website of the Province of Montreal, Canada, http://www.ndcbonpateur.org/mission-avec-toi/. You may reach Sister Rita Bou Abboud at ritabouabboud@yahoo.com.

* IFHIM – Institut de Formation Humaine Intégrale de Montréal
Still a benevolent presence at 105!

Born in Manitoba on May 28, 1914, Sister Germaine Vandal arrived during a spring-like, flowering season. This was a defining element of her personality. She always had in her an instinctive love of nature, creation, and others.

Since making her profession in July 1940 with the Contemplative Sisters in Laval-des-Rapides, Canada, Sr. Germaine has enriched and contributed to community life through her many, diverse gifts. Over the years, she took turns gardening; in the off-season she was sewing cassocks, albs, and other vestments, as well as running a machine-knitting shop. Sister was also an excellent cook. Furthermore, her singing and decorations enhanced community celebrations. Everything she did was done with a generous and sisterly spirit. It was no surprise that Sister was thought of when the local council was first instituted and she became a member of the very first Major Council.

A woman of considerable physical and moral strength, she bore her trials with patience and endured much suffering courageously. She has always had a great ability to love and serve with her whole heart. Although Sister’s physical ability has diminished after more than a century of life, she continues to have a lively spirit. In recent years, Sr. Germaine began making pretty petits porte-bonheur (little lucky charms) * completely wrapped up in her contemplative prayer and which she gives as gifts to her sisters. The growing demand for this popular keepsake keeps her extremely busy. She generously devotes a few hours each day to this work with her characteristic smile. This is how she pursues her mission of love and prayer at age 105! We give thanks for her magnanimous presence!

* Small, transparent bags with a medal on each side of a decorated card
Exposition in remembrance of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

By Sr. Gisèle Lalonde

On Tuesday, April 16, 2019 at 5 pm, there was a preview-performance at the historic Chapel of the first monastery of the Good Shepherd in Montreal. The Exposition-Installation of Madame Horta Van Hoye was titled, ÉVOCATION (Recalling) in remembrance of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd who lived in this place from 1847 to 1979.

“The place inspires reverence. The silence is still filled with prayers and songs. It was with the sculptural wrinkling of the paper and the charcoal drawings that I went to meet these women of faith. Cloistered, disciplined, and committed builders, they left behind an immense heritage.

Over the course of my work, I turned to the highest aspect of their vocation: their fidelity to a lofty ideal that transcends them. That approach led me to reflect on my own spiritual quest that goes beyond images from the past.” Horta Van Hoye

The sisters who attended the preview were charmed by the artist’s spiritual depth and her ability to communicate with a wide variety of audiences. The exhibition’s monumental sculptures in paper and charcoal drawings brought to life the spirit of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. In the photo: Sister Gisèle Lalonde, artist Horta Van Hoye, and Sister Aline Bertrand, Province Leader of the Montréal, Canada Unit.

Originally from Belgium, Ms. Van Hoye lives in Quebec but travels extensively to exhibit her works. She studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Louvain and Antwerp where she specialized in sculpture. In the early 1990s, she developed her art with paper which led to the creation of the successful pageant, Gesichter Geschichten (Stories of Faces). Presented in 17 countries, the Gesichter Geschichten exhibition continues to amaze adults and children alike by its simplicity and creativity.

A former Olympic gymnast. Horta integrates into her art a choreographic demonstration accompanied by musicians.

In the photo: Sylvie Plouffe, Mimi Geoffrion and Francine Paradis, Good Shepherd lay partners, attended the event with the sisters.

Her performance during the Exhibition-Installation on April 16 was accompanied by Swiss musicians Barbara Schirmer, timpanist, and Carlos Niederhauser, cellist, who played selections from their new album, Falter Horta Van Hoye’s Exhibition-Installation took place at the Chapel from the beginning of February until the opening day on April 16, 2019 and was open until May 12, 2019.

Thanks to the artistic eye of our colleague, Francine Paradis, we were able to share a beautiful collection of souvenir photos of this historic event with our sisters from Pierrefonds who lived within these walls but who are no longer able to get to downtown Montreal.

Since 1988, the historic Chapel of the Good Shepherd has been one of the most prestigious concert halls in downtown Montreal.
Imagine for a moment that you no longer have any reason to stay in the place where you were born and grew up, and you begin to admit in your mind that any other place would be better... and you go one by one to the places that once were safe, places known and loved by you, and you visualize the people you have to depart from, and think about all the familiar things in your home, your environment, the landscape, pets, friends, neighbors... and finally you decide that you must look for better possibilities for your children so that they may have food, so that they may not be exposed to violence and so that they may receive an education and have access to better health care.

You know that many have already left, that others will never return because they have lost their lives in the journey and doubt creeps over you... you hesitate, but you make a decisión. You pick up the essential things for the road and place them in your back pack. You go out with your three children without knowing what awaits you... You join hundreds of people who also make this journey and several kilometers later your feet hurt as bad as your soul. There is no water, food or money... Sleep depravation makes you feel overwhelmed and a feeling of having made a mistake in bringing all your family to this exodus anguishes you...

After hours without rest, you arrive at a town where everyone looks at you, where some people let you know that you are not welcome, others bring you water and food, some will ask about your feelings and they will help you to rest. You start walking again and this cycle is repeated over and over for several days... if you are lucky enough to reach your destination, you face again the rejection, exploitation, obstacles, uncertainty and hunger.

This is the reality of thousands of Central American migrants who leave their country. Once they realize they have no chance of a decent life in their country. Little by little they begin to lose all the things that normally give security, until they feel they belong nowhere.

Forced uprooting is a form of violence that strips people of their nationality, identity, belonging and autonomy. It leaves them in a state of vulnerability that facilitates exploitation, physical and mental health problems and in many cases the experience of failure of their migratory project: the last alternative they had left. For many this experience strips them of their basic human rights, also takes away the meaning of their lives as they are at the mercy of a country of origin that does not establish clear strategies so that they may have life options and a foreign country that openly rejects and points them out as criminals.

Being good shepherdesses and good shepherds in our current world’s situation is a challenge to creativity, commitment and love in the style of Maria Euphrasia and Juan Eudes, who made an option for the most vulnerable. The biggest challenge is to listen, to welcome and accompany them so that they may survive in the restitution of their broken dignity and their fragmented self-love. A mission that demands to fulfill the definition of the Congregational position in all its radicality.

In the photos: The girls and boys from the home of Our Lady, together with volunteers from Banco Panama, who every Tuesday share art and dance workshops. This time they decorate the house and turn it into a colorful place to share games and hopes. With music and snacks, they share this beautiful gesture of solidarity for four years. Our children also color our lives, with their presence; they surround us with smiles, full of tenderness, games and joy.
Sessions with Sr. Clare Nolan to deepen the congregational Position papers - May 3-5, 2019

By Ana Isabel Hernández Navarro, Mission Partner

Member, coming from the countries that make up the Province, shared with Sr. Clare Nolan, the Position Document of the Congregation, as a fundamental strategy of our Formation in Partnership. When we meet in El Salvador, home of San Romero, land of martyrs, we had an experience that motivates our faith and challenges our fidelity.

We begin the journey, with the awareness of the presence of God in the history of our personal lives. Then we saw in depth the global tendencies of injustice, migration, discrimination, militarization... tuning in with the global vision of the Congregation and to make a dynamic charism in the mission.

We analyze the ways in which we will concretize each of these positions, what we need to change, the new ideas that emerge out of the reflection, the language we use and the obstacles we foresee.

In particularly the theme of migration resounded as a situation that implies local responses, so that people do not have to look for other horizons fleeing from situations that originate in injustice.

We feel a profound relevance of the inspiration of Saint John Eudes and Saint Mary Euphrasia and we feel the challenges of interpreting all in a creative and risky way in the midst of our peoples. This is the greatest challenge we have to give light to the Strategic Plan of our Mission.

We thank our dear Sr. Clare Nolan and our beloved Provincial Leadership Team, for their generous company in this journey that has broadened our horizon and has invited us to continue with zeal the process of formation/transformation.
Celebration of the International Day of the Girl-Child. October 11, 2018

With the national theme “Batang Babae: Malakas Ka, Batang Lalaki: Katuwang Ka,” (girl – child, you are strong; boy – child, the partner) the Religious of Good Shepherd (RGS) Philippines - Japan Province celebrated the “International Day of the Girl-Child” through the conduct of a series of orientations on the status of the girl-child in the Philippines, on October 11, 12 and 17, as well suggestions on how to protect, promote and fulfill their rights as children. More than one hundred twenty (120+) participants attended the sessions from RGS managed schools and from some programs beneficiaries. Sessions highlighted the realities of the Filipino girl-child per the 2015 Beijing Platform for Action: Philippine Progress Report, such as:

- child labor;
- pornography;
- in conflict with the law;
- teenage pregnancy;
- early marriage;
- multiple forms of abuse and discrimination especially those with disability; and
- cybersex

During the session, the participants suggested the following to promote, protect and fulfill the rights of girl-child:

- guidance from the parents; be responsible parents;
- ask for help, be brave/ report to concerned government such as local government unit in case something happened;
- don’t be too trusting especially to strangers; and
- continuous education/awareness raising.

According to the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) this year’s international theme, With Her: A Skilled Girl Force, marks the beginning of a year-long effort to bring together partners and stakeholders to highlight, advocate for and invest in girls’ most pressing needs and opportunities to attain skills for employability. As a response, the Province has strengthened ADVOCACY PROGRAM especially on the children’s rights by giving sessions and training to various parishes, dioceses and schools throughout the country.
Earth Day is an annual event celebrated on April 22. Worldwide, various events are held to demonstrate support for environmental protection. This year, the theme was to protect threatened and endangered species. Nature’s gifts to our planet are the millions of species that we know and love, and many more that remain to be discovered. Unfortunately, human beings have irrevocably upset the balance of nature. The unprecedented global destruction and rapid reduction of plant and wildlife populations are directly linked to causes driven by human activity: climate change, deforestation, habitat loss, trafficking and poaching, unsustainable agriculture, pollution and pesticides to name a few. The impacts are far reaching. All living things have an intrinsic value, and each plays a unique role in the complex web of life. We must work together to protect endangered and threatened species.

As part of the six priority issues of the Good Shepherd, we encourage and strive to take part in this movement. On April 22, 2019, we celebrated a two-day event for the annual Earth Day in our Good Shepherd Farm located in Sariaya, Quezon. It is a two day activity which was participated mostly by youth since this year we also celebrate the year of the youth. The participants are from different groups and communities; namely, Saint Joseph Youth Parish and Vocation Conducts, Janagdong Communtiy, 1043 Convent Community, Saint Bridget College – Batangas, Alay Kapwa Youth, Sariaya and Tahanan Youth Community.

Program Proper:

The event was officially started by group introductions from different participant groups which was then followed by the opening prayer and welcome message by Sr Anya and Sr. Lea respectively. The first activity was the Cosmic Walk. The Cosmic Walk consists of 12 stations and each station contains readings and scriptures pertaining to what are currently happening with their environment and surroundings. It inquires the participants with their perspective about the current geological situation of
After the cosmic walk, dinner took place and some time to rest before continuing with the next activity in the evening which is the Film Viewing. The film was entitled Journey of the Universe.

The film was about the scientific creation of all things and its timeline in our history. It then adjusted its focus from creation to altering and shifting. It shows how our environment changes drastically for the past decades because of human beings. After watching the film, they had a group reflection activity. They presented their group reflections in creative ways such as dancing, acting, singing and poetry. The second day was filled with more interactions and learning. They started the day with a morning exercise called Shubashi and also morning prayers; shirts were given freely and a group photography opportunity before proceeding with the formal simultaneous activities. Three activities were Laudato Si, Eco Bricks and Poster/Slogan Making which are held synchronized. The Laudato Si contextualizes the creation of the world in religious perspectives. How everything was created and how should human take care of it. The activity included philosophical quotes and biblical celebrations as examples in protection God’s creations. The second activity was the Eco Bricks. This activity immerses participants to the ecological crisis we are currently facing. Eco Bricks are reliable alternatives to regular bricks. Using these kind of bricks are done via recycling non-organic materials such as plastics that are just being thrown away. Solid wastes have polluted the ocean greater than we have imagined for the past decade. Every year hundreds of animals suffer from the plastics that float along the ocean. By using this recycled product, we help reduce garbage in our surroundings. The last activity was the Poster/Slogan Making. The participants gather in groups and try to illustrate the knowledge and perspectives they gained from the past activities by making creative posters and slogans.

After the morning activities, there was an evaluation in the afternoon. The participants wrote positive feedbacks and that they wanted more activities such as tree planting and more days for the duration. The evaluation showed that they did enjoy the Earth Day event. The event ended with closing liturgy led by Sister Tess and closing message by Sr. Regina.
On the Good Shepherd Priority Issues: Trafficking, Prostitution, Migration, Economic Justice, Integral Ecology and Girl-Child

By Sr. Anya Borbon

Women – Justice – Peace and Integrity of Creation Thrust

The Province Link Persons of WJPIC from the different communities gathered September 27 – 28, 2018 at St. Bridget School, Quezon City for the regular Annual Meeting for updating and planning to synchronize efforts of the Province to address issues related to Women, Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation. A sharing of the National Situation in the Philippines was done highlighting the socio-political issues that affects the people, especially the poor to include specifically the Indigenous youth from Mindanao who suffer because of continuous militarization in their area. This was graphically shared by two students representing their Tribe from Cotabato, Mindanao in coordination with Sr. M. Elenita Belardo, the National Coordinator of the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines.

Sr. Juanito Dano also shared her experiences in response to the challenging issues of Extra Judicial Killings in her mission area in Tahanan, San Andres Bukid, Manila. She also showed the documentary video made in coordination with the GMA News (a local TV network in the Philippines) about this prevailing issue.

A Biblico – Theological Reflection was facilitated by Fr. Oliver Castor, CSsR to end the first day by evoking the participants on how to “act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with our God” bearing in mind the glaring issues and in the country now where injustices and lack of respect for humanity are the new narratives that are normally experienced throughout the Philippines.

The second day was devoted to plan actions and synchronize efforts for better coordination and strong delivery of message on these priority issues. A presentation of the position papers on priority issues was made by Ms. Grace Mallorca – Bernabe, the advocacy officer of St. Mary Euphrasia Development Foundation, Inc. This sharing made it easier for the Link persons to concretize responses that are suited to various settings, including the schools. Suggested STEPS for CONTEXTUALIZATION of actions are in the areas of: (a) Capacity Development, (b) Knowledge Management including Monitoring and Evaluation (c) Advocacy and Alliance Building, and (d) Program formulation and Implementation/Resource Mobilization. Possible concrete actions were identified per areas.

The participants during the WJPIC Link Persons’ Meeting

In general, as Link Persons of the Province, the group agreed on the following as focus for this year:

⇒ Conduct advocacy / information dissemination, aggressive networking, dialogue on life, peace and justice
⇒ Integrate priority issues (trafficking, prostitution, migration, economic justice, integral ecology and girl – child) in the school curriculum.
⇒ Communal Planting.
⇒ Facilitate programs and services for families.
⇒ Enhance ecumenical, inter faith spirituality as way of life.
⇒ Document baseline information and research on issues.
It seemed apt that the recognition awarded to Good Shepherd Sister Micheline Lattouf for her heroic work in Lebanon was given on the eve of the feast of Mary Euphrasia. All Good Shepherd partners seek the footsteps of John Eudes and Mary Euphrasia and the heritage of our founders is being lived in so many wonderful ways across the globe. Thus, Micheline was a bit overwhelmed when a university in the middle of North America (St Louis, Missouri) took note of her ministry and invited her to receive the Sr. Mary Byles Peace and Justice Prize. Nevertheless, she travelled half-way across the globe and relied on her not-used-daily English to rise to the occasion and give witness that mercy and compassion are powerful forces. The events included a class lecture to students from multi-discipline majors as well as an evening lecture done as an interview in conversational style; the evening attendance included alumni, faculty, friends of the university, and students.

It wasn’t just her vital work in a small devastated Lebanese village in the Bekaa Valley that caught the attention of the international community, although that excellent work, providing social services, dignity, and human stability to a population in a very poor area already devastated by the multiple conflicts Lebanon has faced over the decades was worthy of recognition. No, it was when, even as that work was sustaining itself, in 2011, the area was flooded with refugees, a result of the outbreak of conflict in Syria. Micheline had no extra resources; she had no budget for expansion. She saw the children in the tents and in the mud facing long term displacement and she saw her Lebanese village worried about their own stability. The threat was not only of poverty and displacement but of new conflict between the more permanent villagers and the new refugees, two groups with a history of national wars between them. Additionally, there were the social conflicts and complexities that many refugees were Muslims, coming into a Christian village while the nearby Muslim communities were a differing and unwelcoming sect than the new arrivals. Gradually, with Micheline and staff and the engagement of NGOs who helped with resources, a new work was begun. It was a work of survival: employment, schooling, shelter, water, and more. It was a work of peace and justice. Every program included and integrated the two communities. Both communities had suffered trauma and in the trauma healing, especially among the children, they were brought to share, to understand each other and to experience mercy which Micheline defines as the guiding principle of her work. This is what she believes helped the children to look forward with hope.

The events at the University were attended by several Good Shepherd sisters from North America, two of Michelin’s brothers from Lebanon, and a friend who came from Canada. It was so easy to share, to take joy and pride in this event and know that as a large “family” we all take part in this recognition and we all support one another in such works. The Mid-North America province hosted Micheline and her brothers and, like any Good Shepherd celebration, it was not all serious. There were outings to local attractions, even some exposure to America baseball, a visit to a unique local GS ministry, and lots of time and conversation around the convent dining room table. It was an abundant way to celebrate Mary Euphrasia and the heritage that is lived daily by so many dedicated GS partners in their ministries.

You can read more from the Maryville University press at: https://www.maryville.edu/mpress/lattouf-honored-with-byles-peace-and-justice-prize/
The Communities of Practices in Latin America

By GSIF office

The first online course (in Spanish) organized by the Community of Practice in Latin America focusing on "Accompaniment to women in situation of prostitution" (Acompañamiento a mujeres en situación de prostitución) was held on last May 16th. The objective of the course, coordinated by Ms. Maricruz Tabbia, Capacity Development Specialist for GSIF Regional MDO Latin America, was to increase knowledge and share innovative theoretical approach from a gender perspective, aiming to promote awareness and develop capabilities to support women in situation of prostitution or victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation.

The course included an outstanding and inspiring contribution of social anthropologist Ms. Ixchel Yglesias González Báez, from Mexico City, who guided the participants to help them delve further into these extreme forms of violence against women, sharing a “space” of reflection on current challenges for the Good Shepherd mission in prevention, accompaniment and advocacy about gender-based violence at a regional and local level in Latin America.

In total, 53 people, sisters and lay from all the local MDO’s in Latin America, registered and attended the online course, which was carried out via Zoom and is now available also on ProLea, the new e-learning platform of the Congregation, developed in collaboration with the GSIF, at prolea.gssweb.org.

This course, together with workshops, online conversations and webinars, is one of the most recent initiatives to animate and develop the current Communities of Practices (CoPs) in America Latina. In collaboration with the Provinces and the regional and local MDOs, Communities of Practices aim through a participatory and interactive method to identify models of intervention and share good practices in ministries and contribute to improve the capacity of Good Shepherd sisters and partners to respond to the needs of program participants, delivering services at the highest level of professionalism.

In 2019, four CoPs were created in Latin America to ensure learning and sharing knowledges around key themes that are strategical to Good Shepherd programs:

- Migration: This CoP started the conversation around migration, which is not a topic that all local missions are working on, and intercultural mediation as a possible effective approach and organized an introductory webinar on “What is Migration”. The presentation and the recording of the webinar are on ProLea, together with a forum to share questions and ideas. The next activity of this CoP will be to start learning about the work of Fundacion Madre Josefa in Chile, that is specialized in providing support and services to migrants, through an online meeting.

- Providing care to women in prostitution: The aim was to start looking at this issue from different angles and provide participants with information they need to improve the support they provide to the women they work with, incorporating the perspectives of gender, human rights and spirituality.
- After an online course about prostitution as a form of violence against women, a second webinar on how Spirituality should guide the work of sisters and partners was offered. Both webinar recordings, presentations and supporting materials can be found on ProLea. The sisters are also holding meetings after the webinars to reflect and discuss how to incorporate these new learnings and ideas into their work. Next webinar will be on July 11 and the group of CoP will be discussing about the context and family relations of women affected by prostitution.

• Human trafficking

In its start-up phase this CoP has the goal to get greater clarity, collecting and analyzing information, on who within Good Shepherd regional network is working on human trafficking issue and would be interested in participating in the CoP. The sisters started out with a survey that will help to have a more detailed picture of what types of services and work is being done on human trafficking and to create a directory of partners and possible interested individuals to be involved. Next step would be to understand what their needs and interests are and to start discussing possible work for advocacy and capacity building.

• Implementation of the Care Manual (Guía de Acompañamiento)

The participants of this group developed a manual to be used to guide the work of accompaniment and care. The first activity will be a webinar to introduced this resource, explain how and why it was developed and to invite other local organizations to try out this manual. A mentorship process will be developed to support these organizations and also to collect information on their experiences with the manual to update the tool and add case studies to show how it can be used in different contexts (a webinar will take place in July 18th).

“As with all new CoPs, we started slow, getting to know each other and trying to figure out how each group would work and what activities they would conduct”, Ms. Maricruz Tabbia who is coordinating CoPs in Latin America says. The sisters that are part of the core groups sustained many meetings and online discussions to figure out ways in which they could start "thinking together" about these issues CoPs are focusing on and develop and sustain new practices and effective models of intervention over time. The activities of the Communities of Practices in Latin America are currently involving 123 sisters and partners.

We hope the CoPs in Latin America, supported by GSIF, will continue to grow and that more sisters and partners will join activities also through the e-learning platform ProLea to connect each other and interact, as it provides a new digital channel for people to communicate and share information in a way that builds understanding and insight and ultimately supports the Congregation to develop best ministry practices.
Good Shepherd Newsletter

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