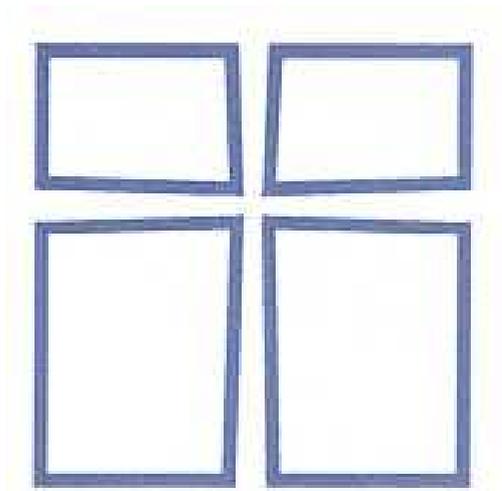


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# *Theodosia*

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Quarterly  
of the Sisters of Mercy  
of the Holy Cross  
Institute Ingenbohl  
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Theme of the year "On journey with the People"

## Editorial

An aspect of our "Vision 2020" runs like a recurrent theme in the present "Theodosia": "In the footprints of the compassionate and crucified Jesus, we are on journey with the people." When thinking about it, countless stories of life rise up in every sister. Encounters with people challenge, bestow and change us throughout our lives. The Bible, too, is full of stories about the way. Jesus did not train his disciples in any seminary, but he taught them on the way with the people.

Prof. Dr. P. Thomas Dienberg OFM Cap widens our reflections on the theme with the 2<sup>nd</sup> presentation at the Provincial Superiors' Congress 2018: "On Journey with the People" (see 1<sup>st</sup> presentation in "Theodosia" 2018/4). He develops a true "Spirituality of Being", shows how the Franciscan background supports it and how "the change by the other" on the way with its implications gets concretized, "As a Community Journeying with the People".

The pictures inserted in the text do not originate from him. They serve as illustrations.

Representing different encounters, the sisters share their experiences with people from their everyday lives: Sr. Rastislava Ralbovsky opens for us, so to speak, "Bethany", the house of spiritual help in akovo in the province Croatia, and shows us the many initiatives with which sisters respond to the needs of their region and the present time.

We also hear from Sr. Natalija Fadiga, province Croatia about the Day Care Center "Amadea". Elderly and lonely people are in good hands and find here what is good for body and soul.

Sr. Petra Car lets us participate in the mission of a sisters' community in Graz which is present in many ways with and among the people: "Vocation Ministry in the Province Europa Mitte".

In all provinces and vicariates we work together with women and men who, because of our age, are taking on more and more tasks in our homes. Sr. Magdalena Walcher explains how in the province Europa Mitte co-workers are introduced, accompanied and sensitized for their service: "On Journey with the Co-workers".

Sr. Rita Dobler from the province Baden-Württemberg encounters extreme situations again and again in her everyday life, because she works "As an Emergency Pastoral Advisor on the Way".

A bundle of "Experiences with People at the Pilgrim's Gate" in Ingenbohl shows us how this service is not only a task, but also a gift and deepening of personal faith.

Sr. Christiane Jungo reports on a still young, impressive tradition in the Motherhouse: "Encounters with ALS Patients".

The "Information from the General Leadership" contains appointments, changes in provinces and a small statistic of the past year.

In the year 2018, 99 sisters, "Entered into Eternal Life".

Sr. Christiane Jungo

# On Journey with the People

Prof. Fr. Dr. Thomas Dienberg OFM Cap, Münster Germany

After the first talk of Fr. Thomas Dienberg, published in *Theodosia* 2018/4, the second talk on the occasion of the Provincial Superiors' Congress in September 2018 in Ingenbohl, will be published here. The content deepens and enriches the reflections of Sister Marija Brizar's Yearly Letter 2019 in many ways.

Dear Sisters!

The second talk deals with the question of journeying with people. I would like to present this to you in three steps. I will begin with some reflections on the way and on a spirituality of being on the way. These explanations are followed by some reflections on Franciscan itinerancy (being a pilgrim) before I come to the third step and talk about communities as communities on the way.

## **1. From the 'spiritual mobility' - a spirituality of being on the way**

To live faith and to dare to try to make Christian spirituality to take flesh in one's own life means, being on the way and to journey. Christian spirituality and stagnation, Christian spirituality without being on the way is like divine service without prayer.

Christian spirituality deeply involves a spirituality of being on the way. If you were to delete the vocabulary that has to do with

being and the way from the Christian vocabulary, then the essential would be missing. For hardly have images or words been very often called in connection with faith and spiritual life as words about the way and words in connection with being on the way - in whatever way. The everyday use of language speaks a clear language: "The way of life, to go one's way, to leave the way, to pave the way, to take new ways, to find ways and means, to go the way of all earthly things, to walk the path of least resistance, to avoid something, to do away with something, to put stones in the way, not to trust the way, it is a



Way into the valley

long way to ..., all ways are open to me, here our ways separate, be on the best way, meet halfway, get going..." The way and of being on the way are images for life in all its facets.

In the Bible, the motif of the way in its various facets appears over 800 times. Being on the way is always associated with the 'way' in the Bible: to set out, to walk a path, to go from one place to another. The story of the people of Israel in the Old Testament is a story of being on the way. Abraham sets out, Noah, Jacob - all the patriarchs, the many different prophets break open, face a purpose, an assignment or a promise - and God also makes his way with his people. He is a God who journeys with his people, a companion God, the Emmanuel.

In the New Testament the story of Jesus is a story of the way. The Gospels are conceived as ways: from Galilee to Judea and to Jerusalem. Jesus goes from place to place, heals and proclaims, prays and speaks with and to the disciples, who in turn join him and go His way, follow him. Above all, Luke conceives his Gospel as a story of the way. It is especially



Emmaus-disciples, Janet Brooks-Gerloff

evident at the beginning of his Gospel, by expressing and telling the story of Jesus' childhood. The birth is already preceded by a story of the way: Mary goes to Elizabeth as the angel comes to her first; the birth takes place on a path, on the wayside, so to speak, on the basis of the census to which Mary and Joseph set out on their way; then they both flee after the three kings and the shepherds came to the manger - departure,

walking, sojourning, getting back on their feet and get going: biblical elements that bring life to the Bible, to life in Jesus and his successors and thus for Christian life in history and are of profound importance today.

To set out, to set off and get going, to stay on the path and to have a goal in mind - these are again and again images that have been taken up in the tradition of the church and by many mystics, often with paraphrase: the Labyrinth of life; the ladder that leads man to God; the spiral that symbolizes the course of life; the path through the desert and through the dark night... innumerable examples of the way and of being on the way, of a spirituality of being on the way.

One who is not on the way cannot let people into her/his life, one cannot tolerate novelty, one wouldn't dare to take risks which are things that can liberate and broaden her/his own views.

One who is not on the way cannot perceive God in the world in such different contexts than one might expect: in a small child, on the side of the road, endangered and fragile, such a person must make

his way again as an incomplete and imperfect person.

In other words, it can be said that the one who is no longer on the way and abandons it, ends up as 'ruined'. But God is born in the unfinished, in the small and fragile, in a child, in adverse circumstances - unimagined, unfamiliar, unexpected, not in perfection, not in completion, but in the fragmentary nature of our lives - on the way, on the wayside, on the road.

Life is a journey, to be on the way to what and who I am and should be, not to give up hope and not to come to an end, but to go on, after breaks and recuperations to set off again on the way, not to stand still or to stick your head in the sand. Only with death do life and the path of life come to an end.

Being on the way does not refer to radical mobility, which is required in many areas of our work today. What is required is 'spiritual mobility' that knows that life is always unfinished, always fragmented, always piecemeal. In this sense, mobility as a 'modern virtue' means much more than being able to get involved in new situations and relocations that

arise as a result of one's professional situation. Mobility is much more than flexibility. Mobility then means, completely in the sense of a spirituality of being on the way, keeping track of oneself, the mystery of life and God, following one's inner longing and remaining true to oneself.

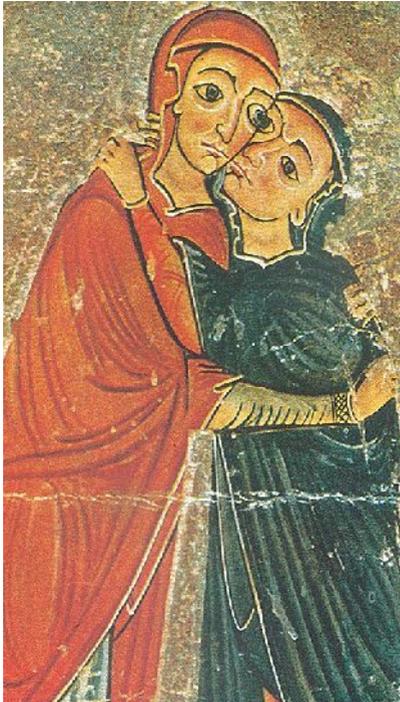
It is no coincidence that people of all centuries and of all religions have chosen the path as the image and symbol of life, as an image of progress and advancement - for a successful and failed life. Only one who sets out can have experiences and encounters human being, the creation, the world - even oneself; and that can be frightening, and unsettling, which requires courage for the consequences. But daring is the virtue of the one on the way; and one who doesn't dare, doesn't win; whoever does not get going, will remain stunted.

Step by step, each person goes her or his own path of life with different stages: a straight stretch with an interesting view, a winding path with surprises, steep and flat paths, crossroads and dry stretches, moments of rest and strenuous stages.

On these different stages of the journey there are companions who accompany you. There are partners and people who accompany or have accompanied one stage, several stages or even the entire journey. Some are still present in the memory, others have long been forgotten, and still others are missed and mourned. Again and again partners and loved ones, sisters and brothers, make decisions, get out of sight or die. Thus a spirituality of being on the way is also at all times a spirituality that has farewell in mind.

Life is a continual path, the goal of which lies in the unknown: in death. Each and every one of us goes this last stage of life alone, all by oneself, and it certainly depends on the way one has travelled so far, whether one goes this last stage of life in fear, in hope, or in confidence. Life is a constant path to death, which for Christians means a passage to new life. But it is no less threatening, no less questionable and no less mysterious. A spirituality of being (and a spiritual mobility) consists in the art of being able to die, to face questions and failure.

In the Bible, Mary, the mother of Jesus, can be a good example. She sets out, as the Gospel says, carried by the promise of the angel in whom she senses the voice of God. For her this is connected with many questions and risks, but she sets off on her way, sets off into an unknown life and country. It is a venture; a departure full of courage, but



Visitation of Mary, altar of Llusà, Spain around 1200

courage is the virtue of the moving. Courage is a virtue of the spirituality of being on the way and spiritual mobility.

Franz Kafka has written a short narrative that points to the end of a spirituality of being on the way and makes clear how much life means to journey and to go on a path that carries both risk and adventure: "I ordered my horse to be taken out of that stable. The servant did not understand me. I went to the stable myself, saddled my horse and mounted it. In the distance I heard a trumpet blow; I asked him what it meant. He knew nothing and had heard nothing. At the gate he stopped me and asked: 'Where are you going, Lord?' 'I don't know', I said, 'only away from here, only away from here. Always away from here, only in this way can I reach my goal'. So you know your goal?' he asked. Yes', I replied, 'I said it, 'away from here', that is my goal. You don't have any food with you,' he said. I don't need any', I said, 'the journey is so long that I would starve to death if I don't get anything on the way. No food supply can last me that far. Fortunately it is a truly wonderful journey."

Life is a truly wonderful journey and a truly tremendous path. Looking back on one's own path of life, one may think that the paths were already twisted and strange, perhaps even monstrous, full of surprises that make the individual become who he or she is now.

The goal in the narrative: 'away from here' means as much as that life must not be about stepping on the spot and not staying in the here and now, in the present, but progressing towards a goal, in the Christian sense the goal of life in fullness here on earth and beyond death.

The provisions of the journey strongly remind us of Jesus' words of sending: to take nothing with you on your way. It is a long journey, where the provisions must be found on the way in people, in encounters, in life itself.

A spirituality of being on the way in the sense of 'spiritual mobility', here only briefly indicated, is a truly deep spirituality, another description of a Christian spirituality which is nothing more than the tremendous journey of life towards a life in abundance.

## **2. From the Franciscan itinerancy or: the transformation by the other**

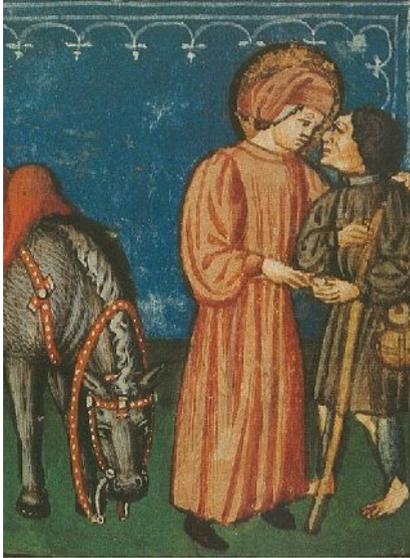
A central narrative for Franciscan spirituality and then for what itinerancy means is the story of Francis' encounter with the leper, which you all know. It can also be portrayed as: Transformation through encounter.

What happens here in this narrative?

Francis overcomes himself, or it urges him to do something completely different, yes, something unheard of, something that completely breaks his previous principles of action and habits and runs counter to them. He gets off the horse, touches the leprous sores, embraces and kisses him - and he is deeply touched and stirred up.

The leper in turn allows the touch. It must have been incredible for both of them, an encounter that transforms both. Francis radically changes his life, and the leper? At least for a moment, he has been given back what he has been publicly denied before: his dignity, his humanity.

Francis and his first companions wanted to live the Gospel in the



Francis with the leper, Museo Francescano, Rome

manner of the apostles: poor and wandering, proclaiming the Good News to people on the way, people who were open-minded; poor and on the periphery; moving between the bustling marketplace and withdrawing into prayer in solitude - as a missionary in the midst of the people. Being on the way and proclaiming were a unity, and, at least from the structural point of view, they are still so today in the Franciscan communities, with the brothers and sisters constantly setting out for new places. The content of the proclamation of the early Friars is

the call to penance and the message of peace. The friars see themselves as people following Jesus who, like him, want to bring peace to the world. Authenticity, the harmony of word and deed, is an important means, but deeds count more than words. So what Francis conveyed was the message of peace and penance; penance as turning away from self-centred thinking, and turning to God and man, as he himself had experienced when he went among the lepers and showed them mercy.

Itinerancy means being a pilgrim and a stranger. It is often transferred to the structure of the Franciscan Communities: a dynamic leadership structure that has the principle of election for a fixed period of years; the principle of transfers from one place to another.

But even more than these, I call them the outward appearances of itinerancy; it is about a constant inner transformation, according to my remarks on transformation yesterday. To be a pilgrim and a stranger, to live itinerancy means to take one step towards the other. It is also a category of movement! I move towards the

other and may be changed, moved and transformed. Or even sharper: I embrace the other, the marginal, the lepers, yes: the world.

And so it is not surprising that the stories about Francis and his brothers, and also about Clare and her sisters, are encounter stories. In 2019 we will commemorate an important one: the encounter of Francis with the Sultan.

Itinerancy means to be on the journey and to remain with people on the journey.

Applied to lived spirituality means: The spirituality of being on the way and journeying together through the Franciscan paradigm receives once more a very special style (character):

- It is a spirituality of moving: towards the other, in an open attitude. This attitude does not know from the beginning what is good for the other person and then tries to move him in one direction accordingly. This posture asks, observes and first tries to understand the other.
- It is a spirituality of transition that knows about the

provisional nature of life which means it does not cling to houses, to standards or to regulations that are carved in stone. It is flexible and future oriented.

- It is a witnessing spirituality in missionary mobility. It is about witnessing to the love of God in living and carrying the daily life of people, as it is so wonderfully expressed in the Franciscan Missionary Statute in the Regula non Bullata Chapter 16. This is only possible if one gets involved with the people, wants to understand them and their culture - and does not come in an attitude that the other must in any case accept the Christian faith. In a secularized world in which pluralism and individualism dominate, in which the Baumann principle of ephemeral modernity (the swarm as the image for community with the key concepts: functional solidarity, survival of the fittest, event character, only one goal counts, then everyone diverges again...) prevails, it is primarily about understanding the search of the one and the other.
- It is a spirituality that lives Franciscan ABC: the other, the world, the absolute.

### 3. As community journeying with the people

*"Let the Friars appropriate nothing for themselves, neither house nor place, nor any thing. And as pilgrims and exiles in this age let them go about for alms confidently, as ones serving the Lord in poverty and humility, nor is it proper that they be ashamed, since the Lord made Himself poor in this world for us." (BR 6, 1-3 = Regula Bullata)*



At Provincial Superiors' Congress 2018

What do the spirituality of the way and of journey and of the Franciscan Itinerancy for communities that want to journey with the people, mean? In the following I would like to answer this question with some key words. Sometimes it's provocative, because the answer is not that easy. And we should not make it too easy with the answers.

The itinerant spirituality, which was mentioned earlier, has consequences. Thus, the former Minister General of the Franciscan Giacomo Bini describes them with the keywords:

- From lifeless structures to the lightness of renewed mediation, closer to the people and the people who are more emblematic and open: So it's about the vibrant communities with a great proximity to the people, about openness and the ability to get involved with others.
- From a past which is only repeated, no longer speaking and adapting itself too much to a theocentric and eschatological manifestation of

signs: So it is about an eschatological serenity which, on the basis of God's promise of a future for man and the world, dares to try something new and always sets out anew on its way, breaks out of everything that burdens hope and eschatological serenity!

- From logic of conservation to logic of conversion: So it's about a constant change and transformation process!
- From an attitude of waiting, sedentary stability, structural immobility to lightness, to mobility, to itinerancy, to mission: it is about a spirituality that opens and moves towards the other. This means opening up, low-threshold offers, knowledge about the questions and the search of people today!
- From a passive, tired and resigned presence to an active presence that is receptive and fearless in its approach to others: it is therefore also a matter of willingness to take risks, one who moves towards others does not always know what to expect. The other is the stranger I have to get involved with. At the same

time: such a spirituality of departure draws circles!

One can therefore conclude that the spirituality of exodus is a spirituality of encounter, openness and movement to the world and to others.

Other aspects besides the spirituality of exodus, as characterized by Bini, are:

Such a spirituality of the moving bears in mind the "Franciscan tension" of the market place and hermitage. These are the two poles in which Franciscan spirituality takes place and is lived.

It follows that a contemplative basic culture characterizes Franciscan life. It becomes more concrete in listening to the world and the human being, in obedience to life, as a listener in every age and in the different cultural contexts. Thus, a basic dimension of Franciscan contemplation is the confrontation with the signs of the times and the characteristics of a (post) modern world. To mention a few:

- Mobility and flexibility
- Individualism and pluralism

- Fragmented biographies
- Longing for spirituality outside of institutional religion
- Digitalization
- Changing community understanding and experience through social media and virtualization of the world
- Growing gap between poor and rich in the western hemisphere
- Loneliness as an increasing illness

In this respect, the school of attention is the world as it presents itself. It is important to perceive the beauty and threat of this world and to know the challenges that people have to face today. But this also means that the convent should not be regarded as the island of the blessed, in which everything is good and the characteristics of the (post) modern world have no meaning. For: Has not individualization already taken up a large space in the ranks of the orders? Have not communication structures also undergone fundamental changes as a result of digitalization?

- Open eyes, open ears and a great capacity for acceptance, an ability and willingness for dialogue and understanding on the part of others, culture and the world are required. Contemplation is therefore a characteristic of a community that is on the journey and strives to be.
- Which schools of thought have the consideration and care for the communities?
- Another aspect of a vibrant community on the journey is the aspect of minorities: to live as minor with minorities and to seek the place of the minors. Who are the minors in the society? Who is on the periphery - and what are the places of the religious communities? Who is the leper in our time?
- Asked at a personal level: Is my spirituality still prone to failure or: Where am I still spiritually, spatially mobile?
- Living as sisters and brothers of the people. The question is: where can you, where can we and should we stand for a more just world?
- A community journeying together with others leads to a hospitality that welcomes the

stranger and embraces him, as Francis did the leper. This requires a large heart and great openness.

- Living inclusive or: How fundamentally dialogical am I?
- Being on the journey and remaining a pilgrim and a stranger that can lead to the moment of free detachment and to a community of hope in times that seem hopeless to many people.
- Finally, in a time of migration, Franciscan mobility and journeying with people is setting new standards and questions for their own communities: how to give hope to these many migrants and asylum seekers? How to take up their questions, their search and desires, their fears and worries? Is not the Franciscan place especially today with these people, who are more and more marginalized, sent away, not wanted? On the one hand, it is important to take care of the concrete people and their destinies; at the same time, however, it is also important to engage politically and to contribute to finding the best possible answers and

solutions from those responsible in church, society and politics.

- The fear of the stranger and a community of people are mutually exclusive.

Ultimately, all this means nothing more than embracing the world, because it is our convent, as the medieval mystery play "Sacrum Commercium" so beautifully put it.

One last thing - and this is very important to me - I see great deficits in this point, especially in our male communities: as community on the journey with people requires people who are willing and able to dialogue.

Journeying with other people requires a living spirituality of dialogue. Again a former Minister General of the Franciscans, Hermann Schalück, describes such a spirituality of dialogue. Since I could not do it better, I want to give him the floor at the end of my presentation:

"In my opinion a Franciscan 'spirituality of dialogue' is not to be absolute, to be a servant to the other and to see in Jesus Christ both the starting point and the goal of a common way. There is

probably not only in the house 'Europe', but also in one's own house still a lot to be put in order: The Franciscan Family should live the 'inclusive' spirituality of Jesus and our brother Francis especially in today's world context. Internally, in view of the Franciscan Family, this would mean that still existing 'exclusive' tendencies, e.g. in the relationship of the laity to the clergy, of men to women, of the 'First Order' to the 'Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis', would be overcome. The Franciscan Family can only contribute

credibly to the dialogue of denominations, religions and cultures if it is internally in 'dialogue' with itself and fundamentally reconciled. It must be made visible from within that the Franciscan-Clarian form of discipleship can still shape our Church and our world today. Our dialogue with cultures and religions only then receives its inner strength and Franciscan touch and dynamism when all can meet and exchange without reservation (cf. RB 6).

## "Bethany" - House of Spiritual Help

Sr. Rastislava Ralbovsky, akovo, Province Croatia

For more than 20 years the sisters in akovo have an open door for people in need. These have many names and many faces, and it seems that more and more people are visiting this shelter for body and soul.

What is it about?

The "House of Spiritual Help" ("Haus der geistlichen Hilfe" HGH) offers a place to feel at home and to be together, it is an open door for all who seek peace of heart and salvation of soul, and it helps to turn personal suffering into a means to help other sufferers.

It was opened in autumn 1996 with the approval and blessing of

the local Bishop in all simplicity. In the beginning, the HGH was intended for girls and women traumatized by war, as well as for war widows. As time went by, this help was extended to all needy people in the area.

As Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross, we want to bear witness to the Cross as the privileged place of the revelation of God's love. The cross defeats evil, gives



life, new hope and love. With God's help, we want to bring to life this merciful love of God for the "crucified" of today.

In our mission we rely on the means that Christ entrusted to his Church: Holy Scripture, sacraments, especially the Eucharist and confession, then personal and common prayer, community of faith, mutual solidarity and support. Therefore, the centre of the HGH is the Chapel with the Most Blessed Sacrament.

With God's help we are available for people in different needs, especially for the disabled and their families, for psycho-spiritual sufferers, for drug addicts, for families with problems, etc.

We try to bring every kind of problem and human misery to the merciful and crucified Jesus Christ, because even today He is the Lord, Saviour and Friend of every human being.

In this way we nurture an attitude of openness. We let ourselves be "touched by the destinies of the people" and time and again "we hear in our hearts what God wants to say to us through it". (Yearly Letter 2019)

### **Overview of offers**

The HGH developed the following offers:

- Individual help through dialogue and prayer
- Monthly renewal meetings
- Retreats for women, mothers with children, families
- Week of fasting in prayer and silence
- Working with differently abled people and their families
- Working with drug addicts
- Possibility of temporary stay

### **Individual help through dialogue and prayer after appointment**

The main work in the "House of Spiritual Help" was individual help from the very beginning. It is given in the form of conversation and prayer. The person is accompanied by a one-hour weekly meeting in his/her problem. This help extends primarily to the spiritual level, but also includes the psychological level. It is an exercise of the saving mission of the church. We want to become channels of God's healing love. Therefore, in listening conversation, we rely on the means entrusted to the Church. This includes prayer with the person concerned, looking at the problem with the help of the Word of God, preparing for the sacraments, especially confession

and the Eucharist, since these are the strongest sources of healing. Many already experience a relief of their problems only through a counterpart who listens.

In the spirit of our vision and of year's resolution, we try to show people respect, to take them seriously and to accompany them in their questions and problems. We are happy when our attentive listening is life-giving. Often we can be close to those seeking help through our prayerful support.

### **Monthly renewal meetings with the motto "Peace in God"**

We have been organizing these meetings since 1996, and they are still held regularly today. They are half-day meetings, mostly on Saturday afternoons. The aim is to refresh the spirits and to renew them. People from the surrounding places also come to these meetings. The meeting has three parts: Lecture with a given theme, sharing of faith and adoration. In addition there is the joy of being together. There is always an opportunity for confession, which is much appreciated. Many testify that through these meetings they unload all their burdens here and return home with inner peace and courage.



### **Retreats for women and mothers with children and families**

Since the year 2000, retreats for women have also been organised at the HGH. These are days of silent reflection in prayer, meditation on the Word of God and celebration of the sacraments, especially confession and the Eucharist. At first they were especially open to women, which proved to be very good. Then they were extended to young mothers with small children with a special spiritual-creative program for the children. In recent years, since the fathers also expressed the desire to participate, we offer retreats for whole families, twice a year. We are glad that we are able to support the families.

## **Fasting week in prayer and silence - Life with bread as a way to the bread of life**

Since 2008 it has been organised twice a year for a period of five days. The goal is to approach the Eucharistic Bread by the living with bread. Impulses, meditations, prayer of the hour, lectio divina, celebration of the Eucharist, confession, adoration also during the night, the possibility of a personal conversation with the

leader, all this leads the participants to strengthen and renew their strength for a challenging life. Their testimonies at the end of Lent are very impressive.

## **Working with differently abled people and their families**

From the very beginning we have worked at the HGH with disabled people and their families. On our initiative the community "Faith and



Light" was founded in akovo, which belongs to the international movement of Jean Vanier and Marie-Helene Mathieu for people with mental handicaps. Mother M. Theresa had a special preference and care for such people. Therefore the community chose the name "Blümchen von Mutter M. Theresia" (little flowers of Mother M. Theresa) and pilgrimages every year to the convent church of Mother M. Theresa on 16 May, together with other communities of "Faith and Light" from the region of Slavonia.

For young people with a mental handicap or psychological stress who suffer from feelings of loneliness, we organized a therapeutic working group called "Workshop of St. Joseph", as well as the day care centre "Friendship Group" to support the mental and psychological health of young people. We meet weekly to promote interpersonal relations through various creative activities, work in the kitchen, garden, etc. We create a connection between the young people with problems and the disabled, because by helping others you help yourself. We create a family atmosphere

through prayer, work and joyful gatherings; so that they experience that they are valuable as they are.

The group is growing more and more, and the program is getting richer and richer. We like to celebrate birthdays and name days, St. Nicholas and Easter. Up to 250 participants from the region come to the Christmas party. We also organize athletic competitions and outings for them.

From the very beginning we went on pilgrimage to Medjugorje every year until these pilgrimages became international in 2012. The parishioners show great love and generosity by hosting the handicapped and their companions for three days free of charge. This is a great help, not only for the disabled, but even more for their parents.

### **Working with drug addicts**

We give information and help to drug addicts and their families and try to build a bridge to therapeutic communities, mostly to the "Cenacolo" community. This community, founded by Sister

Elvira Petrozzi, uses the values of the Christian faith as a means of healing. We have also organized preventative programs for young people by connecting them to the "workshop of St. Joseph".

### **Possibility of temporary stay**

This possibility is offered to people in life crises, especially those with psychological problems. In an environment of peace, prayer and work, they can find themselves and then approach the challenges of life anew.

At the moment Sr. Rastislava Ralbovsky and Sr. Marija Klara are organizing the programmes in the HGH Klari with many co-workers.

### **The fatherly providence of God**

The sphere of activity of the HGH is constantly growing due to the needs of the times. We leave ourselves to the guidance of God.

Above all, we rely on the intercession of the Mother of God, the Queen of Peace, and on God's providence. Fr. Theodosius recognized God's will in the need of time and firmly believed in God's help for works that respond to these needs. In these more than 20 years of silent work we can see, how God's Providence has not only entrusted this task to us but has also constantly accompanied us with abundant blessing. We thank God that through all these activities in the HGH, with his help, we can accompany people in need on their difficult paths.

*"Our service to people ultimately consists in ... being with them and walking with them... We are not alone on this way. We know that we are united with Mary, the mother of our Lord. Trusting in her intercession, we place our life and every endeavour under her protection". (Constitutions)*

## Day Care Centre for Elderly and Lonely People - "Amadea"

Sr. Natalija Fadiga, akovo, Province Croatia

In the "Amadea" day care centre, elderly people are not only in good hands, they also find themselves in a family environment. The service meets a great need, since many younger people have emigrated from Croatia for economic reasons.

As Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross, we try to respond to the different needs of people and be with them on their life path. We believe the words of Jesus: "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me." Mt 25:40. We try to be open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and to the call to live faithfully according to the word of our Founder Fr. Theodosius Florentini: "The need of the time is the will of God."

With this background, an association was founded in 2010 and opened the house "Amadea" as a day-care centre for psychosocial needs.

In a society where birth rates are declining and life expectancy is prolonged, thanks to medical advances, the number of "third- and fourth-age" people is increasing. In addition, Croatia has been affected by mass

emigration of younger people for some years, which aggravates "demographic aging".

The program of day care for the elderly as well as the organized daily activities have the following objectives: to prevent the social exclusion of elderly people, to extend their time in their own home, to improve the quality of life, to support the working family members and to promote volunteering as a practical form of charity.

The number of day visitors is between 20 and 25 between the



age of 56 - 90 years. In the day care centre, the day is organised as if it were "at home", so everyone feels welcome and at home. We strive to maintain a personal and cordial relationship with the elderly. The stay offers a variety of activities: dialogues and social games, creative and domestic workshops, sports and leisure activities, physical activity, activity programmes, excursions and visits, cultural events, spiritual

offerings through the daily rosary, Holy Mass on the first Friday of the month with the possibility of confession. Those benefitting stress, that prayer and singing together give them new strength and vigour to cope with the difficulties of old age and illness.

In the entertainment programmes are indispensable: singing songs, talks, training and discussions about the "third age", consultations for self - help in



difficult situations, meetings with elderly people from suburban settlements, etc. Blood pressure is also measured regularly. Many times a year we organize meetings for elderly people in nearby places, spiritual preparation for the feast days through meditation, interactive workshops and leisure activities.

For the feast of All Saints our guests can visit the city cemetery and pray at the graves of their relatives. Occasionally a pilgrimage to the nearby Marian shrines is organized.

The Day Room is for our guests a place of meeting, entertainment, relaxation, the family atmosphere is also expressed at birthday parties, name days and anniversaries. The users say that their second family is here and that they really feel at home in the Amadea centre. So they love to do in the day care centre everything they normally would do at home: Caring for garden flowers, picking lavender and aronia berries, squeezing fruit juices, making jams and sweets. In addition to the activities, it is also important to provide transport for the guests.



Other projects are also being implemented to improve the quality of life of elderly people. These are for example: organizing a domestic help and the 'SOS' armband of hope, which makes it possible for elderly people to get the right help at any time. It is also important to work with other stakeholders, particularly the Centre for Social Welfare. Such good connections help elderly people in their situation.

All the activities of the association have another social dimension: users learn to accept and understand each other, even in difficulties, develop empathy, solidarity, etc. Elderly people are grateful for every kind word, every smile, every support and every

patient listening. Further contacts are made through occasional visits by schoolchildren, people with disabilities, etc. The day stay is an ideal place for dialogue between the generations: Young volunteers spend a lot of time with elderly people. These volunteers are always ready to help where they are needed. They are also open to learning from the rich life experiences of elderly people. In the "Book of Impressions" there are many expressions of gratitude from the guests of the day and their children, who recognize the value of this service with its many possibilities.

And what is the proportion of dementia, especially Alzheimer's disease? Since this disease occurs more frequently, we also include such people in the program. We take care of them and thus help the families who are usually overtaxed with such a patient.

Finally, a statement from a daughter of a day guest: "Giving away one's time to elderly people is invaluable. Thank you very

much, dear sisters, for caring for those we love, but unfortunately we don't have time for!"

Lack of time is a disease of today. Therefore, many elderly people are abandoned, lonely and sad. A lot of time and love is given in the day care centre by listening to the people, by promoting mutual love and understanding, by supporting each other and helping each other on the way to the final goal, the blessed eternity.

Many elderly people testified that the Holy Mass, the common prayer and the example of devotion on the part of the sisters mean a lot to them. The Day Care Centre also has a house chapel with a large crucifix and the Blessed Sacrament. Here the guests can spend their time individually in personal prayer. Some people appreciate this very much because they did not have enough time for it in the past.

We Sisters trust especially in the intercession of the Blessed Mother Mary. On the summer terrace there is a large statue of Mary in front of which people like to gather and pray.

## Vocation Ministry in Province Europa Mitte

Sr. Petra Car, Head of Formation, Wels, Province Europa Mitte

An approach for vocation ministry encourages action and shows diverse possibilities of presence and journeying with the people of today. Attention is also drawn to a "voluntary religious year".

### Vocation ministry today

The core team for vocation ministry in our province has invited interested sisters from the regions to learn something about their present work in vocation ministry and to reflect on the question of vocation. Is vocation really still attractive? What priorities do we want to set in our province? What expectations do young people have of the Church, of the Orders, of us in concrete terms? How can we be on the journey with them?

Sr. Antonia Maria Huber and Sr. Gertraud Johanna Harb reported on their work and presented a

model for vocation ministry. They believe that women are still called to join our community. But the question is: how can searching women find us and discover their vocation in our institute? Vocation ministry has to help a person to recognize her own vocation. In order to be found, one needs the presence of the religious community, the concrete religious sister, who can meet people in the church, in the parish, on the street, at events or quite simply in everyday life. Every form of our work is vocation ministry and thus an external effect. This also includes an appealing presence on the internet.



Sr. Gertraud Johanna and Sr. Antonia Maria talking to seminarians

## **Presence of the sisters**

How does the "San Damiano" Vocation Ministry Community in Graz reflect its mission? It lives in the heart of the city in the seminary, organizes prayer times together, invites to live together, takes part in the confirmation catechesis in the episcopal school centre Augustinum and is in the spiritual accompaniment of the young students in search of perspectives or answers questions about life and a possible spiritual path. The sisters are present at events in various parishes of the city, at evangelization, in prayer circles, at the Taizé prayer, at the Franciscan feast of youth, on the Israel journey of the Catholic youth, or they are requested to accompany pilgrims to Assisi and Rome, New Year's Eve in the convent, retreat or prayer days of 48 hours in the convent are the offers to set spiritual impulses and to show with attentiveness and openness, a way on which God calls - perhaps appoints.

## **Paths of vocation**

Sister Gertraud Johanna Harb, Dr. theol., member of the pastoral team of the diocese Graz-Seckau, speaks of four possible categories of "called persons" in her model of vocation ministry. In her opinion, these are different types of people with different

needs. There are the "sure ones" who already as children felt strongly attracted to faith and were active in the parish. For them it takes time to live together in order to make a good decision. The "enthused ones" feel an inner call and need people who advise them, who do not take them in, but offer them a free space of development on their spiritual path of life. Today, we come across the "driven ones", who on the one hand are very active in social networks and on the other cannot steer their strength in the right direction. Vocation ministry is challenged here to discuss the state of affairs, to give help so that they can better recognize themselves and give direction to their lives. Wandering retreats can be a good opportunity to look for solutions together on the way. The "unsuspecting ones" stumble as it were, into a form of life and discover this life for themselves. They are fascinated and enthusiastic and let themselves in on this path.

## **Voluntary religious year**

Sr. Ruth Pucher, Missionary of Christ, Advisor and Representative for the Pastoral Ministry of the Austrian Religious Communities, has prepared a concept for the voluntary religious year, which has been successfully

implemented in Austria for two years. Being there, engaging in others, trying out, daring to make new discoveries for life are the motivations for young people who are interested in this new project and decide - not for life, but for a limited period of three to twelve months. Sr. Ruth accompanies the young people as project coordinator of the religious communities of Austria and Germany. We also have a few communities in our province who have agreed to this project and are open to

young women.

So we are praying and hoping for women who feel a yearning for a deeper relationship with God, seeking communion in prayer and commitment to the needs of the times. "Ask, and it will be given to you" (Mt 7:7), Jesus asks us to knock at the door of God with all our questions, hopes, worries and fears. "He will give us future and hope" (Jer 29:11).



Sisters from province Europa Mitte at the Vocation Ministry Meeting in Linz, Upper Austria

## On the Journey with Co-workers

Sr. Magdalena Walcher, Assistant Provincial, Wels, Province Europa Mitte

The Province Europa Mitte provides us with insight into the goal-oriented introduction, accompaniment and further training of its approximately 7000 co-workers. It is a demanding way of being on the journey in order to live our charism in the future under changed circumstances!

### Changed situation

Francis said, "The Lord has given me brothers!" We prayed for offspring and today we can say: "The Lord has given us more than 7000 collaborators". They travel with us in more than 40 places and six monasteries in different ways. With them we can look for new ways in dialogue and dynamism that enrich life.

Some co-workers are happy to have a secure job with us in order to earn their living. Many of our co-workers are happy to work competently and empathetically for our patients, residents, children, clients and customers. Today, they create the atmosphere in the workplaces and the good reputation of our religious institutions to the outside world.

There are also those who wish to carry on the mission of the Holy Cross Sisters and to respond attentively to the needs of our time with new ideas.

### Establishment of the Provincial Leadership

To make it possible to have a common journey, we organise **introductory days** for new co-workers in many workplaces. If they understand our spirituality and our mission, they can also help shape our organizational culture and mission more consciously.

We invite all interested co-workers to the Provincial House in Wels or to one of our convents for a **'meeting'**. This meeting is an opportunity to get to know the Provincial Leadership better and to ask what moves them. Coming together from different workplaces and different professional fields, they tangibly experience mutual enrichment, and the consciousness of belonging to a large and diverse community in the Province Europa Mitte.

In a rapidly changing world, we want to offer our co-workers with the **curriculum**, "Entering new

paths " something that strengthens them personally and helps them to face today's challenges in the footsteps of our founders. Dialogically they immerse themselves in the values of the Holy Cross Sisters in the training program. In the curriculum, they experience a new quality of relationship throughout the workplace; discover new scopes of action through different perspectives and experience gratitude and attentiveness as essential foundation stones for happiness in life. The series of curriculum training includes five modules:

In the 1<sup>st</sup> module "How to meet oneself", it is about the contact

with oneself, with others, in nature and in dialogue.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> module "How to discover new ways", new possibilities are gained through changes in one's own thinking, perception and action.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> module "How to find God" is a primer to rediscovering one's own spirituality, to draw from sources of power suitable for everyday life.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> module "How to be in the world" can provide sustainable impulses for exceptional places that enrich spiritually, socially and ecologically oriented way of life.



Completion of the training program with Sr. Magdalena Walcher and Sr. Maria Dolores Scherrer

The 5<sup>th</sup> module "How to set out" invites you to try out "new ways" with others and to unfold your own potential.

In our **Holy Cross Sisters' Magazine**, we want to show appreciatively that many great people in our institutions bear responsibility, contribute innovative ideas, and act professionally and creatively from their personal potential. Each contribution is part of a larger mission. When one's goals are linked to a greater one, all receive satisfaction, meaning and joy.

### **A permanent mission**

Sister Marija Brizar encourages us in the yearly letter to share the richness of our charism in a different way with our co-workers. This enriches us all and also challenges us. In this way, being

on the journey with our co-workers is a permanent concern for us. At visitations, events, celebrations or other occasions, we approach them to listen to their life and work situations and to express sympathy and recognition to them. Much remains insufficient, however, but we are able to combine the joys and sorrows of our entrusted co-workers with the redeeming love of God.

We want to be supportive on the way with the employees entrusted to us. In many places our elderly sisters have adopted prayer partnerships and recognize in them their special task of mission. They seek the blessing for the responsibility of our leaders and for the work of all people employed. Our co-workers appreciate this prayer accompaniment of the sisters and express their gratitude to them.

## As Emergency Pastoral Advisor on the Journey

Sr. Rita Dobler, Sigmaringen, Baden-Württemberg

Being on the journey with people in extreme life situations is the task of the emergency counsellor. Let us get to know the extraordinary task of a fellow sister

### Not alone

For more than 15 years I have been with the emergency pastoral care, which was established almost 20 years ago in the district of Sigmaringen.

What's this? How does it work? Who does that? These or similar questions are often asked of me in this context. It is not easy to give a clear answer. There are many reasons why we are asked to do so, and none of the missions is the same as the previous one.

The emergency pastoral care (NFS), or psychosocial emergency care (PSNV), as it is now increasingly named, is an initiative of the churches, the fire department, the emergency services and the police.

Throughout the year we are available alternating day and night in Emergency services. Whenever people need accompaniment in case of serious accidents, suicide, sudden deaths, fire missions,



giving a death message, or other terrible experiences to them, we are alerted via the rescue control centre. Not to be alone in such situations, but to experience assistance, comfort and help for the next step is necessary in order to be able to continue with these events in one's life.

We are there immediately during or shortly after the event, giving time, attention, understanding and an open ear. We try to put the incomprehensible into words with the people affected, or to endure in silence. Not to leave people alone, to offer them a bridge that leads back to solid ground; to give support in the feeling of helplessness, powerlessness and total loss. No matter which religion or nationality they belong to. For a limited period of time, perhaps just a few minutes, a



handshake, or several hours, we are there with and for the other until they can be received by relatives, friends, or professional services, or are in a position to decide and act for themselves again. Sometimes even simple explanations, information or the calm presence are enough to bring stability and order into the outer and inner chaos.

In order to be able to provide this service, we have received training that is regularly strengthened through supervision, further training, and not the least through contact and support in the group.

For the encounter with people in extraordinary and often terrible situations brings with it the confrontation with not easy topics like death or guilt, and can always lead each of us to our own limits.

Increasingly, the rescue forces are also requesting support for themselves when they have carried out strenuous operations. For example, when a comrade has been injured, children have died or other circumstances have been particularly challenging. This high level of stress must be taken into account, dealt with and possible health consequences avoided and reduced. Here, too, we have undergone special additional training, which is constantly being refreshed and expanded. In this way we can provide security and orientation for the next route in the company of the emergency forces on site, in the processing of the experiences shortly afterwards, or in individual discussions with those affected.

## Experiences with People at the Pilgrim's Gate

Short contributions from different sisters

Every day people come to the pilgrim's gate of Mother M. Theresa. Others report on the phone, express themselves in a letter or e-mail. The Pilgrim sisters are confronted with everything that life can bring. Four of them answer the question what it means to them to be at the service of the people.

### Not alone in times of need

I have been working in pilgrimage service for several years. I am always impressed and touched by the trust and loyalty of our pilgrims to Mother M. Theresa. People come to us with their everyday concerns or with great worries. They are concerns and worries of life: serious illnesses, problems with pregnancy and childbirth, burdens in the partnership, disagreements in the family, challenges in the workplace, worries about abuse of power, incomprehensible ways of the children, examinations of children or grandchildren, money worries and other emergencies. Just by describing a difficult situation, a first approach to solving a problem can sometimes be seen. Lonely people telephone us almost every day because we are reliable, loyal conversation partners for them. The technology of e-mail has also found its way into the pilgrimage service for petitions. They often tell us that their parents and



grandparents have already made a pilgrimage to Ingenbohl to pray at the grave of Mother M. Theresa. Some pilgrims come back faithfully to tell us about their experiences and to thank us for the open ear and for our help. The great trust of the devotees in Mother Maria Theresa, in us sisters and in me personally touches me again and again and strengthens me in my faith and in my task. To have time for the people in their needs is a privilege and a great gift to me .

Sr. Mirjam Oeschger

### Learning from each other's trust

For me, the journey with people is above all a great enrichment. The



pilgrims who come to Mother M. Theresa taught me to trust. They are convinced that they will be helped. Often I stand speechless beside them. Doubts still arise in me, what if the requests are not answered? However, in the twelve years of my service I have never heard that they have not received any help. Some things come differently than expected, but they are well done. The trust is passed down from generation to generation.

Sr. Gertrud M. Knecht

### **Helping to carry**

The Pilgrim Service, my favourite and satisfying task, encourages and challenges me daily. It is not easy to find the helping word

during short conversations or when answering certain questions. A counter-question can often provide better food for thought and a solution. In late autumn I heard it said that a 35-year-old man in a motorcycle outfit was helped by the good word of the little sister at the pilgrim's gate which saved him from suicide. Are there still such miracles?

With great joy and gratitude I meet people who deeply trust in our prayer and the intercession of Mother M. Theresa Scherer. God takes those who seek help seriously as soon as they put everything into His hands. They go home confidently and inwardly liberated from the place of power of the crypt. I can only marvel at that. They teach me to truly trust. I am happy to share with our great intercessor the many sorrows

entrusted to me. Often I also experience the joy and the gratitude for the help received afterwards. It is a joyful giving and taking on our pilgrim's way.

Sr. Lucie Piller

### **Be there for others**

I've been working at the pilgrim's gate for 20 years. I find the experience greatly enriching to meet people, to take part in their needs and concerns. The pilgrims feel a power that attracts and fills them. I keep hearing people say, "The crypt is a place of power." From the visitors I also hear again and again that of all the outstanding memories of the year, strength, hope and trust in God have been prominent, many human and spiritual experiences.

People narrate how their grandparents and parents had already made the pilgrimage to Mother Theresa's grave, and they continue to do so because it helps them to improve their everyday lives and to overcome difficulties. And most of them say: "We always carry a relic picture of Mother M. Theresa with us, which gives us strength and protection".



One woman told me: "When I have great difficulties, I always hold the little picture in my hand that I can be calm when I am challenged". Others write: "Mother M. Theresa always helps me when I have a problem" or: "Kind-hearted Mother Maria Theresa helped me." Both the elderly and the younger people come to Mother Theresa's grave to pray, to ask, and to thank her, sometimes they are entire families, with all generations.

Concerns and needs are usually expressed at the pilgrim's gate and recommended in our prayer. Longer conversations require more time, then we make an appointment. People tell us what moves them the most. I listen and promise them prayer. Most of the time they go on calmly because they believe again that Mother M. Theresa is accompanying them. I carry their worries with me in my

spirit and hand them over to Mother M. Theresa in prayer. Some of these people have been in contact with me for years.

People are also grateful when they can put their concerns over the phone or send a letter. Most of the time, it is about difficult relationships, divorces, illnesses, operations, inheritance, exams,

etc. There are also grateful messages: "Examination passed, surgery went well, difficult conversations fruitful", etc.

For me it is a meaningful time to be able to live from person to person and from man to God after retirement.

Sr. Guida Hüttenmoser



## Encounters with ALS Patients

Sr. Christiane Jungo, Convent Ingenbohl

A self-help group meets quarterly in our convent. Those suffering from ALS are accompanied and cared for by relatives, volunteers or survivors, i.e. by women or men who have lost a family member due to this illness. Encounters with these people open the eyes.

In the Mother House different people come and go: individually and in groups. Since 2017, four times a year we have hosted a group of ALS patients who also call themselves ALS. These women and men are accompanied by relatives or friends, volunteers and survivors. Every patient is dependent on the help of others in many ways. Each one needs an electric wheelchair to get around. They like to come to the convent because they feel welcome and at home, and because our spatial conditions give them enough space to move

around, be it in the guest refectory or in the garden. It is important for them, so I learned from them, to be treated normally, not with pity. They would like to meet as equals and exchange thoughts and ideas. What is striking is their fundamental joy in life, in beauty, in communication.

Until two years ago, I hardly knew the disease. Meanwhile I learned a lot from the people affected. To give you an idea, here is a description according to the dictionary:



*“ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis) is a progressive nerve disease that occurs with increasing muscle weakness. The disease usually begins between the ages of 50 and 70 and its cause is largely unknown.*

*The disease usually leads to death for those affected in 3-5 years. A cure is not possible.*

*The muscle weakness typical of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis results from the fact that certain nerve cells in the central nervous system or brain and spinal cord are increasingly damaged: Their damage results in progressive paralysis.*

*As the disease progresses, ALS affects all muscle groups, including the respiratory muscles, resulting in breathlessness. Sooner or later, most people with*

*ALS also experience speech impairment. However, the perception, the consciousness and the intellectual abilities are usually not affected by the amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.*

*The aim of ALS therapy is to slow down the disease and alleviate the symptoms and disabilities associated with it”.*

In the course of the meetings I came to know from the patients how relatively harmless the first signs were; how shocking the diagnosis was for them to have a disease, the cause of which is still unknown, which cannot be cured and which is fatal in 3-5 years. The affected persons and their relatives report on their experiences of how, after the initial shock, they tried to live with this disease, i.e. to accept the disease as part of their lives and to make life as meaningful as possible with increasing restrictions. What sounds so idealistic here can only succeed by using all their strength, is the fruit of laborious processes. The pain of being able to do less and less persists. It is particularly difficult to learn to reset one's own ideas and demands. A visitor therefore called her homepage under the apt title: "Trimmed wings". This becomes apparent when the movements of the arms



and legs are gradually restricted; speech disorders occur, the voice becomes unclear and powerless. A professional work is no longer to be thought of. Independence becomes gradually lost, dependence increases. Everyday things are only possible with the help of other people. Even though the ability for various functions are lost, the thinking capacity remains. Above all, those affected often think about how rich their lives were before, and how they are now being rewarded in a new way through attentive interaction with people. Paired with the pain of letting go, there is a lot of gratitude.

I soon noticed that the patients have a different sense of time, that they consciously live in the here and now. They are happy about life, about everything they can do at the moment, perhaps not tomorrow anymore. For us, who are to some extent healthy, it is often so difficult to keep an eye on the present, which for the ALS patients is the only possible thing. I experience their handling of the thought of death in a similar way. Since the day of diagnosis imminent death is a stark reality. Moreover, year after year they have to say goodbye to loving fellow sufferers. This conscious



treatment of time and death is also reflected in how patients no longer seek happiness in the future but in the present.

Most of them are real fighters. They don't give in so quickly, but try to do as much as possible on their own and use technical aids. Thank God there are different ones available today. Nobody can win the fight against ALS, but they can grow from it. Much strength comes to them from their environment: from the relatives and friends who stay at their side, from the trained helpers. I am always touched by the great devotion - 24 hours a day! I must not forget the active contacts with other affected people, especially through social media. Many ALS sufferers share their experiences on the Internet. They are

interested in life, nature and society.

The relatives are also challenged by a continuous process: Everyone knows about the advancement of the disease, but how it develops in this person is a constant challenge. The kind of help is always requested anew. In contact with the "ALS-family" I experience in the most beautiful way how love makes us innovative.

When the group arrives on a Saturday afternoon, the first thing to do is to meet, to inquire how everyone is doing at the moment. Last year, three women and two men from their circle died. In order to remember them and to bring them into the circle in a spiritual way, the group made a special candle, which is lit and kept in the middle, while everyone reflects on the dear deceased and prays for them. Memories are shared; thoughts about one's own path are expressed.

From time to time there is a desire to hear something about the convent or to watch a presentation. Very few of them used to have relationships with a convent, with religious women.

So, they move and we move in a somewhat "new world". For the sisters in the guest refectory and for me these afternoons are a big learning field and a deep enrichment. In the case of language impairments, patient enquiries, computer language or writing tablets are helpful.

Among the accompanying persons there are always those who have lost relatives through ALS and who remain connected to the group. Together with the relatives, they help with the following meal, which is taken with much happiness. Most of them have to be served food, or they can take liquid with the help of a tube. The task of the sisters is to prepare everything well, to help where necessary, and to come into personal contact with everyone during the afternoon. An over 90-year-old sister decorates a table for each occasion, which is always understood as a sign of appreciation.

Depending on the state of health, the number of participants has so far varied between 15-34 affected and accompanying persons. With currently about 700 ALS sufferers in Switzerland, these are few, but



the group loves this small circle for mutual exchange and moral support. The ALS Association offers opportunities to meet in larger groups, such as holidays or regional meetings. I would like to conclude my personal impressions with a poem for being on the journey with people.

### **Appeal**

I'm happy, when you're with me,  
but don't help me,  
if I can do it myself,  
even if it takes a long time;  
don't give me that,  
which I can take myself,  
even if I have to make an effort;  
do not support me,

if I can stand by myself,  
even if it challenges me;  
do not fetch me,  
what I can accomplish myself,  
even if I deviate;  
don't tell me  
what I can see for myself,  
even if I don't see it so clearly.

Let me have space,  
let me take my time,  
let me have the opportunity,  
to search myself,  
to find it myself,  
to do it myself,  
to unfold my capabilities,  
to be myself.

Max Fig Winter  
From: Growing together, Noah  
publisher

## Information from the General Leadership

On 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2018, the General Leadership has appointed a new Provincial Leadership for the India South Province for the next three years:

Provincial Superior: Sr. Flory D'Souza,  
for the 2<sup>nd</sup> term  
Assistant: Sr. Georgia  
Vadakethalaka  
Councilors: Sr. Marshan  
Rodrigues  
Sr. Archana  
Padikara  
Sr. Flavia  
Mendonca  
Sr. Shanty  
George  
Official start: 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2019

We sincerely thank the sisters who are newly or re-appointed for leadership in the province India South for their readiness to accept this demanding mission.

We wish them strength, courage and confidence for their new tasks entrusted to them. May God's blessing accompany them!

### **Merging of the Motherprovince, Switzerland and the province West Switzerland**

Two years ago, the two Provinces decided to start a process together with a view to merging the two Provinces.

The process of merging is complete. The two provinces have officially been one province since 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2019. The actual celebrations will take place on 15<sup>th</sup> February in Ingenbohl and on 16<sup>th</sup> February in Fribourg.

From the date of the merging – 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019 - the merged province is called "Province Switzerland", in French "Province Suisse". It has its main office in Motherhouse in Ingenbohl. The present Provincial Leadership of the Motherprovince Switzerland with Sister Tobia Rüttimann as Provincial Superior will continue as the leadership of the merged Province Switzerland.

### **Restructuring of the province India North East**

With the help of an external process facilitator, all sisters went through a spiritual process with a "core team" and thus dealt with the division of the province.

This process has already been completed. Through this bifurcation, a new province in India was erected at a solemn ceremony on 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 2019. This province is called: India East

Province. The Provincial House is located in the city of Siliguri in West Bengal. Sister Celine Chemmamadiyil with her four councillors was entrusted with the responsibility of this new province. Sr. Marija Brizar, the General Superior, and Sr. Elsit Ampattu, the General Councillor, participated in this ceremony.

We entrust to your accompanying prayer all sisters affected by the merging or bifurcation of their provinces.

#### **From our statistics 2018**

Date: December 31, 2018

#### **Pre-candidates**

68 in Croatia, Slovakia, India, Uganda, Taiwan

#### **Candidates/Postulants**

168 in Croatia, Baden-Württemberg, Slovakia, India, Taiwan, Brazil, Uganda

#### **Novices**

40 in Croatia, Czech Republic, Slovakia, India, Uganda

#### **Total no. of sisters**

2980, of which 188 junior sisters

#### **Total no. of sisters of the Motherprovince**

376

#### **Total no. of sisters of the Province West Switzerland**

57

## Entered into Eternal Life

From 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018



Sister	Native place	Born	Prof.	Died
<b>Motherprovince Switzerland</b>				
Aloisia Gonzaga Grob	Winznau SO	1920	1946	12.08.2018
Anna Beata Berger	Subingen SO	1924	1950	03.05.2018
Bernardetta Ponente	Napoli, Italien	1935	1957	01.09.2018
Caterina Gabutti	Manno TI	1931	1960	14.01.2018
Charlotte Zoller	Au SG	1919	1941	14.07.2018
Christina Maria Bernasconi	Chiasso TI	1924	1953	13.12.2018
Cornelia Pia Anderegg	Wattwil SG	1929	1956	07.02.2018
Feliziana Käufeler	Wettingen AG	1924	1948	17.01.2018
Gabrielle Moser	Arni b. Biglen BE	1928	1960	27.02.2018
Giovannina Matta	Cabras, Italien	1933	1966	24.04.2018
Gisela Eberhard	Amden SG	1920	1948	25.10.2018
Gratiana Heini	Tersnaus GR	1932	1961	03.07.2018
Helen Rosa Grüninger	Berneck SG	1927	1956	27.07.2018
Ines Meuwly	Liebistorf FR	1920	1943	26.04.2018
Jolanda Maria Gumann	Oberlunkhofen AG	1931	1953	28.05.2018

Klaris Kamber	Gunzgen SO	1918	1945	14.02.2018
Leonita Rott	Vorbach, Bayern	1926	1959	26.09.2018
Liberia Kleesattel	Wäschenbeuren DE	1935	1962	30.12.2018
Ludmilla Businger	Wittnau AG	1925	1949	26.02.2018
Margrit Widmer	Mosnang SG	1929	1956	29.05.2018
M. Agatha Näf	Ittenthal AG	1932	1956	10.06.2018
M. Bonaria Agus	Dolianova, Italien	1925	1950	15.04.2018
M. Heinrika Schnydrig	Grächen VS	1933	1956	25.10.2018
M. Nives Fleisch	Altach, Österreich	1934	1957	01.11.2018
Pia Rita Lögler	Winterthur ZH	1920	1950	31.08.2018
Priska Siffert	Überstorf FR	1926	1947	25.12.2018
Theodolinda Haas	Kriens LU	1928	1958	27.12.2018

### Province Croatia

Adrijana Kramar	Petruševac	1936	1967	21.08.2018
Anijana Lelas	Kosore	1946	1969	19.03.2018
Atanazija Miji	Novo Selo BiH	1925	1948	09.06.2018
Bogumira Koš àk	Oštrice	1925	1950	09.01.2018
Edelfrida Kirchhofer	Filipovo, Serbien	1916	1937	02.11.2018
Ermina Celebrini	Porat	1924	1945	02.02.2018
Hugolina Kova evi	Mrzovi	1926	1947	13.12.2018
Jona Zemljak	Kamena Gorica	1921	1943	24.01.2018
Lidija Kup eri	Marijanci	1943	1966	02.01.2018
Lujza Ileš	Podr. Moslavina	1928	1950	21.10.2018
Marijela Babi	Radikovci	1932	1955	08.11.2018
Maristela Šimi	Ivankovo	1933	1955	17.01.2018
Mladena Španjevi	ur anci	1940	1966	17.05.2018
Pavlimira Hans	Klju	1931	1954	18.07.2018
Petromila Mazi	Preko	1925	1949	31.01.2018
Rajka urinac	Oprisavci	1937	1964	07.09.2018
Svetoslava Nikoli	akova ki Selci	1934	1959	02.12.2018

### Czech Province

Bernadetta R ží ková	Nitkovice	1929	1961	23.11.2018
Dagmar Husková	Staré M sto	1920	1942	01.02.2018

## Province Baden-Württemberg

Friedeberta Meyer	Bohlingen	1925	1950	01.05.2018
Imberta Maier	Güttingen	1922	1949	04.04.2018
Luitgardis Salomon	Rauenberg	1925	1947	08.01.2018
Marga Reckling	Konstanz	1931	1954	12.05.2018
M. Emmanuel Platzek	Hultschin, Oberschles	1932	1962	28.11.2018
M. Friedhilde Wesle	Gottmadingen	1932	1955	15.01.2018
M. Grata Muckenhirn	Freiburg i.Br.	1931	1958	01.11.2018
M. Hospitia Hirlinger	Melchingen	1925	1956	16.09.2018
M. Nikola Mitlöhner	Liebau, Schlesien	1940	1962	13.12.2018
M. Odilia Ilg	Einbach	1920	1956	08.06.2018
M. Stanislaus Lettner	Obersasbach	1924	1953	27.10.2018
Rita Pfletschinger	Konstanz	1941	1961	15.12.2018
Rosia Maria Stemmer	Salem	1946	1969	20.02.2018

## Province Slovakia

Amancia Huciková	Brezovica	1924	1950	22.07.2018
Eugénia Janáková	Dolná Lehota	1942	1971	21.12.2018

## Province Italy

Andreina Messner	Brixen-St. Andrä	1924	1952	03.01.2018
Armanda Cescolini	Cloz	1922	1943	03.02.2018
Beatrix Mayr	Brixen	1930	1964	21.04.2018
M. Cecilia Abrami	Pedimonte del T. SL	1923	1945	11.03.2018
M. Dolores Giormani	Capodistria SL	1929	1962	17.03.2018
M. Giovanna Besana	Valmadrera	1927	1953	28.12.2018

## Province West Switzerland

Claudia Wohlgemuth	Basel	1942	1966	27.01.2018
M. Clément Dumas	Sommentier FR	1932	1957	06.05.2018

## India Central Province

Fabian Valiplackal	Vakakkadu, Kerala	1948	1970	22.06.2018
Gertrude Kallarachial	Chowara, Kerala	1927	1957	25.04.2018
Jyoti Sharma	Chakhni, Bihar	1947	1970	23.10.2018

### India North East Province

Colette Alencherry	Thuruthy, Kerala	1936	1965	13.01.2018
Joel Pathalil	Vazhoor, Kerala	1951	1976	10.01.2018

### India South Province

Basil Moolayil	Kuravilangad, Kerala	1937	1969	25.11.2018
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### Mid India Province

Anita Kumplunkal	Meenachil, Kerala	1942	1967	01.06.2018
Jeevanlata Minj	Tongo Ghaghra, Chh.	1943	1972	03.07.2018
Kanta Minj	Jokbahla, Chhattis.	1946	1972	19.01.2018

### Province Europa Mitte

Dietfrieda Fink	Höhenberg, Bayern	1935	1956	25.10.2018
Ephräma Dicker	Inzing, Tirol	1927	1948	22.08.2018
Florina Wö	Ulrichsberg OÖ	1935	1960	25.08.2018
Franziska Greiml	Kleinviecht, Bayern	1944	1966	19.10.2018
Friedberta Hofer	Reichenau, Böhmen	1935	1957	05.02.2018
Gottlieba Königshofer	Birkfeld Stmk.	1929	1955	15.03.2018
Gudula Gebhart	Rüstdorf OÖ	1945	1966	22.03.2018
Herberta Bodingbauer	Hirschbach OÖ	1923	1951	10.05.2018
Hirlanda Zanner	Luhe, Bayern	1927	1956	19.06.2018
Hyazintha Bachmeier	Grossaign, Bayern	1929	1952	31.10.2018
Isabella Mrfka	Blosdorf, Mähren	1934	1960	17.03.2018
Konradina Six	Opponitz NÖ	1935	1965	15.04.2018
Magda Wöhrer	St. Peter/Wimberg OÖ	1925	1952	18.02.2018
Nikolina Mostbauer	Hargelsberg OÖ	1926	1949	02.07.2018
Philiberta Wagner	Klaffer, OÖ	1932	1964	08.03.2018
Reinharda Gattringer	Weitra, NÖ	1936	1957	02.11.2018
Theodora Mitterbuchner	Neuhofen / Inn OÖ	1925	1948	07.10.2018
Ulrike Maria Miljan	Krapina, Kroatien	1950	1974	19.10.2018
Ursula Klösch	St. Margarethen Stmk	1923	1952	09.04.2019
Veronika Wolf	Schlackenwerth, Böhmen	1923	1950	12.03.2018
Walburgis Scherer	Wörgl, Tirol	1932	1954	05.10.2018

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of the Holy Cross  
Institute Ingenbohl  
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