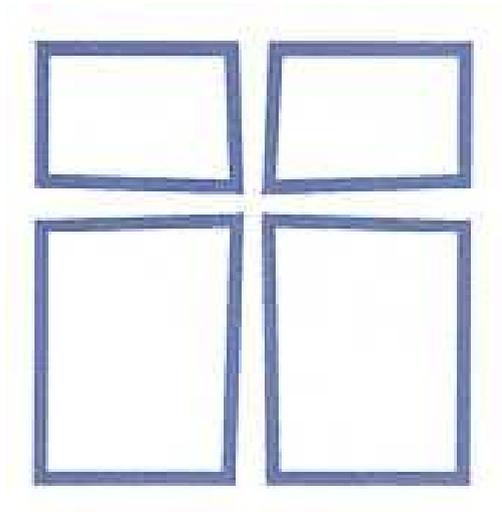


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# *Theodosia*

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Quarterly  
of the Sisters of Mercy  
of the Holy Cross  
Institute Ingenbohl  
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**Contents**

<b>Picture</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>“Lord, When Were You in Prison...?” Mt.25:39</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Editorial</b>	<b>05</b>	Sr. Linda Songy, Merrill, USA Province	
<b>More Ranft – Power from the Depth</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>“Faith Comes from What is Heard” Rom. 10:17</b>	<b>32</b>
Sermon by Fr. Konrad Burri on the pilgrim day, 16 <sup>th</sup> February, 2017		Sr. Anne-Roger Prétôt, Fribourg, Province West Switzerland	
<b>Two Different Reformers</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>The Vicariate Uganda Lives</b>	<b>35</b>
Dr. Anselm Kraus OFM Conv., Kloster Schwarzenberg D		Four Articles by Sr. Sheeja Kolacherril, Anna Wolz, Dr. Benno Kreienbühl, Sandra Aschwanden	
<b>So that the Word of God Becomes Alive</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>Short Reports from Our Provinces und Vicariates</b>	<b>42</b>
From the yearly letter 2017 by Sr. Marija Brizar, the Superior General		Book-Release Function	
<b>Spiritual Place</b>	<b>18</b>	Sr. Tresa Paul, Delhi, North-East Province, India	
Experiences in the World Monastery in Radolfzell		<b>Information from the General Leadership</b>	<b>45</b>
Sr. Canisia Mack, Hegne, Province Baden-Württemberg			
<b>Spiritual Place</b>	<b>25</b>		
“House of Religions” in Berne			
Sr. Yves Germann, Ingenbohl, Motherprovince, Switzerland			



Brother-Klaus-Wheel in the convent church Ingenbohl. Design: Ruedi Gut

## Editorial

Anyone who presides over the liturgy on the pilgrim day tries to build a bridge to the life of mother M. Theresa from the given readings. Thus over the years, her portrait has gained many colors and aspects.

Fr. Burri took a different approach in February 2017. In the background, the simultaneous World Ski Championships held in St. Moritz and the jubilee year of our country saint, Brother Klaus, enticed the preacher to ask for the secret of the power for the highest achievements of two ecclesiastical people: Brother Klaus and Mother M. Theresa. Pastor Konrad Burri wishes us too "More Ranft - more strength from silence", "when the highest achievements are demanded of us, and also when it is easy to persevere in faithfulness, endurance and confidence, that is our task."

On 31st October, 1517, Martin Luther published 95 theses against the abuse of the indulgence. Luther's posting of his theses to the door of the Wittenberg castle church was the beginning of the Reformation, one of the central events of European history. It is of exceptional significance this year, its 500th anniversary; and to mark this special occasion, it is celebrated with a "Luther year". On this occasion, P. Dr. Anselm Kraus OFM Conv. makes a remarkable contribution in the Theodosia: "Two different reformers." The various highlights between Francis of Assisi and Martin Luther are astonishing, and the consequences of each one's actions are stimulating food for thought.

In the yearly letter, 2017 of our Superior General, Sr. Marija Brizar, we are called upon to let our communities become spiritual places. We are particularly concerned with dealing with the Word of God: "So that the Word of God becomes alive."

The following is reported from two spiritual places outside of our community:

Sr. Canisia Mack from Hegne was asked for her personal experiences, which she underwent during several years in the World Monastery in Radolfzell. She gratefully looks back at a piece of new territory in which she could live and work together with a fellow-sister: "Experiences in the world monastery in Radolfzell."

Since 2015, there has been a "House of religions" in Berne. The sisters of the Mother province were allowed to visit and admire what is possible under one roof when openness, dialogue and appreciation are practised. Sr. Yves Germann shares with us her impressions: "House of religions in Berne."

For more than ten years, Linda Songy from the United States has been a Catholic pastoral worker at the Louisiana Women's Prison. This penitentiary, with 1200 women, was flooded in autumn 2016. We read about the lasting consequences in "Lord, when were you in prison?" (Mt. 25:39)

Sr. Anne-Roger Prétôt from West Switzerland province has been a dedicated teacher and pastoral worker for hearing impaired for decades. Together with a group, she is involved in translating the Bible into the French sign language and then transferred the work on to CDs. About her work, and a great award, she narrates in: "Faith comes from what is heard." (Rom 10:17)

Under the title "The Vicariate Uganda lives", we read about personal experiences and impressions that four different persons have had during visits or assignments: Sr. Sheeja Kolacherril, Anna Wolz, Dr. Benno Kreienbühl and Sandra Aschwanden.

Under "Short reports from our provinces and vicariates" is the subject of a noteworthy book publication by Sr. Tresa Paul from North-East Province, India: "Book-Release Function in Delhi."

The "Information of the General Leadership" concerns appointments, a forthcoming General Visitation in the Mid-India Province, and a conference of the representatives in the provinces and vicariates against human trafficking in September in the Motherhouse.

Sr. Christiane Jungo

## "More Ranft" - Power from the Depth

### Sermon on the pilgrim day in the convent church, Ingenbohl, 16th February, 2017

Parish priest Konrad Burri, former parish priest of Ingenbohl

World championships – athletic records – athletes, who push themselves to the limits and thus attract the many fans who turn them into their highly praised idol. For many young people, they are also an incentive and role model for their own achievements.

Top athletic performances are not cheap. Only hard training, sophisticated technique and extreme perseverance lead to the goal. Athletes train their physical strength and their mental strength. So they wrestle themselves for the highest achievements.

Today, we are invited to meet two people who have achieved top performances in a very different field: Brother Klaus and Mother Maria Theresa Scherer.

From where did they draw the strength: Mother Maria Theresa for the way of her vocation, for the establishment and leadership of her sisters' community, for the whole hearted service of love for the poor and the sick, for perseverance even in the most difficult circumstances?

And Brother Klaus: from where did he draw the strength to be totally

open to the call of God who led him to ways which were so incomprehensible to him and to his fellow men at first; who asked him to leave the dearest of all that he possessed and to live entirely for God in the solitude of the hermit's life, and thus to be there for the people in a new way: as advisor, as admonisher, as peacemaker, as signpost on the right path.

The Jubilee Year of St. Brother Klaus is held under the motto "More Ranft". I mean, this is a motto that is worth looking at and asking us where we have our innermost sources of energy. The pilgrim day with Mother Maria Theresa should be an inspiration to us today.

"More Ranft" - Probably you have all been one or more times as pilgrims, to where Brother Klaus lived: on the Flüeli, where he was born, and where he built his own house for his family. And then you would have gone down into the deep valley of Melchaa, down into the Ranft, where he lived for 20 years as a hermit.

This descent into the depth of the gorge is a sign, a strong symbol. It



Painting of Bruder Klaus, photo Reinhard, Sachseln.

is connected with leaving behind everyday life with all its operation, its hectic pace, its noise and its unrest, its demands, its pleasures and its worries.

Descent into the deep valley, very consciously - and at the same time feel how that does good: there is much to relativize life itself, to lose its heaviness, to create space for a new vision and new courage; many things become clear, what blocks our way to ourselves, to our fellow being and to God.

*"My Lord and my God, take all of me, which hinders me from you."*

Doesn't something similar happens, when we go down the few steps to the crypt of Mother M. Theresa, when we enter the twilight, the dim light of this space, experience such a unique calmness, that it makes us quiet inwardly. There are almost always

prayers, sometimes individual, sometimes several- people, who offer their thanks and petitions, deliberately visit this place as pilgrims to the grave of the Blessed Mother Maria Theresa: they bring their everyday life with their joys and sorrows. They come with a great confidence that God is there in his goodness and carries and guides them, just as he bore and led Mother Maria Theresa. They sit down and remain silent and often experience how daily life lags behind, how questions get clarified and worries become lighter, and how they are strengthened with new courage in their lives, in their daily tasks and responsibilities.

Move down into personal Ranft – be calm – let go - be empty - and simply be there.  
And then?

Then there is the chance to find one's own new self: that, what forms us and our life; the joys and sorrows, the demands and obligations, and also to see difficult problems and to accept and affirm them with new courage. There is the chance to see our fellow human beings anew, to find a new way to them and to approach them; to those to whom we are connected in love, and also to those with whom we have difficulties and problems. Then there also lies an opportunity to

encounter God anew in this stillness and emptiness: to experience his presence; to feel his encouraging power; to perceive light again from him in the darkness which paralyze us; to experience his closeness as help in order to live our life in new confidence.

*"My Lord and my God, give everything to me, that promotes me to you."*

In one of his visions, Brother Klaus in his adolescence saw where his life would lead him. His friend Erni in Halden reported:

*"When he was sixteen years old, he saw a tall, beautiful tower, at the place where at present his little house and the chapel are. Then he had also a desire from a young age to look for the 'one being'."*

The picture did not go out of Niklaus' mind. It showed him his calling to seek a deep bond with God. This was the great longing of his life. Brother Klaus met this longing in the painful decision he made with his wife Dorothee: to leave his family and live in complete solitude for God. An unusual path - a path, that we can also pursue and which challenges us with questions. But why shouldn't God also call in unusual ways? Brother Klaus followed this call with deeper faith in union with God. "God knows it", was his



Photo of young mother M. Theresa, archive

answer when people asked him about his inner strength.

Mother Theresa was also led to unusual paths: the peasant's daughter, who simply wanted to live her life in the service of the weak, the small and the disadvantaged. She was led into tasks and took up the responsibilities which we hardly can imagine, and which often threatened to crush her. She undertook these tasks with dedication and love, with commitment of all her strength and in confidence that God guides her on these paths. It was in him that she found her inner strength,

with which she could endure even the most difficult situations and kept her going.

*"My Lord and my God, take me and give me completely to you."*

As pilgrims, we have come together today to Mother Maria Theresa: as people who are on the way, and on this way we may experience much joy and have to bear all sorts of burdens. May we all be strengthened today in the certainty: our path has a goal, a

final and supreme goal that is God himself.

And may all of us today experience anew that God is with us on our way, that He is our innermost strength, which encourages us to go our way and makes us keep moving when the highest achievements are demanded of us, and also when it is simply a matter of fidelity, perseverance and confidence, which is our task.

## Two Different Reformers

### Dr. Anselm Kraus OFM Conv., Kloster Schwarzenberg D

Francis of Assisi and Martin Luther of Eisleben are two reformers who are quite different. They also have a number of similarities too. Francis died in 1226, Martin Luther in 1546.

They both come from the good middle-class families. The parents of Francis were wholesale merchants of fine cloth; Martin Luther's parents were metallurgists (mining). The ways of the two young men would soon diverge: Francis would initially go on to become a merchant like his father; Martin Luther would begin a scientific career.

In the life of the two young men, however, God intervenes massively and both react with obedience: Here I am, Lord, I will gladly do your will. Francis has some experiences and encounters behind which he clearly sees God's guidance. Looking back at his life, Francis writes: "The Lord has given me to begin life in penance ..." "The Lord gave me such faith in the churches ..." - "The Lord gave and gives me so great faith in the priests, who live according to the holy Roman Church, because of their consecration ..." - "After the Lord had given me brothers, no one showed me what I should do, but the Most High Himself revealed to me that I should live according to the Holy Gospel... and the Pope permitted me." - "As greeting, the

Lord has revealed to me, we should say: the Lord grant you peace." Francis actually wanted to realize this life of penance in the footsteps of Jesus only for himself. But he unintentionally became the founder of a new order and a reformer of the Church.

### Vows in mortal fear

Martin Luther began to study law in Erfurt. A terrible thunderstorm in July, 1505, caused mortal fear in the young student. In his distress, Luther promised the Lord his own life and took a vow "to become a monk" if he were saved. In the same month, he entered the Augustinian Hermits in Erfurt. He went on to become a priest, and professor in Wittenberg. Despite his being in a religious order, and his spiritual life, Luther remained inwardly restless. He believed that his sacrifices did not satisfy God; that in order to achieve salvation, he would have to render new pious services and works. He used to confess long and desperately, prayed eagerly, and read the Bible. The deeply pious monk, biblical theologian and university professor, in his search

for the "merciful God" got a liberating insight from the Bible (letter to the Roman): God is not the punishing judge but justifies us human beings by faith. Faith is a gift, is grace! We are thus justified not by many pious works, but by faith. This is possible for us because of Jesus Christ's work of salvation. Luther once put it in a dinner speech: "The righteousness of God is that we are justified and saved by Christ." The doctrine of justification has now become the common good of the two Churches.

## **Conversion with consequences**

Francis, too, saw himself confronted with his sinful life at his young age. He goes into the solitude (hermitage) of Poggio Bustone and brings his guilt and his inner wounds before God. "God, be merciful to me a sinner", he prays for weeks in the rock cave. God has given him a way of purification, forgiveness and inner healing.

As a man of peace, as an instrument of peace, he can work from this time onwards. Peace will be his heartfelt desire. So, his greeting: "The Lord give you peace" Francis becomes a peacemaker between the citizens, noble families and cities. Unlike Martin Luther, Francis does not know



Francis of Assisi, Fresco of Cimabue around 1280, photo INFAG

enemies and acts of destruction. Everyone is brother and sister: the pope, the bishops, the noblemen, the leper, the robber, the sultan, the prostitute.

## **Indulgence with excesses**

Martin Luther rightly takes on the scandalous awarding of "indulgence" of his time. Men of the church pretended that one could buy heaven with indulgences. The phase of the purification after death could also be shortened by donations. The money transaction (indulgence trade) ran between Pope Leo X., the Archbishop of Mainz, Albrecht of Brandenburg, and the banking house Fugger in Augsburg. Precisely because of his deep knowledge about the grace of faith and justification, Luther had to strike an alarm. He also publicly opposed Rome and the Pope.

When Rome was opposed, Luther's love turned into hatred. Thomas Kaufmann (church historian) speaks of "disappointed love". Francis, however, managed – and he was the first - to get an indulgence from the Pope for the Portiuncula - little church without losing money.

### **Political alliances**

Martin Luther, the "revolutionary of faith", within three years (1518 - 1521) also assumed the role of a champion of political and nationalist tendencies. In order to save his reform he took some princes and nationalists (Ulrich of Hutten and Franz of Sickingen) as help and led his new awakening, which was to lead to freedom. The excommunication and empire wide ban as well, which was long since threatened but not imposed, brought no respite. The opposite situation occurred. "Humility, happiness, and love, which had filled him since his knowledge of true divine grace, turned into pride, arrogance, and hatred during his breathless and desperate externalization. The good news lost out in the battle against the blazing sword that knocked all down to the visionary faith perspective. Luther sensed his power when the first messages were pointing to a storm. Now the storm had its own

momentum. He felt God was on his side." (Dietrich Gronau, Revolutionary of faith, Luther)

In his later years too, Luther had terrible, hateful words against Jews and Turks.

### **Reformatory demands**

Luther's main reformatory work was founded in 1520. There are four individual writings. They aroused genuine enthusiasm among the population. The reformer was seen as a liberator of Germany from the yoke of Roman papal power. Luther had triggered a "wildfire." His work, "On the Christian Nobility of the German Nation" contains the program, which has already been largely implemented: abolition of celibacy, appointment of bishops in their own country, abolition of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, abolition of spiritual possessions and spiritual fiefs, all payments made to Rome, free election and dismissal of the clergy by the congregations, interpretation of the Bible by each individual Christian, the abolition of almost all the church festivals, the ban on indulgences and pilgrimages, rejection of oaths in the name of the Pope. The Pope is, in principle, subordinate to the emperor; the Pope is merely an arbitrator in cases of differences between high churchmen.



Martin Luther, Painting by Luke Cranach the Elder around 1528, photo Veste Coburg

After 1521, the Reformation took place in two different ways: one is characterized by power struggles, social uprisings and national movements. The other is the pastoral work and the construction of a new church.

### **The precious asset of the Bible**

While for Francis, the life "In the Footsteps of Jesus" or "According to the Gospel" was connected with fidelity to tradition, Martin Luther accepts only the Holy Scriptures as a guideline. But for both the Holy Scripture is the precious asset. Luther translated the New Testament into German and so decisively helped everyone to read the Bible. He created the

figure of the Christian, who alone without mediation of tradition and church, sought to hear God's word and will in the Holy Scripture and thereby - as the case may be - confidently rebelled against the established order.

### **National and international**

The work of Martin Luther is mainly limited to Germany. He himself does not come beyond Germany. Francis, on the other hand, is universal in his missionary spirit: "Go to all people." He himself sets a good example. He sets out for France, Spain, Croatia, and Palestine, Egypt.

### **Challenges for the Church**

Even if Francis did not want to criticize the Church, the special characteristics of his way of life led him to contrast with the available ecclesial behaviour and thought:

- His concrete life according to the Gospel.
- His radical poverty was in contrast with the riches of the Church and its dignitaries.
- His choice to be a Friar Minor and serve was a question to the power and political rule.
- His unarmed missionary work was contrary to the policy of the strength of the crusaders.

- His courage to preach as a simple, uneducated layman gave the impression that he wanted a traditional task for the bishops and priests.
- His way of community life in the form of a fraternity, in which everyone is socially equal, was an explosive element in the hierarchical and feudal order of the time.

The successful worldwide development of the Franciscan Order was a wordless challenge to the Roman Church. From the beginning, Francis sought the "Yes" of Rome for his new way of life according to the Gospel. «Yes» to Christ means "Yes" to his Church. And indeed, he achieved a "Yes" from Rome.

### **Pope - loyalty or one's own way?**

Francis had certainly the danger of a church schism in mind. He also knew his limits and felt that he needed the help of the church for his work. That is why his program: "Brother Francis promises obedience and reverence to the Lord Pope Honorius and his canonically elected successors and to the Roman Church" (Rule of Francis).

Martin Luther ultimately went in the other direction. In 1524, he left his religious order. Francis had

paved the way for a new religious order (Poor Clares) for women who were enthusiastic about his way of renewal, and founded the Third Order for the laity. In 1525, Luther married the former nun of the Cistercian Order, Catherine of Bora. There remained a divided church and a divided country dependent on the princes.

### **Luther's Jubilee**

The motto of the Jubilee Year is "Reconciliation instead of splitting". 500 years of the Reformation! Much has been changed. The two churches have come closer together and continue to seek unity. The Second Vatican Council and many discussions and encounters have fostered unity. The Christians agree on the following points:

- in the appreciation of the Bible;
- the Magisterium of the church is understood primarily as a service of the Word;
- Jesus Christ is the only priest and sole mediator;
- the vernacular language in the liturgy is possible;
- the Holy Communion can be received in the form of bread and wine;
- the Church is communion of the Word and the Sacraments; the universal

priesthood of all believers is affirmed;

- one confesses: both sides have a blame for the division and they have asked each other for forgiveness;
- the indulgence has been clarified in Catholic theology;
- there is the "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification".

There are also differences of opinion regarding

- the understanding of the Church;
- the valid execution of the Eucharistic celebration;
- the question concerning the ecclesiastical office.

It is to be hoped and to be wished that in the jubilee year, the motto "reconciliation instead of splitting" will be implemented. According to Jesus' will and promise, all Christians can make their contribution: through prayer for unity.

Editorial note: The text first appeared in: emissary of St. Anthony, January 2017. Both the director of the German-language edition, Br. Andreas Murk, as well as the author, Dr. P. Anselm Kraus, gladly gave the permission to print the article in the "Theodosia".

## **So that the Word of God Becomes Alive**

**From the yearly letter 2017 by Sr. Marija Brizar, Superior General**

"As a Congregation we want to view our communities in the spirit of the vision this year as spiritual places that focus on their centre, the Crucified Jesus, are centred on it, are constantly strengthened and live by it, and can give strength and orientation to other people because of it.

Our spiritual centre is the merciful and crucified Jesus. We feel called, personally and as a community, to walk in his footsteps and thus to grow in relation to him, to deepen this relationship more and more and to be shaped by it.

Dear sisters, I invite you to emphasize two main points in your communities that can always strengthen the spiritual centre and also open up space with other people on the way: the Word of God and the Eucharist.

In every community, we are a community of faith. This becomes visible and tangible by supporting one another in faith and creating space to share faith. A simple way to do this is to break the Word of God in the form of a faith sharing or a lectio divina. The Word of God has the power to shape our

personal life and the life of the community. The more we get involved in the words of the Holy Scripture, and especially in the word of the Gospel, the more it will show us the "footprints" of Jesus in different life situations and form in us his spirit, his attitudes. Gathered around the Word of God, we find ourselves as a community of believers, united in the one who has made his home among us.

To deal with the Word of God and to grow and mature in it must not only remain our privilege within the community. We can share this word of God with other people and grow together with them in faith ..."

### **Suggestion:**

The Word of God determined and shaped Francis and his way of life.

What experiences do I have with the Word of God personally and in community?

What are the methods of engaging with the Word of God?

The "Theodosia" gladly accepts brief reports.

## **Spiritual Place**

### **Experience in the World Monastery in Radolfzell**

Sr. Canisia Mack, Hegne, Province Baden-Württemberg

“The need of the time is the will of God.” Fr. Theodosius Florentini. God’s will often expresses itself in surprising needs. Many people are awake today and discover what is important and urgent at present. An example of this can be seen in a decision of the municipal council of a city on Lake Constance. It recognized the need of many people for peace around the turn of the millennium for meeting and understanding, for stillness and spirituality. It wanted to set an example. The former Capuchin monastery, which was in municipal possession, gave concrete impetus and the question of how the currently vacant house could be put to good use. The proposed idea of providing rooms of the building as a place for interreligious encounters was positively taken up by many.

Ideas need to be followed up by meaningful actions. What was initially possible? Proposals were discussed, volunteers organized and looked for speakers, and media work was activated. A board of trustees of seven volunteers ventured to set up and maintain the "Radolfzell World Monastery" as a place of dialogue, encounter and spirituality. In

addition, a circle of friends was formed, who sought to support the project. Until today, the place of encounter still functions as a place of voluntary commitment, without financial foundation but on the firm trust and steps to contribute to the understanding of man, religion and nation.

#### **Guided**

Again and again, I am surprised by the question of why I would have been engaged in the unfamiliar task in the World Monastery. My interest has always been the "now" – exactly what is currently being shown in the church, the world and the contemporary world. In 2005, I received information about the Radolfzell World Monastery. I saw in this flourishing institution a courageous venture to respond to contemporary spiritual needs. Was it a coincidence that a spontaneous remark had rapid consequences? While waiting for fellow sisters at a car parking place in Radolfzell, I discovered under many indications, a signpost "Weltkloster". Something touched me and I said lightly, "I would go there too." A few days later, when I was invited by our

Provincial Superior to take part in a discussion with those responsible for the World Monastery, I was more than surprised. I did not know that our Provincial Leadership had repeatedly received inquiries with the request for a sister from those responsible for this project. I spontaneously agreed. At first, however, I did not realize what I agreed with. But the motto of the founder of our congregation: "The need of the time is the will of God" left me with no surprise. After a brief reflection, an Indian fellow sister and I as "Christians" were faced with various tasks in a house called the World Monastery. Worlds meet in this place.

## **Required**

The concept of "Christianity" can be viewed differently depending on whether it is approached in a cultural, political, religious, intellectual or other context. In my opinion, the understanding of God, man, and the world is particularly called upon in everyday life. This was a daily routine in the World Monastery.

Sr. Anandi Parunthemplackel and I, as Christians, formed the "permanent inhabitants" of the World Monastery. Working with "volunteers" was encouraging and benevolent. And we tried what is

possible to get involved in the new task. So we were responsible for everything a guest house needs, be it planning and organizing, working on the computer, on beamer, on telephone, shopping, working in household and kitchen. Everything was up to date. Offers of meditation, guided tours and conversations were part of everyday life. Groups of pupils and senior citizens, educational institutions, authorities and parties and often those interested spontaneously wanted to get the information. It was just "to be there" around the clock. What I had learned sometime and somehow up to my 80th year, I could use here. Looking back, I would like to say that we were not just challenged. Encounters frequently gave us insights and positive experiences.

Never before had I sat down with a Hindu at the table, had spoken to a Jew about the Holy Scriptures, discussed about meditation with a Buddhist. How close we came as human beings. We really saw ourselves as brothers and sisters at a time when people were hungry for transcendence.

## **Held**

An irreplaceable principle in the World Monastery is that we respect each other and take them seriously. Every day there were opportunities to respect the world



In the foreground: World Monastery Radolfzell

and faith of fellow human beings, to meet others face to face. The World Monastery offered an environment to people searching for spiritual answers to faith challenged by modern understanding of reality and information about them. Numerous speakers give talks and dialogue discussions are offered. Religions and science make steps towards understanding the essence of human being. Carl-Friedrich von Weizsäcker said several years ago: "Is it not impressive that many wisdom teachings and traditions from all over the world, such as Buddhism, are confirmed by modern physics? A strict separation of philosophy and new physics is no longer possible." Especially quantum physics surprises with insights that were unthinkable years ago. Once again the Nobel Peace Prize winner Hans Peter Dürr was a charming guest with us in the World Monastery. In simple talks, he showed

connections from the "tangible to the incomprehensible", from the "visible to the invisible" and from the "audible to the unheard". As quantum physicist, his insights had a special weight and were perceived by many people with astonishment.

Meditation is a daily offer in the World Monastery. My Indian fellow sister was very much in demand as a yoga and meditation teacher. The schedule included regular times for peace prayer. But it included more. It clearly struck me that many people today do not need so much theological explanations, rather the experiences move a person to give his life for what he believes. The people who came to the World Monastery wanted to practically experience the value of religions in their lives, which leads to faith. Counselling is needed. So we were challenged to be what we understood and lived by our faith. Not only through words, but even more through our being, we two sisters, as Christians witnessed at meetings with Hindus, Muslims, Jews, Sikhs, Baha'is, non-believers or atheists. Very often, I heard from visitors: "I have nothing to do with the church, but spirituality interests me." It was our task to be there as believers among people of today, to answer their questions, whether on the telephone, on unexpected visits,

at meetings, etc. It was not about juggling with theological terms. We handed that to experts. It was important to take the fellow human being seriously and at the same time to respect him for what he believed. Through my encounters in the World Monastery, this conviction became more and more solidified in me. We can do a lot of things together. We should not emphasize division. We can stand side by side. We cannot have disconnect and expect an active coexistence.

The Holy Scriptures, the books of today's theological and spiritual authors provided great help in discussions. The Holy Father's monthly intentions also led to a mutual exchange and understanding.

What I had vowed as a Catholic religious nun in the profession was not only accepted by the voluntary staff and guests, but was rather expected. Thus the daily prayer times were ensured, the time for the Eucharistic celebration in the cathedral of the city was kept free. This also gave the opportunity to talk with the Catholics of the parish about the goal of the World Monastery. We found ourselves accepted and incorporated in the parish community and pastoral care unit

all around. However, I was particularly encouraged by the fact that our fellow sisters in Hegne and Motherhouse in Ingenbohl showed great interest, came to visit and supported our task with their prayers.

However, it also occurred that for example, a tourist rang the door bell just as we wanted to prepare a meal. She had read information about the World Monastery in the front of the house and wanted to look at it. After a short while, she noticed that it was probably wrong that Christian nuns lived in such a "heathen" environment. Then followed a tirade against abuse and grievances in the church! I tried to listen carefully to the woman and not to interrupt her. In many cases she was right. But then I tried to show her the positive things that germinate and blossom in many places. Shortly after, she stood up without a greeting and went. Eight days later, she rang the door bell again. How astonished I was when she gave me a bouquet of flowers in the hand with the remark: "You have inspired me to think. Can I pay you a visit next year during my holiday? "

It was not a single incident which encouraged me that God wanted to have me in this house.

## Born

The whole of creation shows clearly that God loves diversity. I often ask myself what God is doing with his people. Ultimately, we are all created as creatures by the divine Original-You, desired and loved. The experience that we as Christians "live, move, and have our being in God" (Acts 17, 28), and that God's life ultimately flows through the whole of being, brings us close to all living beings. Loving thoughts, deeds, words make us wonder how transparent the creation is. Francis of Assisi has shown us this convincingly in his Canticle of the Sun.

The Buddhists in particular place special emphasis on "mindfulness" and "compassion". They try to get closer to secrets of life through daily meditation. A Buddhist told me that as an atheist he set out on his way to India in 1984 from Europe. There, in an ashram, he had met men who actually lived what they believed. That convinced him, and he stayed with them.

Jesus speaks to us Christians of this being-one with the divine. He wants to make this consciousness accessible to all. In John's Gospel it is put down in writing: "To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God." (1:12).

And Paul is constantly shaping new forms of words to make it clear that we all share in the life of God "in Christ". Something therefore became very clear and important to me: "We are not only the children of God, it's us." Is there something more pleasant? We should and would desire to continue to be so. What is required is thus the being-one of faith and life. Nothing new, isn't it? This being-one and a positive presence is the prerequisite that we can contribute to the change of the world. We are all lifelong learners and people who are guided.

Boundaries and walls are created in the minds. All eternity we have to get along together, why not start today? Doesn't diversity show the practical possibilities in unity? It is pleasing that today much good will is reflected in our Catholic Church and not only for itself. As the Israeli head of state, said recently: "We do not have different heavens but only different prayer books."

Recently, the press reported: "Representatives of ten religious communities in Schaffhausen, Switzerland give a joint statement on interreligious dialogue. In this, Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists and the Bahai undertook in particular the recognition of the state

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The "Golden Rule" in the World Religions</b></p>						
						
Hinduism	Jainism	Chinese Religion	Buddhism	Judaism	Christianity	Islam
<i>This is the sum of duty: do nothing to others which would cause pain if done to you.</i>	<i>A person should treat all creatures as he himself would be treated.</i>	<i>Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you.</i>	<i>A state that is not pleasant or delightful to me must be so for him also; and a state which is not pleasant or delightful for me, how could I inflict that on another.</i>	<i>Do not do to others what you would not want them to do to you.</i>	<i>In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you.</i>	<i>No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.</i>
Mahabharata XII.114.8	Sutrakritanga I.11.33	Confucius, Analects 15.23	Samyutta Nikaya V. 353.35 / 354.2	Rabbi Hillel Sabbath 31a	Matthew 7:12 Luke 6:13	40 Hadith (Sayings of Muhammad) of an Nawai 13

The "Golden Rule" according to World Ethos, Tübingen

constitution and the democratic legal order."

Dialogue is today a much used word that would lead to a rethinking in society, so that the religious communities will be perceived as "partners" in the future. Sometimes this means changing the perspective. A dialogue between religions can be successful if one meets at the level of inner experience.

Before our departure in August 2015, it so happened that a Buddhist nun entered the World Monastery. She also sees herself as a bridge builder who wants to

foster dialogue. She gives regular courses in Buddhist meditation.

Through her presence in the World Monastery, she can also make spirituality visible through hospitality, through contemplative life and spiritual exchange.

In one of the long corridors of the World Monastery large tablets with "key sentences of the writings of different religions" are installed. They give visitors an overview of the most important statements of the individual religions. Attentive viewers noticed every time that it was about the basic facts, and this was expressed in nearly the same

words. Christianity says: "Do to others what you would like them do to you." The golden rule taken seriously by every person could change the earth within the shortest time.

It would be more than desirable for convinced Christians to take this project seriously. If I were years younger, I would have continued working there with joy. I am still deeply attached to the ideals of the World Monastery. Through my prayer and

occasional visits, I support the place that is dear to my heart.

We may be amazed and confident that God directs his world and leads to the promised goal, a goal that is more than we can imagine and hope for. Small and persevering steps, but above all God's daily providence leads to the new world promised by him. In my opinion, the overriding need of our days is, the daily request: "Your kingdom come" and the corresponding commitment.

## Spiritual Place "House of Religions" Berne

Sr. Yves Germann, Ingenbohl, Motherprovince Switzerland

Within the educational offer of the Motherprovince, a visit to the "House of Religions" in Berne was planned at the end of March. 24 sisters were inspired to join the visit.

Even the ornamentation of the frontage - it is based on a pentagonal structure - promised something special, made it clear that it is a religious house. And we experienced this very closely this afternoon.

Already in the forecourt we were impressed by the hospitable, mainly Tamil atmosphere and we felt good being there. We were looked after by the Hindu chief priest, who is also a cook and a waiter, and is therefore concerned about both spiritual and physical well-being.

Then followed a good two hours of intensive discourse, which we listened to with great interest, and which impressed us all very much.

At first, the manager gave us a brief **general introduction** to the history of development. Already in 1998, it was considered that in Berne there should be a worthy

cultural building for various religions, e.g. for weddings, death rituals, annual festivals. The purpose was: to build confidence in the people of different cultures living in a peaceful community. This is how the "House of Religions", the centre for a Dialogue of Cultures was built at Europaplatz. The initiators were firmly convinced that the project they dared to construct would be symbolic of their intent. Thus the association "The House of Religions" was founded in the year 2002 and the house was inaugurated in December 2014. Since then the great religions of the world have a home in Berne. These are the Christians, Alevites, Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists. The Jews, Baha'i and Sikhs are also the members of the association, but they do not have their own sacred space in the House of Religions. The whole enterprise can, and is sustained today by tremendous voluntary work. It is still a great learning process, needs a lot of consultation, for e.g. what is noise and what is music, even sacred music, or where to wear shoes and where not etc.



Facade "House of Religions", Photos Internet

After this introduction, Mrs. Ecclesia (she is really called so!) led us into the **Church**, which is available for Christian denominations, such as the Roman Catholic, the Reformed, the Lutheran, the Methodist, the Christian, the Ethiopian-Orthodox, and the Moravian Church, with the latter two being instrumental in shaping the Church. For example, the simplicity of the Church corresponds to the Moravian Church, to the Evangelical Unity of Brethren (naturally also with women!) who call themselves societies and go back to Count Nicholas Ludwig of Zinzendorf (middle of the 18th century). The

eastern facade is adorned by a large iconostasis of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, a representation of the Trinity, which is somewhat strange to us, as well as the birth and the crucifixion of Jesus, Archangels and Saints.

In this church, besides the usual worship services, baptism, confirmation, wedding, birthday, synods etc. take place. In Christian area, in interreligious surroundings, it is possible to work very well with other religions. Thus much of the fear of the stranger is reduced. What is important is equivalence and not egalitarianism, for e.g. the

question can be asked: Why do we do so and not like the others?

Subsequently, a Zen Buddhist led us into the **intercultural Buddhist centre**. He explained to us that there are different types of Buddhism, and want to show this diversity to the public, and to enter into a dialogue with the different directions. Thus one comes to know Eastern and Western Buddhism, and that is also celebrated together. The Buddhists do not have a superior uniform structure. As to the different meditation forms, the Buddhists are strongly interested in learning from each other. The leader told us that the Buddhist monasteries were actually teaching institutes, a sort of training camp for 2-3 years of monastic life before people became active in society.

The next stop was the **Hindu temple**. Here we were told to take off the shoes before we could enter the sacred room. The Shiva temple (they call themselves peaceful vegetarian Shaivists) is a typical Tamil Hindu temple, the largest in Switzerland. All six main denominations of Hinduism are represented by a large colorful altar with the corresponding gods and goddesses. Thus, the temple is a meeting place and home to Hindus of all colourings. Eleven temple builders from South India



Space of the Christian religions

have made the individual figures according to ancient traditions. Hinduism knows no founders of religion. Between 1500 and 500 B.C., the religious knowledge (the sacred knowledge, primarily in the so-called Vedas) was written down in script. Mahatma Gandhi was one of the most important representatives of Hinduism. The Hindus are acquainted with many rituals. In the temple puja takes place every evening at 6 p.m. In 2015, five women priests were consecrated, three of whom are in the "House of Religions" (for the first time women in 700 years). God is an infinite energy for the Hindu, who guided us.

After that a young dynamic Muslim received us and led us to the meeting hall of **Alevi**. The Alevis are a Shiite Islamic schismatic sect. Their attitude to faith is based on the texts of 12 philosophers and poets. The 12 Wall niches in the hall symbolize this origin. A stylized reclining

figure on the ceiling in the meeting room would like to remind you of eternity. The five pillars of Islam (public creed, daily ritual prayer, social donation, fasting in the month of Ramadan, and pilgrimage to Mecca) are not of great importance to the Alevis. But it is very important for the Alevis that the rituals can only be celebrated when all are reconciled with each other. They also attach great importance to equality between men and women.

Then we were allowed to take a look at the **mosque**. This is open to all Muslims, for men and women, Shiites and Sunnis. It is a place to practice the faith as well as a social meeting place and a centre for education and exchange, also with the other religions in the "House of Religions". The prayer takes place here 5 times a day, but it can also be done at home. Only the Friday prayer is obligatory for the men in the mosque (women have to take care of the family). Up to 400 people take part in the Friday prayer. Iman holds the sermon in

Bosnian, Albanian, German and Arabic. Krishna monk has expressed the following about the prayer practice of the Muslims: "That Muslims here pray 5 times a day, gives me discipline for my own religion." Could this also not apply to us?

I was struck by what the representatives of different religions so frankly and confidently reported on their religious practice. It is certainly one of the reasons why the so different religions here can coexist peacefully together and work together. Because they are firm in their religion, they need not be afraid of each other, they do not have to justify themselves and fight with each other.

I was very much impressed by a saying on the wall of the Hindu temple. It is translated as:

*"All men are born equal in rights and dignity,  
we are all equal even in the sight of God.*

*The whole world is one family,  
every person is welcome."*

## “Lord, When Were You in Prison....?” (Mt.25:39)

Sr. Linda Songy, Merill, USA



The flooded terrain

In his description of “the last judgment,” (Mt. 25:31-46), Matthew tells us that in our desire to be among “the just,” one of the questions that we will ask of Jesus is: “Lord, when were you in prison?” I have been serving as the Catholic Chaplain at the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women for almost 10 years. As the only state-wide penitentiary for women in Louisiana, we have sometimes had as many as 1200 women assigned to our care, including 2 who were waiting to be executed. So over these many years, I have seen and heard

Jesus’ answer to that question in many different ways.

In August of last year, however, Louisiana experienced a major flood, and we were among thousands of people who had to be evacuated to higher ground. Our inmates were scattered around the state in 6 different places, some quite distant from each other. Ever since then, the challenges and heartaches which face them are even greater than those of ordinary prison life. I would like to share with you some of those challenges and

heartaches by suggesting that we imagine Jesus answering our opening question: “Lord, when were you in prison?”

Please join me in seeing and hearing Jesus saying, “I was in prison when.....”

- “... all 1200 inmates were given 10 minutes to put what they needed (for 2 or 3 days, they were told!) in 2 laundry bags and walk through rapidly rising flood waters into the buses that would take them to dry ground, but they didn’t know where that would be;”
- “... some of them were taken to a nearby prison for men, where they were put in 4 large dormitories, with 80 of them in each one, sleeping in double bunk beds side by side, with no privacy at all, not even for a shower or the use of a toilet;”
- “... 700 of them were taken on a four-hour bus ride to an empty prison building where they slept on thin mats, laid side-by-side on the floor, with no privacy at all, in Louisiana’s August heat;”
- “...some of the inmates were removed from their state prison system, sent to a privately owned prison, 3½ hours away, with very similar living conditions, feeling abandoned



Sr. Linda with her shoe collection

- and unwelcome, just like a piece of garbage!”
- “... as the inmates were packing to be evacuated, they thought it best to leave some of the few precious items that they still had (family pictures, legal papers, the shoes and clothes that they did not expect to need and did not want to risk damaging) on the upper bunks in their bedrooms, thinking that they would be safer there---
  - only to be told later that all of their personal belongings had been destroyed;”
  - “... the inmates realized that it would likely be 2 or 3 years (not days) that they would be living under these conditions, and that they had taken very little clothes and shoes with them (nothing for the winter

months), and a very small supply of personal hygiene items.”

As chaplains, we asked ourselves (and God!): “What can we do to ease the pain of our incarcerated sisters and to help them meet some of their needs?” One of the most important services that we tried to offer them is the ministry of compassionate presence--- simply being there with them, to pray with them, to hug them, to listen to them express their fears and heartaches, and to grieve with them.

But as time went on, and the winter months drew near, we knew that we must do more! As the physical needs of our women became more and more obvious, I offered our prison wardens to seek the assistance of people that I knew would want to help us provide them with warmer clothes, warmer shoes, and some of the basic personal hygiene items which they so badly needed

(soap, shampoo, tooth brush, tooth paste, deodorant). Once I was given that permission, we shared the needs of our women with our Holy Cross community (both sisters and associates) as well as our other generous donors. The financial assistance that we needed began to come in abundance, and it is still coming!

The result is that approximately 400 of our women now have a good pair of tennis shoes and warm socks. And countless numbers of our indigent sisters no longer have to go without (or beg from another inmate) the basic items of personal hygiene. With deep gratitude and great admiration, I pray that every one of our donors will experience the joy of hearing Jesus say to them: “I assure you, as often as you did it for one of these (so often considered ‘the least’ in our society), you did it for me.” (Mt. 25:40) “Well done, good and faithful servant.” (Mt.25:23)

## "Faith Comes from What is Heard" Rom. 10:17

Sr. Anne-Roger Prétôt, Friborg, Western Switzerland

And how is it when you hear nothing?

"Faith comes from what is heard, says Paul. What happens when you do not hear anything? How can I fill this gap? In which way can I come to understand Bible texts?

The deaf man "hears" with his eyes! For him, it is difficult to understand the symbolisms of the Bible. To look for and find the spirit of the message of the Holy Scriptures is not without concern for him. His grasping of the world is the wordless communication. His culture moves in gestures.

The people who are involved in pastoral work are constantly confronted with this problem. The ecumenical group of pastors of the deaf and hearing impaired of Western Switzerland have faced the somewhat daring challenge of translating the Bible into the French sign language.

This big adventure started in 2007. Priests, parish priests and pastoral assistants were appointed by their church. They had, and have a single Creed:

They live together a solid and fraternal ecumenism, open to the

wealth of everyone which strengthens it in pastoral work. Everyone is convinced that the deaf person has something special to say to our churches, which the churches cannot understand: a world outside of hearing, a world in which one hears differently. When God speaks, the deaf people hear. Another conviction: We will not translate, think, seek, and pray for the hearing impaired people, no! With them we start working. Two groups of theologians educated themselves and are engaged in pastoral care, professional interpreters of the sign language and young deaf people. Every 14 days we meet between 6:00 p.m. and 10 p.m. At the beginning of our work, we contacted an international group of French language experts, who had already worked on a part of the Gospel according to Luke. In order to maintain this contact, some deaf and hearing persons regularly went to Paris. Lack of motivation, insufficient endurance and other problems that accumulated led to the disbanding of this group.

Thus, we continued our work all alone later with the support of the Bible Society of Switzerland and



Sister Anne Roger at the ceremony

the rules of translating the international Bible alliance. There is much joy, sometimes discouragement, intellectual effort to understand the words and sentences that allow our young deaf friends to go deeper into biblical thoughts. Inflexibility, if the texts block us, if Hebrew and Greek require great effort for those who do not know the language, the concern to always approach the true meaning and finally the humility to approach the Word of God which can never leave us alone.

To this day, we have translated the whole Gospel according to Luke, the first 11 chapters of Genesis, and a lexicon.

Everything can be found on a DVD and on the Internet: [www.bible-lsf.org](http://www.bible-lsf.org). An ecumenical liturgy lexicon of the reading years ABC is currently in preparation.

2007 - 2017: According to the example of the chosen people on the way to Canaan, we were on the way for a long time and are still today: attentive to the hands that speak, to the eyes that glow, to the hearts that open and understand, to the faith to which we belong, to the friendship that connects us, and to the different cultures that we discover, to the word that is revealed to us.

On 1st April, 2017, the wage, which crowned our work and endurance, beckoned us: we were



Happy laureates

awarded the "oecumenica-label". The Conference of European Churches honors ecumenical projects sponsored and supported by individuals, parishes, religious communities and church organizations. The project was named "exemplary".

In the amphitheatre of the Geneva Town Hall, this honour was given to us in a public ceremony, in the presence of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities. In a long ceremony in which addresses alternated the introduction of our project and its realization with music, singing and prayer, we were honoured with the "oecumenica label", seal of excellence for exemplary ecumenical work.

In front of the podium, populated by the state and church

authorities, sat the parents and friends, Frédéric and Gilles, two deaf young men who received the valuable document from the hands of the President, Dagmar Heller, of the Commission "Oecumenica". A great moment for our feelings accompanied by some discreet tears of emotion for our group! Great pride, too, because 10 years ago the project still seemed like a dream, a utopia.

For me that was a moment of silent prayer and thankfulness to the Lord. Before us, all the two deaf boys, the missionaries of the "Good News", witnesses of a world that is different from ours, express gratitude and happiness with their hands.

Here is the word of the "good news" to the full weight of the promise: "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes."

Lk 10:21-22.

## The Vicariate Uganda Lives

### Short Overview

Sr. Sheeja Kolacherril, Ingenbohl

In a year, the sisters in Uganda look forward to celebrating 25 years of mission in the upliftment work of the society in Uganda. At the outset, during the General visitation from the Motherhouse, Ingenbohl, the official opening of the Jubilee year is planned, for 15 February 2018, the death anniversary of our Founder Fr. Theodosius Florentini. It is therefore opportune to turn the pages of the history of the Uganda mission.

At the request of the General administration the Indian provinces were ready to respond to the invitation to the Uganda mission and sisters were sent forth. They launched out in faith, determination and sacrificing spirit. With the passing of time the history got expanded with the intervention of so many people of good will in different parts of the world. Over the years the General administration and provincial administrations in India, Europe and USA were keenly interested and immensely supportive of the mission with personnel and finance. Besides this major contribution, the voluntary service,

financial assistance by individuals, churches and organizations and sponsorship programmes are the major reasons for the sustenance, growth and spread of the mission. The children in the schools and hostels, the sick who are less privileged, the villagers who are mostly farmers and the youth profit from the service rendered by the sisters.

At present, there are 54 sisters, 18 Novices, 12 Postulants, 6 candidates and 12 pre-candidates in 6 communities in Uganda and Kenya. Their life, culture and spirituality vibrate to the fibres of this mission and look forward to expanding the realization of the call of God to assist in the needs of the time against the backdrop of threatening political situations and deteriorating social and religious values. Sr. Amala Kunnath and Sr. Lisa Mudoor as Vicariate Superiors took the mission ahead with great loyalty, firm faith and profound trust in the providence of God. From 2017 Sr. Genevieve as Vicariate Superior, Sr. Margaret Nnassunna, Sr. Claris Thekumpurath and Sr. Rose Nakitende as councillors continue the mission with inordinate fervour and sense of urgency.



School girls at the Welcome Dance

With this background, I am pleased to bring to your attention the experiences of people from different walks of life and take you to different areas of the vicariate mission.

## **Uganda - "The Black Pearl of Africa"**

Anna Wolz, teacher from Germany

The Central African spot land at the equator, that's how Winston Churchill called it. Uganda has remained one of the world's poorest countries till today despite positive developments in the last 25 years.

And for almost 25 years, Indian Holy Cross Sisters have been living and working in Uganda and since then a small network of schools and health centres have been established. The community of the Ugandan sisters is growing

steadily, and so the work of the sisters there bears abundant fruits in every respect.

Life in Uganda is not easy for what is needed for life, the sisters cannot simply get in supermarkets and shops but they grow most of them in their gardens, just as all the families there have to do. Around the convent in Kiziba, there is a large garden with all sorts of important food: peanuts, cassava, potatoes, coffee, bananas, mangoes, avocados, etc. The Holy Cross Sisters are very good farmers.

The sisters focus on the education of children and youth and on the medical care of the local population. With the construction of several schools (in Osia, Kikjusa, Kiziba), the sisters offer the children and young people a good basic education. Teachers cannot access any teaching



Community of Kiziba and three teachers from Germany

materials or media, but they produce their own teaching materials: there are no books, but hand-made posters and posters with the learning material. How much effort and intensive work behind it, it's admirable. It is clear from the performance of the children that the pedagogical work is gratefully accepted.

In the Vocational Training Centre, young women can learn to sew and deal with computer programs, or even undergo the hairdresser's training. With such professional training, a woman in Uganda can live self-determined and

independently which is still a rarity for Ugandan conditions. The women are clearly disadvantaged in society and often depend on quite unreliable fathers or husbands. It is not unusual for them to experience violence.

The health centres are a blessing for the people: the sisters show young mothers how they can keep their babies healthy. Minor accidents and infections are treated, and HIV-positive people can find help and purposive education. Since there is no state health system, the medical start-up station for the local people is a great help, indeed a blessing.

"Ora et labora!" is also a direct motto in the communities of the Ugandan sisters. All day long, work is being done everywhere without complaining or grumbling about scarcity. The fact that people focus on prayer and work is natural and it ultimately leads to success, for the people themselves can shape, develop or change their lives. For Uganda, this is the only opportunity for development. The Holy Cross Sisters put it into practice through their work and attitude toward the people. So, one could allude to the sentence from Churchill and say: Holy Cross Sisters - the white pearls in Uganda.

## **Experience as a Doctor with the Ingenbohl Sisters in Uganda**

Dr. Benno Kreienbühl, Switzerland

For almost 25 years now, the Holy Cross Sisters, Ingenbohl have been active in several communities in Uganda and now also in Kenya in social, pastoral and educational areas. In the health centre in Kiziba and Kikyusa, they are also active in basic medical care. In Kikyusa, I have been involved for 6 to 8 weeks mission annually since 2012.

I work in the office and at the hospital, supported by a nurse or sister as translator. Diagnosis and treatment are in some cases, a challenge.



Primary school children of Kiziba



Kikyusa Community

I cannot rely on many laboratory tests, X-rays or a wide range of medicines as I am used to in Switzerland. Only laboratory tests (test kits) and the possibility for microscopic examinations are available to the laboratory staff. In many cases, these methods are sufficient for clarification, in some cases not; and there is always some uncertainty. I had to learn how to use a few simple means to be efficient.

The experiences of the first two years in the health centre were not easy, sometimes annoying. A lack of clean water, power interruptions, defective examination equipment, unsuitable surgical instruments,

lack of dressing material, etc., or carelessly guided patient records made my work much more difficult. But the ever-relaxed, cheerful atmosphere and helpfulness in the health centre - spread by sisters and lay staff - made me forget personal difficulties. I am constantly impressed with the tremendous work done by the sisters on a daily basis, despite difficult conditions and their religious obligations.

The increase of pregnant mothers, the insufficient or poor facility in the maternity unit and other reasons urge the sisters to build a maternity clinic. This is a major

challenge for them, mainly as their own cash reserve is limited and no support from the state of Uganda is to be expected. I feel inspired to search for donors and professionals and contribute for establishment of this clinic. Activities in this direction have already been going on for some time.

From the very beginning, the sisters have involved me in their daily routine and their spiritual life, and they are lovingly taking care of my well-being. They have taken me into their community as a "second family". That makes me extremely happy. I always experience this benevolent reception and cordiality when visiting the Holy Cross Sisters in other communities in Uganda and Kenya. The contacts and experiences in their community always enrich me to a great extent. I thank them very much for this.

## **My Experience as a Student in Uganda**

Sandra Aschwanden, Switzerland

During my stay in Uganda, I had many new and positive experiences in the most diverse

areas. Particularly impressive was the open and friendly nature of the local people, which is practised both among themselves and towards foreigners. The dealing with each other was always very cordial and was based on the mutual interest of the other person. From a simple greeting developed not infrequently an extensive, intensive conversation. I was also impressed by the great willingness to help in the villages. The people were trying to support each other and help each other out. The hospitality was great and the local people were happy when somebody paid a visit to them and they told a lot about their own culture. In general, I experienced the community as great, being together that fostered their culture, and involved all, big, large or small. I especially remember the festivities in the villages, which were celebrated on special occasions. I was mostly fascinated by the music, drumming, dancing and colored clothing of the local people. Life in general was in a completely different rhythm unlike ours in Switzerland. Since the majority of the people are self-employed, the course of the day depends on the work in the fields and the weather conditions. Almost everything was



Community in Bulimbo, Kenya, with Sr. Sheeja (centre) and an intern from Switzerland

planted and harvested in the fields, which for me was a very impressive experience. In spite of simple means and not always very simple conditions, the people succeed in ensuring self-sufficiency for the most part and getting the most out of the situation. In the face of the great

responsibility, the local people showed themselves always calm and relaxed. Hectic rush came rarely, which I always admired. I experienced Uganda as a very diverse country, which has a lot to offer both culturally as well as from the landscape.

## Short Reports from Provinces and Vicariates

### Book – Release Function in Delhi

Sr. Tresa Paul, Delhi, North-East Province, India

The book “NO MORE SILENCE: COUNTERING SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN” written by Tresa Paul SCSC was formally released by Hon’ble Justice Kurian Joseph, Supreme Court of India in a grand function organized by Indian Social Institute on 17th October, 2016. His Grace Anil J T Couto, Archbishop of Delhi was the Guest of Honor. Advocates Vrinda Grover and Dr. M. P Raju, Supreme Court of India also graced the occasion and were the main speakers at the function. In the presence of a galaxy of scholars, advocates and other dignitaries, the programme started at 4.30 p. m. with the welcome



The most cordial moment: Sr. Tresa with Kurian Joseph, Judge at the Supreme Court. Photos: Ruben Minj



The Archbishop of Delhi, Anil J. T. Couto with Sr. Tresa.

address by Dr. Denzil Fernandes S. J., Executive Director, Indian Social Institute. Thereafter, the author explained contents of the book in brief, besides what inspired her to write the book. All the dignitaries on the dais expressed their happiness over the book and congratulated the author for her timely contribution



Your presence was very important to Sister Tresa: Sr. Dhanam Mary (left), Sr. Lucy Kakkarakunnel

on such a burning issue in the society. Hon'ble Justice Kurian Joseph, who began his address saying that he was deeply interested by the title of the book itself said that one reason for violence against women is that we do not speak out. We should not only break our silence but also must speak out against violence against women. Archbishop Anil J T Couto emphasized the need of translating this book into various languages especially to Hindi so that people from all walks of life could benefit from this book. Adv. Vrinda Grover, who moderated the session, reiterated what Archbishop said and stressed the need for translating this book not

only to Hindi, but also to other Indian languages. She appreciated this unique work by the author and called her the 'inspiration and the woman of the day.' According to her the author has already breached the culture of silence by writing this book. She stressed that the issues of sexual harassment which actually affects the dignity of women tend to be ignored. Various forms of violence against women are linked from one to the other. Dr. M. P. Raju who called for addressing the issue of sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women from its root, hailed that this book may be one of the rare attempts in this field to



Strong presence of friends and guests

incorporate story telling with analytical methodology. We need to expand our value system to clean the society of its various evils especially violence against women. Sr. Smita and Sr. Lucy representing the Congregation placed on record their deep appreciation for the author for her work and hailed it as in line with the motto of their Congregation “the need of the time is the will of God.” The programme ended with a formal vote of thanks rendered

by Adv. Fr. Joy Karayampuram S. J., HoD, Training Unit of Indian Social Institute. The book release programme was well appreciated by one and all. It was more like a spiritual event. I am grateful to each of you for blessing me with your love and prayers.

The 354-page book jointly published by Media House and Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, is available also available in [www.amazon.in](http://www.amazon.in)

## Information from the General Leadership

### Appointments

#### Vicariate Uganda

On March 17, 2017 the General Team appointed a new Vicariate Leadership for the next three years:

Vicariate Superior: Sr. Genevieve D'Silva  
Assistant: Sr. Margret Nnassuuna  
Councilors: Sr. Claris Thekumpurath Sr. Rose Nakitende  
Official Start: May 8, 2017

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the new and re-appointed sisters of the leadership of the Uganda Vicariate and of the Provincial Administration of the Motherprovince, Switzerland for their readiness to accept their demanding and challenging mission. We wish them courage and confidence for the mission assumed. May God's blessing accompany them in their planning and action!

#### Motherprovince Switzerland

On April 3, 2017 the General Team appointed a new Provincial Leadership for the next three years:

Provincial Superior: Sr. Tobia Rüttimann  
Assistant: Sr. Matthia Honold  
Provincial Councilors: Sr. Reto Lechmann Sr. Maria Hollenstein Sr. Eva T. Zanier Sr. Dorothea Jaros  
Official Start: October 31, 2017

We thank the outgoing Vicariate Superior, Sr. Lisa Mudoor and the Provincial Superior, Sr. Marie-Marthe Schönenberger as well as the Vicariate and Provincial Councilors, Sr. Gertrud Nampeera and Sr. Luzia Abegg for their dedicated and selfless service. May God reward them all for their generous endeavours and for taking care of their fellow sisters! May God's blessing accompany them in their future tasks!

#### Conference of the Representatives in the Provinces and Vicariates against Human Trafficking

Since the General Chapter of 2008, the sad reality of human

trafficking and especially trafficking women has become an important concern of our congregation. The struggle against this modern slavery is more necessary than ever. The Working Group against Human Trafficking is planning a conference of the representatives of all provinces and vicariates.

This conference will take place from 18 to 26 September, 2017 in Ingenbohl. It is being organized under the motto, "Stand up for human dignity". In these days it is mainly focused on getting to know each other personally, listening to each other and learning, encouraging and strengthening one another; networking and cooperation; expanding knowledge and experience; to reflect upon joint activities and projects undertaken so far; to think about steps beyond the session.

Mrs. Magda Emerich-Scholliers from Constance will moderate the conference. We already have good experiences with her. We especially recommend this conference to your prayer.

### **General Visitation**

The General Visitation will be held from 17 October to 24 November, 2017 in the Mid-India Province. Sr. Marija Brizar, the Superior General, Sr. Verena Maria Oberhauser, the General Assistant, Sr. Elsit Ampattu and Sr. Sheeja Kolacherril, the General Councilors will conduct the visitations. May God's good spirit accompany all the sisters who participate in the meetings, the encounters and in deepening of the charism and our vision 2020 as well as in the discussions and consultations!

Quarterly  
of the Sisters of Mercy  
of the Holy Cross  
Institute Ingenbohl  
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