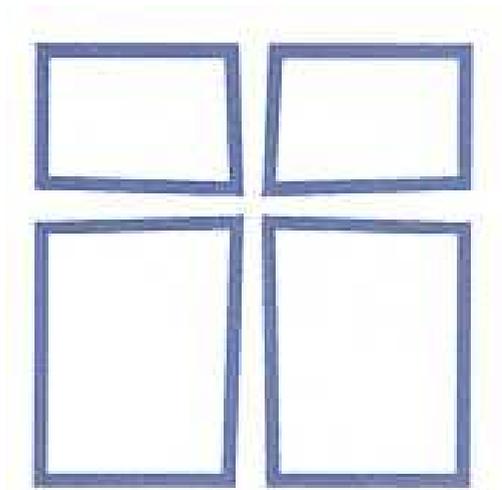

Theodosia



Quarterly
of the Sisters of Mercy
of the Holy Cross
Institute Ingenbohl
CH-6440 Brunnen

Editorial Team:

Sister Christiane Jungo
Sister Edelgund Kuhn
Sister Verena Maria Oberhauser
Sister Elsit J. Ampattu
Sister Dorothee Halbach

English version:

Sr. Roseline Kujur, India

Contents

Theodosia 2019, 2

Picture	4	Journey with God and for God	31
Editorial Sr. Christiane Jungo	5	Sr. Mirjam Ferak and staff members, Mala Loka, Slovenia, Province Europa Mitte	
The Emmaus Narrative –a Model of Spiritual Fellowship and Community Culture Fr. Helmut Schlegel OFM Frankfurt/M.-Bornheim (book excerpt)	7	Journey with the People on "Nisch day" Sr. Margareta M. Brenner and participants, Hegne, Province Baden-Württemberg	40
A New Shoot in the Indian Mission: Erection of India East Province Sr. Merlyn Kanjirakombil, Province India East, and Sr. Elsit Ampattu, General Leadership, Ingenbohl	17	Carrying Together Thoughts on a column capital in Romainmôtier CH Sr. Christiane Jungo, Ingenbohl	44
Celebration of Merging of the Mother Province and the Province West Switzerland into the Province Switzerland Sr. Eva Teresa Zanier, Provincial Leadership, Ingenbohl	25	50 Years Ago, Moving into the New Motherhouse "Theodosia", 84 volume No. 2/3, May/August 1969, Pg. 115	45
		Information from the General Leadership	48



A light for the joint path as Province Switzerland. On the left Sr. Tobia Rüttimann, Provincial Superior, on the right Sr. Louise-Henry Kolly, former Provincial Superior of West Switzerland. "I am handing you this candle as a sign of belonging together. *A candle* – a Province. May the light of Christ accompany our joint steps."

Editorial

The annual motto "Journey with the people" characterizes the new edition of "Theodosia". There is discussion on many paths and experiences: the common search for answers to changed circumstances in provinces, the common shaping of the life of convent and neighbourhood, the common journey of faith in the surroundings of convent, etc.

Right at the beginning we let ourselves be inspired by Fr. Helmut Schlegel OFM. One of his books is entitled "Faith Stories of the Way". The core of his reflections is "The Emmaus Narrative –a Model of Spiritual Fellowship and Community Culture", in which he shows us the great richness of the story of Emmaus with the experiences that take up the whole of life: Departure, disappointment, accompaniment, sorrow, joy, arrival, meal and mission.

Changes in our worldwide community meant that almost simultaneously one province had to be divided into two provinces in India, and in Switzerland two provinces were merged. Sr. Merlyn-Kanjirakombil and Sr. Elsit Ampattu give us an insight into the history of the Institute: " A New Shoot in the Indian Mission: Erection of India East Province".

From Switzerland, Eva Teresa Zanier gives us an impression of two celebrations with common and independent elements in Ingenbohl and Fribourg: "Celebration of Merging of the Mother Province and the Province West Switzerland into the Province Switzerland".

Sr. Mirjam Fer akund tells us how rich and diverse cooperation between sisters and the neighbourhood can be. There the togetherness reaches into the practical everyday life. The contribution, "Journey with God and for God" allows us to participate in a piece of a living church.

Inspired by the name Ulrika Nisch, Sisters of Hegne developed an attractive programme for interested women and men: "Niscentage". The sisters and the participants have found in these enrichment and support for life and faith: "Journey with the People on Nisch Day", Sr. Margareta M. Brenner, and four regular participants share experiences.

On a column capital from the 14th century in the former Benedictine church in Romainmôtier, Switzerland, Sr. Christiane Jungo reflects on "Carrying Together".

19 May 1969, 50 years ago, was a great "day of movement" in Ingenbohl. After the first stage of construction, the sisters were able to move from the old convent to the western wing of the new Mother House. A great day, with a lot of nostalgia! "Theodosia" May/August 1969 contains the article which had appeared shortly before. Today we write: "50 Years Ago, Moving into the New Motherhouse".

Through the "Information from the General Leadership" we come to know in brief about visits, anniversaries, and meetings of formators and accountants.

Sr. Christiane Jungo

The Emmaus Narrative –a Model of Spiritual Fellowship and Community Culture

Fr. Helmut Schlegel OFM Frankfurt/M.-Bornheim

In: Faith stories are path stories, Echter Verlag GmbH, Würzburg

The story of the disciples of Emmaus is one of the most popular Easter stories. It is easy to find yourself in it. Father Helmut continues. He presents it to us as a model for our spiritual life in community.

The spiritual dimension is the basis in the life of Christian fellowship and communities. It needs special care.

Christian communities and fellowships are neither circles of friends based on sympathy nor special-purpose associations. Rather, they are based on an existential togetherness. They connect people who have set out from different points and walk a path together - perhaps at different speeds, but still in visual contact. They do so because they are striving for a common goal. So they are communities on the way.

In the Bible there is a multitude of way communities. In the Old Testament, the story tells about the passage through the Red Sea and the decades of migration through the desert to the land of promise. It emphasizes that Israel does not find its way by itself, but is led by Yahweh.

"The angel of God who went before the host of the Israelites moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and darkness; and the night passed without one coming near the other all night. Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the Israelites went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left." (Exodus 14:19-22)

Inspiration and Initiative

God's guidance is a fundamental word for a spiritual community on the way. In the background of the exodus narrative it even becomes clear that this word "guidance" has two aspects: On the one hand

it means to get involved trustingly in God's inspiration, on the other hand it means to bring one's own initiative and responsibility into the dynamic of being led. The latter is an active action, the decision to rely on God and to go step by step in the strength given by him. Moses and the people of Israel are not passive, on the contrary: they must have had a lot of courage and trust, they must find their own ways, they must face dangers, and they must supply themselves with water and bread.

The biblical writings emphasize that we must also experience irritations, fear, hunger and thirst, even the night of unbelief, on the guided path. They emphasize that God is faithful and that he does not make his faithfulness dependent on the behaviour of people. The reliability of God is therefore also the main theme of the Holy Scriptures of Israel and sees as a clear thread running through.

The theme of "inspiration" is also addressed in chapter 24 of the Gospel of Luke. Already at the beginning of Luke's Easter story it becomes clear that the disciples want to keep control. Peter reacts to the report of the women, who tell of the message of the angels that Jesus lives, with its inspection "walkway" to the grave. Although

he finds everything as the women had reported, the disciples do not believe. The two disciples of Emmaus express their disbelief in the word and justify it as follows: "But they themselves did not see Him" (Lk 24:24b). Luke describes very sensitively how this refusal to trust is slowly changing because of the encounter with the unknown third. People can only "learn" to be led in faith in a living relationship with Jesus.

A spiritual community on the way grows and becomes strong as it trusts the "angel of God" (Ex 14:19), who guides and protects it, and aligns its movements with him. Their essential potential for growth lies in listening, listening and obeying God's word and instruction.

It seems to be one of the most important tasks of current community spirituality and pastoral work to keep the balance between "being led" and "going by oneself", between inspiration and initiative. Too often action gives way to actionism. In a world where efficiency and economic growth count, spiritual communities are also in danger of being judged by such standards. On the other hand, this can also lead to a fatal counter-movement in which religious people retreat into the protected niches of spiritual

practice. Religious communities that have lost their serving function and social relevance are lost movements and revolve around themselves. In his Emmaus narrative Luke also warns against this.

Dialogical communication

On the way, the disciples of Emmaus talk to each other "about all that had happened" (Lk 24:14). It is a great step when people move from talking about one another to talking to one another. The tragedy of our days is not that we talk too little. We certainly talk a lot about "things", as the Emmaus story also says. We rarely talk to each other. And it is particularly difficult for us to entrust each other with the ruptures of our lives and the disappointed hopes. Exchange means a familiar conversation within the framework of a high degree of human intimacy. This is the chance for spiritual communion. But even it is not of itself and without further a familiar group in which everyone can share everything with everyone. Building trust is an important, and also tedious and long-lasting path. There will be disappointments. One of the greatest dangers of spiritual communities on the way is probably the illusion that people who decide for such a project are

those who have reached a high communicative maturity. All too quickly the standard applies: Whoever decides for a spiritual way of life, or even for a Christian community, must after all be permeated by the spirit of the Gospel. The reality is that even spiritual people are limited in their social competence. Like others, they are vulnerable, egocentric, jealous, envious, vain and aggressive. Sometimes unhealthy traits are hidden under their spiritual motives. Yes, it is not uncommon for people to try to compensate for their limited horizons and social inability in spiritual communities of all places. This fact does not speak against spiritual communities, on the contrary. The spiritual challenge lies in the need to deal with these realities in a sober and loving way and to embark together on a process of healing. The belief that the "Saviour", Jesus Christ, forms the centre of this community is the decisive perspective.

Exchange in the true sense of the word is a form of mutual give and take. Exchange presupposes humility and discretion: listening, compassion, being interested in the lives of others, respecting the otherness of others. The art of true exchange also includes the patient enduring of shortcomings and deficiencies.

In the Emmaus story, Luke paints the various colours of a spiritual dialogue very vividly and realistically. He shows the psychological pressure that weighs on the two disciples. They want to get rid of the frustration that their previous hopes are null and void. They need each other to complain. And they must also, when the "stranger" joins them, express their anger that he is the only one who does not seem to know "what has happened in Jerusalem these days" (Luke 24:18). And yet they do not remain squatting in their dark niche, at least they are prepared to remain silent, to listen, to become thoughtful, to engage in the words of the third. In their exchange, Luke makes it clear to the readers, without the disciples knowing, that Jesus is with them. The willingness to exchange and meet each other gradually opens them to the deep and far-reaching encounter with the unknown, in which they later recognize their Lord.

The story of Emmaus as model for Christian community and the spirituality of the community emphasizes that one of the most urgent tasks in community is not only to bring up hopes and faith, but also fears and doubts. A strange shyness towards each other hinders this necessary

process. It is the fear to venture too far out due to embarrassment or hurt. Deep faith extends, and is inclusive of our genitalia and sexuality. It therefore takes courage and trust. One of the most important tasks of church and community leaders is to reduce mutual fears, to prevent indiscretions and rumours and to build and strengthen trust.

Approaching Jesus

The relationship with Jesus is anything but a linear upward movement. It is not always strong, either in a personal biography or in a spiritual community. It is more like a zigzag movement that oscillates between closeness and distance, faith and doubt, defence and affection. It would be wrong to attribute this only to human instability. As the biographies of great saints show us, their faith experiences are also marked by these fluctuations. Yes, it seems that the closer a person knows that he belongs to Jesus, the deeper he penetrates into a spiritual existence, the more he is shaken by irritations and doubts. All the deeper he threatens to fall into the "dark night of the soul" (John of the Cross). Francis of Assisi also had to experience this night, the experience of being far away from Jesus, even rejected by God.

The great spiritual teachers say that it is in this place of existential and spiritual emptiness that Jesus, who himself went through suffering and death, is closest to the human soul. That in the heart of the believing man the empty tomb which precedes the Paschal event may be depicted. Luke 24 draws the story of the soul of the dark night, which merges into the light of the resurrection, very vividly. The women and later also Peter see the empty tomb. The disciples cannot yet believe because "they themselves did not see him" (Luke 24:24b). Even now, on the way to Emmaus, their eyes are held. He has for them the features of a stranger, an unknown.

The decisive thing on their way is that in their inability they let Jesus speak for himself. They do not stay to talk about him, they listen to him. Luke emphasizes that he also speaks where he is a stranger to them. Jesus can be experienced not only (and perhaps not even first) within Christian congregations and religious communities, of worship celebrations and theological discussions, but also in the "foreign", in the secular realm, where Christians are asked uncomfortable questions and social tasks are waiting for them.

People in churches and spiritual communities are on the way with Jesus. This also means that they have not yet reached their goal, that they never "know" or even "have" Jesus. Their relationship with him is not a possession, is never "*that* with Jesus of Nazareth" (Lk 24:19b), it is the story of a lifelong search and acquaintance. The decisive question is whether we go instead of standing still, whether we get involved on the way, whether we let *him* in our midst.

Jesus speaks to us in the plural: "What are these things that you ... talk about?" (Luke 24:17). In a way community we also talk about "things" - about ordinary, everyday family and professional life, about topics of society, about the practical necessities of living together. But all these are not just things. Behind the surface of the material lies a "more". The Emmaus story encourages us to discover how we can find our way through the factual reality of everyday life in the congregation and community in conversation with Jesus and thus into a deeper relationship with one another.

The "conversation with Jesus" also affects the practice of prayer. Perhaps praying is also so difficult because we talk so much, especially about "things" - our

expectations, concerns, supplications, which we address to God and to Jesus. And in their polyphony and power of words we possibly hardly hear the voice of Jesus any more. All the more important it is to hear and to listen. On the common paths of our faith it is good to remain silent, to feel each other wordless or to be for oneself, only then turn to the community again with gathered strength. In silence and listening we experience what Jesus says and who he is.

Orientation on the Word of God

Communities on the way are also word communities. Words are ways that bring people together. A decisive point in human evolution was probably when our ancestors learned to make sounds in order to communicate. Language has the central role in human culture and religion. Even if our relationships with God are unspeakable and mysterious, they use words. Christianity is one of the great word religions. Paul says in his letter to the Romans: "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ" (Rom 10:17). God reveals Himself in the Word. The human language of the Holy Scriptures is, so to speak, the garment in which God is revealed.

Spiritual communion among Christians is inconceivable without the Word of God. The Holy Scriptures of the Hebrew and Christian Bibles are the basis for the common search for the incomprehensible God and for the common practice of faith in love and world responsibility. There is no question about it: the study of the Holy Scriptures makes trouble. The texts come from times and cultures that are not directly accessible to us. We cannot simply translate them one to one into today. It is necessary to take their message out of the historical context and insert it into our modern context. However, scientific knowledge alone is not enough to allow the Word of God to speak to us and become fruitful for us. Exploring the Holy Scriptures is too little; we want to understand them - their inner meaning, their spiritual-existential content. Blessed are those who find a spiritual community in which people read Scripture together, share it, listen to one another and pray together.

It's an experience that many share: Churches and spiritual fellowship grow with the Word of God. Bible sharing and scriptural conversation are fundamental to their spiritual progress. It is not primarily a matter of exegetical detailed knowledge, but of the risk

of bringing one's own life into contact with the Word of God. In the community it is possible to experience that Jesus himself lives in their midst. It can be a joyful experience to discover how a richness of experiences and promises blossoms in a group that would remain hidden from the individual.

Eucharist as centre

One of the most beautiful things is to stop on a common path, unpack your backpack and share it with each other. But the idyllic picture of a picnic together must not close our eyes to reality. While some have plenty of food at their disposal and sometimes are shamelessly lavish with it, others fight for bare survival. Anyone who has ever seen how in Africa, especially women, fetch water from the nearest well and travel miles and miles heavily laden on roads, who knows how children, women and men have to work hard to earn their daily plate of rice, understands the true dimension of the word "sharing".

In the New Testament it is reported that Jesus celebrates the Kingdom of God in the communities at the table. He meets less with the great and the rich, but with the poor and sinners. With those for whom earning

bread is a burden, and also with those who feel guilty. In the breaking of bread new relationships are created, forgiveness is given, a new beginning is made. And it becomes clear that we do not earn our bread. It is a gift, and God is the giver of all gifts. That is why the goods of the earth belong to all. For Jesus, breaking bread is a sacramental gesture that wants to initiate the sharing of life as a whole. Therefore, before the Lord's Supper, he sets another sign by washing the disciples' feet: "I have given you an example so that you also should do as I have done to you" (Jn 13:15). Thus the Eucharistic signs - the bread he breaks for them and the cup he gives them - become signs of his service and devotion. A gift, that does not even shrink from death.

In Emmaus the disciples recognize their Lord in the breaking of bread. There they feel that their hearts were already burning on the way. Their melancholy turns into joy. And the power of this experience enables them to return to the city from where they had fled.

A spiritual community on the way lives from the common meal. It lives from the fact that all

contribute what they can to the common livelihood. It is based on the fact that each and every one of us treats the gifts of creation with care and attention. In such communities, completely natural processes such as planting, harvesting, storing the fruits, and preparing the food not only have a life-supporting but also a community-promoting and even a religious meaning. In the preparation and consumption of the meal a great cosmic connection becomes clear. When a community celebrates the Eucharist in this context, it is not a detached and unworldly cultic act, but the completion of gratitude and salvation in everyday life. This should also become clear in the Sunday Eucharist: Christians are integrated into the great community life of all people through the fellowship meal, indeed of all creatures. We owe our gratitude to the one who gives all gifts and share in the common responsibility for the planet earth.

Living with a mission

Jesus' disciples make decisive experiences on their way. This is not so much the geographical way

as the basic human experience of being mobile, changeable and transient. One who follows Jesus, follows an exhausting, even a dangerous path. To bear one's cross daily, as Jesus commands us to do means to endure, to walk the path of reconciliation despite all (inner) wounds and to remain in search of God in all uncertainty. But this way is also a promise. It is associated with the blossoming and maturing of one's own life, the increase of one's capacity for love and trust in God. According to Jesus, discipleship is neither a privilege of the religiously advanced nor a preference of the morally superior nor an exclusive way of becoming enlightened. Discipleship is a path of God's experience in the footsteps of Jesus that is accessible to all people. The stride length and pace of the individuals are different and may be so. Direction and goal of the way are summarized in one word according to Jesus: Growth in love.

Returning to Jerusalem, the two travellers tell of their encounter with Jesus and "how he was known to them in the breaking of

the bread" (Luke 24:35b): Luke obviously attaches importance to how. The two do not recognize Jesus by his physical appearance, but by the breaking of the bread. If this is the sign of Jesus' recognition, then it is not just for two disciples of Emmaus to "see" Jesus. He is present to all who go with him, who strive to understand the Holy Scriptures and who celebrate the Eucharistic meal together.

And the evangelist also emphasizes this: The result of the recognition of Jesus and the Eucharistic celebration is a mission. In the case of the disciples of Emmaus, their destination is not unknown. It is "Jerusalem". In the biblical language this is the city of David and the city of the Messiah. And it is also the city where the Holy Spirit will come upon the young church and will send them into the world. The mission, which Jesus himself commissions them, begins from here: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy

Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."(Mt 28:18-20)

Jerusalem stands for mission and departure. Christian communities and spiritual communities are, as a consequence of the Gospel Pentecostal communities on the way, that is, movements which go to places in the world and allow themselves to be challenged there in the sense of their Christian and social mission. The story of Pentecost is so revolutionary because the disciples are transformed from a frightened and fearful group hidden behind closed doors into a missionary community.

Inspiration and Initiative
Dialogical communication
Approaching Jesus
Orientation on the Word of God
Eucharist as center
Living with a mission

To this day, these are the key words that characterize Christian fellowship and communities. They live from the rootedness on God and carry a world-affirming

passion within them. They are spiritual and as such also diaconal projects. They are not interested in rejecting and overcoming the world, but in healing and transforming it. The commitment for more just structures and for the preservation of creation, present the integral elements of their spirituality.

In his contribution "The Church as a place of spiritual sending" Karl Rahner expresses this as follows: "Only he who is religious and independent, humble and daring, obedient and aware of his own responsibility, a prayerful and sinful, who is connected to the

past and the future of the Church, only he creates space for God's storming Pentecost Spirit, the eternally old and eternally young, to work in him, to renew the face of his own soul, to make use of him in order to change the earth as well".

From: Helmut Schlegel, Faith Stories are Path Stories - The Emmaus Narration as a Model of Christian Existence pp. 65 - 79, Echter Verlag GmbH, Würzburg.

With special printing permission of the Echter Verlag for Theodosia 2019, 2.

Note: Since 2013 Fr. Helmut OFM together with Sr. Mirjam Schambeck sf has been publishing the book series "Franziskanische Akzente" at Echter Verlag, Würzburg.

A New Shoot in the Indian Mission: Erection of India East Province

Sr. Merlyn Kanjirakombi, Province India East and Sr. Elsit Ampattu, General Leadership, Ingenbohl

Through a process spread over some years, taking into account all aspects, the Sisters of the Province of India NorthEast, dealt with the issue of the division of their province. Starting out in pain and apprehension, the process concluded in solemn celebration, as on 2 February 2019 the fifth Indian province was established.

A short glimpse on the process of Bifurcation of North East Province

After the General Chapter 2014, a Follow up Chapter was conducted in North East Province. In this chapter the Provincial Team put

forward to the assembly the difficulty of the Provincial Team in the accompaniment of the sisters due to the growing number of members and the vast distances between the Provincial House and the communities. The topic of re-



Procession

structuring the province was discussed, and the chapter delegates were of the opinion that at this juncture the province does not need a restructuring due to various reasons such as aging of sisters, sicknesses, financial constraints, and the diminishing number of vocations.

After the General Visitation in 2015, a report was given to the Provincial Team by the General Leadership with their observations, general impressions, suggestions, and recommendations. The General team observed that the Province has grown big in number and in area. The distances between the communities and Provincial House are too far and it is difficult for the Provincial Team to have close accompaniment of the sisters and of the communities. The General Leadership proposed to reflect and think about the process of re-structuring the Province.

When the new Provincial team took charge in 2016, in their first Provincial Council Meeting, the suggestions and recommendations by the General Team was taken up for discussion and the matter of bifurcation of the Province came up. At that time all the members of the team did not agree for it. After many meetings

and discussions all the council members agreed for the process and then on 10th May 2016 the application to initiate the process of bifurcation of the North East Province was sent to the General Superior and on 17th May 2016 the permission was granted.

Fr. R.C. Chacko S.J. from Hazaribag was contacted and he agreed to facilitate the process. As per his advice, the Provincial Team in its meeting on 27th and 28th November 2016 formed a Core Team of 25 sisters. Fr. R.C. Chacko S.J. led the core team deeper into our Charism and guided the core team to discern what God is asking today and what is to be done for closer contacts and greater apostolic effectiveness.

In this meeting the core team decided to have Province Assemblies in order to involve all the sisters of the Province and to ensure their maximum participation in the process of bifurcation of the Province.

Six Province assemblies were conducted under the guidance of the facilitator; Fr. R.C. Chacko S.J. with the theme: 'Bifurcation of the Province for greater Apostolic Effectiveness'. 307 sisters and 13 novices other than the Core Team participated in these assemblies.

The sick and aged sisters as well as the tertians could not attend.

After going through this spiritual process of discernment and realizing the present situation of our Province, the majority of the sisters expressed that a re-organization could help effective administration and greater fruitfulness of our mission.

The General Directive 43 of our Constitution gives the right to the General Superior that with the consent of her council the General Superior can decide for the erection, change, amalgamation or dissolution of Provinces and Vicariates as well as for setting down the conditions to be met there. Therefore, with the consent of Sr. Marija Brizar, the General Superior formed an Extended Core Team of 51 sisters. Instead of the Provincial Chapter the extended Core Team made the final proposals regarding the completion of the bifurcation process.

With the General Administrations' Decree on 13 April 2018, the restructuring of the India North East Province came into effect. "The India North East Province is restructured into two provinces. Communities in the states of West Bengal, Sikkim, Assam, Arunachal

Pradesh and Manipur will belong to the new Province.

This Province will be known under the name: Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross, India East Province. The new Province has the Provincial House at P.O. Pradhan Nagar, Siliguri 734 003, West Bengal, India. The India North East Province of Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross will consist of communities in the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Kerala. The Provincial House remains at Fairfield Colony, P.O. Digha Ghat, District Patna – 800 011, Bihar, India."

Celebration of the Erection of India East Province

Indeed in the history of the 'The Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross' in India, it is another significant grace-filled moment and expansion, the good Lord willed on 2 February 2019. The North East Province got matured to give birth to India East Province.

This solemn occasion began with the holy Eucharist. The students of Holy Cross School, Sonada danced rhythmically and led in a procession the main celebrant, His Lordship, Rt Rev Vincent Aind, Bishop of Bagdogra



Dance by the students

Diocese, Rev Bishops of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Raiganj, the priests, Sr. Marija Brizar, our Superior General, Sr. Elsit, General Councillor, Sr. Valsa Thottiyil, Provincial Superior, North East Province, Sr. Celine Antony, the first Provincial of the new birthing India East Province and her team, to the Altar.

Each of these dignitaries was welcomed with vermilion, i.e., sandalwood dot on their foreheads. The Rev Bishops were garlanded while the main celebrant, Bishop Vincent was welcomed also with an Aarti, i.e. waving in a circle a plate of flowers incense and flame, an Indian tradition of honour and respect paid to a dignitary or to God. An atmosphere of joy and gratitude was experienced by all those gathered to attend the function and to pray for the new Province.

The text chosen for the Holy Eucharist was from Prophet Ezekiel, Chapter 17: 22-24, "From the top of the cedar, from the highest branch I will take a shoot and plant it myself on a very high mountain. I will plant it on the high mountain of Israel. It will sprout branches and bear fruit and become a noble cedar. Every kind of bird will live beneath it, every winged creature rest in the shade of its branches. I, the Lord, have spoken, and I will do it."

This promise places the entire event of the erection of the new Province in the Biblical context with the Lord's own initiative of planting it, His assurance of letting it bear fruit, of tending it to remain noble and of it being a shelter to all.

Sr. Valsa Thottiyil, addressed the gathering on the importance of the day for us Holy Cross sisters. Sr. Valsa briefed the gathering of the founding of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross at Ingenbol, its start in India, the challenges faced by our heroic missionary sisters who dared and braved sickness and death not giving up but remaining true to the founders' spirit. The growth as well as the development of the Holy Cross mission of compassion in India

from 1894 up to the present time was given in a nutshell.

She did call attention to Sr. Sigrid Vogel, the first Provincial Superior of India, a valiant missionary of far reaching vision, great leadership, large heart and apostolic fervour under whose leadership the Congregation came to be known, appreciated and greatly sought after from every corner of this large continent.

From 1985 the leadership of the Indian Province was handed over to the Indian sisters and by 1991

the Indian Province branched out into 3 provinces. She explained with facts and figures the growth and development of the Provinces. India East Province is the 5th Province in India.

Sr. Valsa Thottiyil then surrendered the new Province, its leadership team and all the sisters to the Triune God. Thereafter she requested Sr. Marija Brizar, Superior General to address the gathering and to announce the Erection of the new Province and to commission the Office of the New Provincial Team.



Solemn Eucharistic celebration with Bishop Vincent Aind

Sr. Marija Brizar greeted the gathering in the local tongue affectionately “Jesu pranam” in Bengali and Jesu badai in Nepali and gave a glimpse into the Holy Cross Mission in India.

“We hurry anywhere, where human need calls us to be.” These words of Mother Maria Theresa, the co-foundress of our Congregation, came true 125 years ago, when on November 18, 1894, the first four daring missionaries set foot on the Indian soil, at Bettiah, in Bihar, North India. The human needs of that time were, very specially the orphans and the girls without care and education. These needs urged the sisters to respond and plunge into action. Now – 125 years later – the presence and the mission of our sisters are spread out in almost all parts of India. The spirit of our Founders is alive and active among us. We try to translate it into our times and needs.

After which she read out the ‘The Decree of the General Administration about the erection of India East Province,’ and the ‘Commission of Office of the Provincial Superior and Councillors.’

The offertory procession was symbolic with shawl and key, soil



Handing over of the decree of appointment by Sr. Marija Brizar, Superior General

brought from the places where the India East Provinces has establishments, saplings, burning candle, Constitution of India, Bread and Wine, offered along with meaningful prayers.

At the conclusion of the Liturgy the Superior General put on the new Provincial Superior the shawl and handed over the key offered at the altar signifying the new Provincial’s office. The new Provincial and Councillors were garlanded and given a burning candle each by Sr. Elsit, General Councillor. Sr. Elsit explained the meaning of the German script on the candle, ‘God’s love knows no bounds.’

Bishop Vincent Aind, waved 3 times the camphor flame, as a symbol of the Holy Spirit, over the heads of the New Provincial Team invoking the Holy Spirit. There was the solemn blessing by all

present extending their hands towards the New Provincial Team. The statue of Mother Mary, a gift from the Mother House was handed over to India East Province with a message delivered by Sr. Marija Brizar and the Bishop Clement blessed the statue.

The new Provincial Superior Sr. Celine Antony expressed her sentiments of gratitude to God, to our major Superiors who played a great role in the erection of the new Province and to those present at the occasion.

A felicitation ceremony followed with a prayer dance by the students of Holy Cross School, Sonada, on the love, kindness and justice of God experienced by humans to cross over the storms of this earthly life. The prayer dance ended in the typical Indian traditional greeting, wishing all humans peace, happiness and harmony.

The Students of Holy Cross School, Tadong, presented a Nepali Dance titled 'Gao ko chori'-the rustic girl, reminding the eco-spirituality of St Francis of Assisi,

and our present Pope's exhortation on the same theme. These village girls living in the lap of nature feel a part of it and enjoy the beauties and bounties of nature. Holy Cross School, Rajganj presented a Bangla dance, 'Hamarkholohawa,' our open air.

In the footsteps of our holy father St. Francis of Assisi, our students promote eco-spirituality, danced in gratitude for the blessings and bounties of lady Nature in the atmosphere around.

The Master of the ceremony, Sr. Merlyn wound up with these words: an attitude of Gratitude indeed shows the altitude of the mind and the heart which are moved by tender acts of love and thoughtfulness. Hence much remains unsaid for the caring hearts of those present to feel and sense.

The program of the day concluded with a fellowship meal. All the Superiors of the new Province were given a sapling each, to plant and to take care of as a symbolic act of planting and caring for the new Province. All what is said and done boils down to this:

In the Cross of Christ is victory.

The Cross of Christ is our Standard.

In this Sign we move forward, to live and proclaim
His message of Love and Compassion to the
North eastern parts of our Motherland.



The newly appointed Provincial Leadership. On the left: Sr. Sherin Jose Kalathiparambil, Sr. Grace Mary Thockanattu, Sr. Theresa Dorjee, Sr. Benny D'Cunha, Sr. Celine Chemmanamadiyil

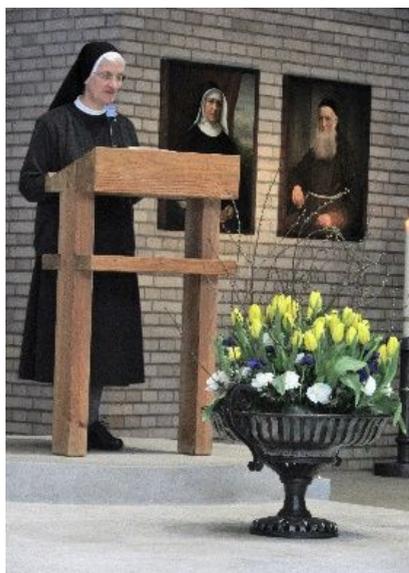
Celebration of Merging of the Mother Province and the Province West Switzerland into the Province Switzerland

Sr. Eva Teresa Zanier, Provincial Leadership Ingenbohl

Changes have many faces. Thorough and process-based considerations were made before the Mother Province Switzerland and the Province West Switzerland were merged into one province. The celebrations took place in Ingenbohl and Fribourg.

The celebration in Ingenbohl took place on 15 February 2019, on the 154th Death Anniversary of Father Theodosius. I hope that he would have had great joy in the mixing of different languages, cultures, mentalities, sisters and guests. Since many of us took part in the celebration and therefore experienced the day themselves, I give only very few personal impressions, but above all quotes from the speeches and sermons, and instead let pictures speak that say more than a thousand words. The motto of the solemn Holy Mass celebration on the hill was "Journeying together trusting in God".

Sr. Marija Brizar began her address with the words "**It is sealed** - today we are celebrating the merging of the Mother Province and the Province West Switzerland into the new Province Switzerland. In November 2016, the two provinces embarked on a two-year process to prepare a



Sr. Marija Brizar, Superior General

good future together. An intense journey has passed with many reflections, consultations, clarifications, preparations. Last but not least, it was a path of faith, of openness, of attentive listening to one another, of readiness to let go and to open oneself to new

possibilities. About this way we could use the words of Father Theodosius: 'Trust, and God leads you.' Today, on the death anniversary of Father Theodosius, we come together to thank God for this intensive process, which led to a good end, at the end of which there is a new beginning." She concluded her address with the words: "It is sealed. It is true."

At the end of the solemn Holy Mass, Sr. Tobia Rüttimann presented Sr. Louise-Henri Kolly with a candle with the image of the tomb of Mother Maria Theresa with the words:

"I am handing you this candle as a sign of belonging together.
A candle - a province.
May the light of Christ accompany our joint steps."

In his homily, **Martin Kopp, the Vicar General** drew attention to another side of the merging. "If I think about it correctly, the merging meant renouncing what has been one's own so far. I don't think that would cause everyone to cheer.

I think especially of the smaller partner, the Province of French-speaking Switzerland. It is more than understandable, even though this day is marked by much regret: Because being independent

released a lot of energy, allowed original and unique things to grow. I have been told how in French-speaking Switzerland a sense for emergencies - for the needs of the time - has thrived and developed."

Already during the solemn Holy Mass, the two languages were blended into a harmonious whole by the efforts of all the participants. A variety of encounters in German, French

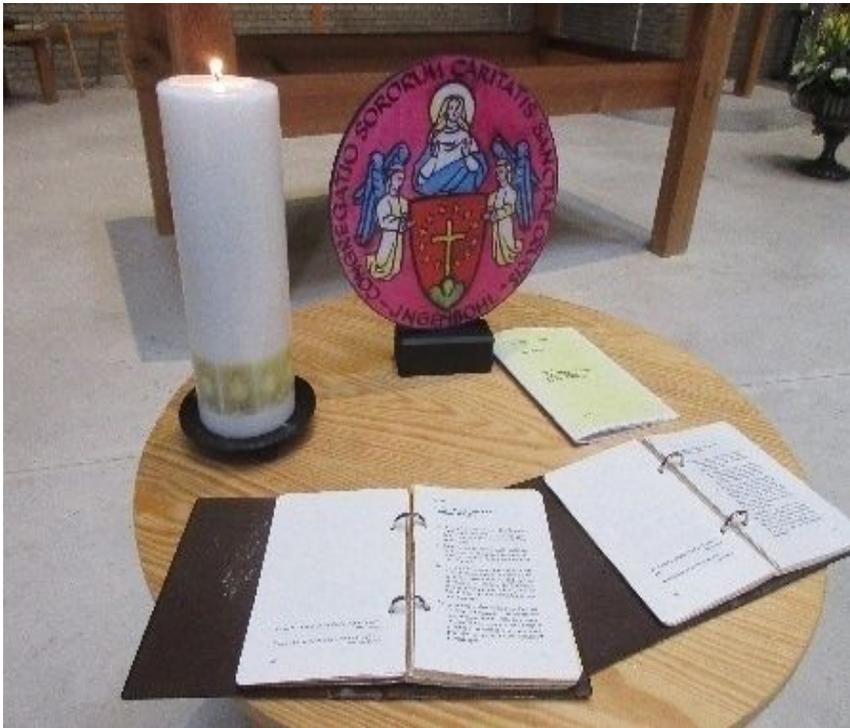


Weaving frame with a started piece of fabric: Symbol for existing and future relationships

and Italian were then possible at the aperitif and lunch together in the various refectories.

In Fribourg, the feast was celebrated the following day, **16 February 2019**. In part it deliberately had the same elements as in Ingenbohl, but of course there were also greater and lesser differences, and again

and again the French charm broke through in between. In Fribourg, during the offering, in addition to bread and wine, a weaving frame was carried to the altar with a partially finished fabric as a symbol of the relationships that were newly woven and be further woven. In Ingenbohl, the French and German-speaking Constitutions, the Sisters'



Signs in front of the altar: a candle, the emblem of the Institute, constitutions in German and French, the sisters' new catalogue of the Province Switzerland

directory of the new Province Switzerland and the candle with the image of the tomb of our Mother Maria Theresa were carried to the altar. In Ingenbohl, three singers of the group "Lesarmailis de la Gruyère" delighted the guests at the aperitif and lunch. In Fribourg, after lunch, the guests could marvel at the performances of a group of children in traditional costume from Schwyz.



Group of children in traditional costume of Schwyz in Fribourg



Three singers in traditional costume of Gruyère in Ingenbohl

In his homily, **Paul Frochaux, the main celebrant in Fribourg**, spoke among other things, of the invitation to accept each other, of the invitation to joy. This was especially true for a fusion, for a new beginning. How different coloured yarns are united in the same weaving piece, we have to develop and strengthen the links that unite us. He also emphasised that we should not forget that God is the one who weaves.

"By the voice of Saint Paul we allow ourselves to be comforted by agreeing with each other. Further, we receive the invitation to welcome one another as Christ welcomed us for the glory of God. He also invites us to joy. This word is particularly suitable for a fusion, for a new beginning. As yarn of different colors is united in the same fabric, you will strengthen the bonds that already unite you. If we are humble workers, the loom, our organizations, our projects, then we will recognize the Lord as the weaver."

At the end of the solemn Eucharistic celebration in Fribourg, Sr. Louise-Henri Kolly presented Sr. Tobia Rüttimann with a bowl of **flower bulbs** with the wish that they should grow, blossom and flourish, so that mutual appreciation, the



A bowl with flower bulbs, sign of growing and blooming

successful approach to one another and our willingness to understand one another beyond language barriers may grow, unfold and bear visible and invisible fruit.

After the common Vespers, Sr. Marija Brizar and the General Councilors thanked Sr. Louise-Henri, Sr. M-Ancilla, Sr. Marie-Agnès and Sr. Danièle for their tireless commitment as Provincial Leaders in the past years and for their great commitment in the Province West Switzerland.

May the light of Christ accompany our joint steps,
 the piece of fabric with the different coloured threads be further woven.
 May the signs of existing

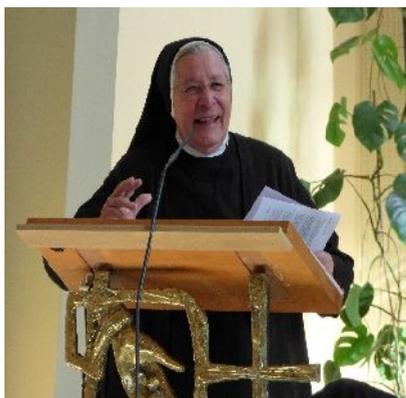
similarities increase, the flower bulbs grow and blossom!

Prayer of Blessing by Sr. Louise-Henri Kolly, Ingenbohl:

Dieu de toute consolation, toi, notre avenir, bénis nous et garde nous.

Accompagne-nous de ton amour qui nous porte et nous appelle. Fais briller sur nous ton visage, aie pitié de nous, car c'est ta bonté

qui crée la vie nouvelle. Tourne ta face vers nous et donne nous ton salut. Pose ta main sur nous et nous sommes bénis.



Sr. Louise-Henri, former Provincial Superior of West Switzerland and former Superior General

*God of all consolation and all
promise
bless us and protect us;
accompany us with your love,
that carries us and challenges us;
let thy face shine upon us
and have mercy on us,*

*for your goodness creates new
life;
turn your face to us and give us
salvation;
put your name on us,
and we are blessed. (Christel
Voß-Goldstein)*



General Leadership and former Provincial Leadership of West Switzerland. Back row on the left: Sr. Anna Affolter, Sr. Dorothee Halbach, Sr. Marija Brizar, Sr. Louise-Henri Kolly, Sr. M. Ancilla Anderrüthi, Sr. Verena Maria Oberhauser, Sr. Elsit Ampattu. Front row: Sr. Sheeja Kolacheril, Sr. Danièle Perrier, Sr. Marie-Agnès Frossard, Sr. Lucila Zovac

Journey with God and for God

Sr. Mirjam Ferak, Mala Loka, Slovenia, Province Europa Mitte

The Holy Cross Sisters have been working among the people of Slovenia for over 100 years. They are interdependent and collaborative in their work, and share life and faith with each other. Sr. Mirjam and three women from the convent's surroundings tell us of their experiences.

The words of our blessed mother M. Theresa "With and for God you can do many things", was paraphrased by us to formulate the motto for the **100 years jubilee of Holy Cross Sisters in Mala Loka**: "Journey with and for God". Our community celebrated the feast with guests and villagers on 9th September, 2018.

It is a long, gracious time in which 140 Holy Cross Sisters were on the way with the people of this small village, and still are today! From the very beginning, the Holy Cross Sisters were closely connected with the villagers and the people from the surrounding area: as nurses, they cared for the elderly and the sick, at the time of the famine the sisters came to help, in the sewing room they produced beautiful traditional headdress costume, vestments and bed linen for the group of customers.

Before the 2nd World War, the sisters also accompanied young women, organizing and leading

numerous retreats in the winter months, in which up to 300 girls and women participated each year. During the 2nd World War, Sr. Ancila Možir, a nurse was known as "the doctor" far and wide. She saved many sick, injured, and also saved the life of the wounded in the war.

In the post-war period, the sisters were able to renovate the convent with the help of good neighbours. A part of the house had suffered great damage from fire during the war, by the partisans. The new political situation in 1950 - communism - brought a change in the field of activity of the religious communities in Slovenia. The sisters had to hand over their work in the hospitals and schools to other hands, and then devoted themselves more to pastoral work.

The recollection days for girls were organized in our convent in 1972. During the school holidays they spent some quiet days in the convent:

prayer, meditation, exchanges with the group and with the sisters shaped these days, so that the young girls were strengthened for their future life. On many such recollection days I could work together and accompany the young women.

Drawing on my experiences I was able to conduct my pastoral work within the parish "Grad", where for ten years I established and maintained daily contact with children, young people and adults in religious instruction and choir conducting.

In 1994, I returned to convent Mala Loka. I took the responsibility as catechist in the parish "Ihan", where our convent is located, and conducted religious instruction. The little ones from 7-9 year old were entrusted to me. Weekly meetings in the religious classes brought us ever closer, and so I was able to lead them carefully to Christ. Through the children I also got in contact with the parents: at parents' evenings, during Mass arrangements and preparations of their children for the Holy Communion and Confirmation.



Church choir Mala Loka, Sr. Mirjam at the organ

In 2002, I was entrusted with the leadership of the children's choir in this parish. The children and parents got to know our convent and also the community through the Mass arrangement of the children's choir, e.g. at the feast of patron saint or at a religious profession. After such a celebration I heard from a child: "Now I know where you live- but you have many sisters!" Through the encounters with the sisters, they soon became more interested in convent life.

Apart from three years during the war, the sisters' community in Mala Loka always had a chaplain - even today. Visitors come from nearby villages, especially on Sundays and feast days, to celebrate the Holy Mass with us. From the beginning there was also a sisters' choir in the convent, later the women from the village joined them. In 1994, I took charge of the choir direction in Mala Loka. Every week 12 singers, two of them sisters, rehearse for the Sunday Mass. There are also three instrumentalists in the choir who delight us with their music on the feast days.

For ten years I have also accompanied a Bible group that meets in our convent. A couple,

two mothers and two widows form a prayer community. We share not only the Bible, but also our joys and sorrows. We take all this in spontaneous prayer before God, and "look at Him from whom all strength comes."

In my journey with people, I am richly rewarded: with trust, with loving surprises, with helpfulness, with gratitude and benevolence, but also with challenges. In the eyes of the children, in the liveliness of the youth, as well as in the trembling hand of the elderly, I am able to discover His trace of love which He left for me with His promise: "I am with you always, to the close of the age."(Mt 28:20)

Three reports of women's experiences

Maja Lazar from Ihan writes: "Since my childhood journey with Holy Cross Sisters"

My first contact with the Holy Cross Sisters goes back to my childhood, when I started religious education in the elementary school, at my home parish Ihan. Sr. Terezija and Sr. Mirjam conducted the religious instructions there. I very much enjoyed going to the class. Later I took part in the recollection days



Maja with Sr. Januarija

for girls in Mala Loka convent. The sisters welcomed us with joy and we soon felt at home in the convent.

For many years I sang in the children's choir, which Sr. Mirjam had already led at that time. I was also able to help her, as I accompanied the choir on the organ. I like very much the beautiful children's songs: they have brought much inner joy and peace into my heart and led me ever closer to God. When I attended nursing school, I often visited the sisters. I loved the good tea in the convent. I kept good contact with the sisters as well. Often I helped the sisters at work in the kitchen or in the

garden, where there was a lot of opportunity for chatting and laughing. Now and then I was allowed to play the organ for hours in the chapel. Another time I prayed vespers with the sisters.

During my study time there was not much contact with the convent. Meanwhile I got married and have two children. But the Lord led my way beautifully back to the convent: The sisters were looking for help for nursing care and so I was allowed to take up this task in the convent in September 2016. Although the work is exhausting, I like to be there for the old sisters and help them. At the same time, I am blessed with inner peace and quietness. I know that the sisters accompany us with their prayers, and this also is an incentive for me personally to strive every day to become an ever better woman and mother of three boys. In this way, I can also accept more difficult situations, following the example of Jesus who sacrificed himself for us on the cross.

Mirjam Starin from Mala Loka narrates: "Being with the Holy Cross Sisters on the way"

Since their arrival in Mala Loka/Slovenia, the Holy Cross Sisters have been closely connected with the villagers. In



Trio Zarja: Mirjam, Estera, Debora

these years, the sisters have done a lot of good for its inhabitants as well as for the village Mala Loka. Even in the time of great difficulties during and after the war they did not leave us. That is why it is right, now that their youthful strength has diminished, we come to their aid and thank them and repay them for all the benefits in which we have participated.

Our family has had special contact with the sisters all these years because we are neighbours. This contact has changed through different periods. In the time of the renovation of the convent building, our paths were very closely connected. Each member of our family has helped the sisters according to one's own strength: by tidying up the building, moving the furniture and books, preparing the park and the green areas ... Since I was unemployed at that time, I helped the sisters to build

up the archive and the chronicle, as well as to do the household work. We are always happy even now to help the sisters, where and how they need our help.

After the renovation of the convent, our relationship with the sisters has not diminished, but is getting stronger every year. Holy Mass plays an important role. We are also happy to participate in organizing the Holy Mass through reading, singing and playing the guitar. This connects us not only with the sisters, but also with the other people who attend the Holy Mass. During these years many new friendships have developed among us.

We will always be grateful to God for calling the Holy Cross Sisters in our midst and thus enriching our lives. I hope that we will be able to stay together for a long time to come.

Magdalena Pirnat from Pšata, describes "Our neighbours - the Holy Cross Sisters"

Our family has long been connected to the Mala Loka convent: our parents and grandparents have already attended the Holy Mass there. As a young family we have grown together with the children in relationship with the convent.

During the family walks, the Holy Cross Sisters observed with interest the growth and development of our three daughters. Sometimes we also met during Holy Mass in the convent chapel. Our daughters liked to visit the convent garden with their grandmother. Since our eldest daughter Debora started to

teach religion, we regularly attend Holy Mass in the convent. Later she liked to work as an altar clerk. All our three daughters also enjoyed singing in the choir, doing Mass readings, playing instruments and taking part in the celebrations.

We parents first observed this from a certain distance and were



Magdalena at the animation of the sisters

increasingly pleased that our daughters felt so at home in the convent. We noticed that the sisters followed their paths and activities with interest, but later on also their new goals in life. The inner joy and openness of the sisters have significantly influenced the character of our daughters, for which we are extremely grateful. Our whole family feels a strong spiritual support in them, because we know that they pray for us and accompany us in this way.

The regular meeting in the convent chapel also connected us with other families of the Mala Loka altar community. A little out of habit, but mostly because of the inner connection in prayer, we regularly attend the Holy Mass in this chapel, which we experience as a safe place where we can surrender to God's protection. The cross in the convent chapel has become so familiar to us that nowhere else have we felt so at home as at Holy Mass in Mala Loka.

Ten years ago our daughters told us that Sr. Mirjam was going to start a Bible study. My husband and I have long wished to delve more deeply into the Word of God. That is why we both joined the Bible group. I feel the members of the group greatly trust and support



Palm Sunday in Mala Loka, front on the left Sr. Mirjam

each other. Lectionary reading is also very popular in our family. That is why this year during the Bible Week our whole family actively participated in a mini Bible marathon in Mala Loka. The event was opened by our grandmother, who introduced herself as the oldest reader (93 years old) that evening.

Six years ago our daughter Estera got married in the convent chapel. The celebration was small but unforgettable. During this time we became even more closely connected with the sisters, because they gladly made their rooms available to us. The good neighbours with whom we meet regularly at Holy Mass or in the Bible study were also a great help. I believe that we have connected

ourselves with the neighbours especially during the renovation of the monastery, because Sr. Mirjam gladly let us participate in the development of the renovation.

At the same time, our family also underwent an important change: the sisters decided to rent the old house belonging to the convent to the young couple. May God

reward them for this decision, because it has given our newlyweds a truly pleasant home under the protection of the convent! We have almost completely renovated the house. The work we did together brought us very close and helped to deepen our relationship. May God lead the young generation on their new paths!



Religious instruction by Sr. Mirjam

Every year I am glad to work as an animator with elderly sisters on Saturdays. Sr. Andreja introduced me and helped me to prepare a room for me. Now I meet with Sr. Rozka, Sr. Lea, Sr. Terezka, Sr. Alojzija and Sr. Katarina once a week. We get to know each other better and better. We rejoice, trust and support each other. All the sisters also do the housework together. I experience them as my sisters, mothers and grandmothers. It is simply beautiful with them. I am happy that each sister, according to her strength, participates as much as possible in different exercises: physical movements, rhythms, games, drawing, finger alphabet, etc. They are interested in learning, in the world and in what

is happening around them, and they have really kept it in themselves. I am very grateful to them for recommending us to God in prayer.

I am also in the convent on Wednesdays, as I conduct individual religious instruction for a boy for confirmation. He is not able to attend classes with his classmates. Sometimes we go together to the chapel, where he offers his life on the altar, as it were. In this pleasant environment, this boy loves to learn, pray and talk. Of course I have to thank the Holy Cross sisters again, who are willing to give me their rooms for religious education. May God reward them! We can only thank them with our commitment and our help.

Journey with the People on "Nisch Day"

Sr. Margareta M. Brenner, Hegne, Province Baden-Württemberg

The word "Nische" in German stands for a small protected area in which one can stay and unfold. This is exactly what the sisters of Hegne are interested in when they offer "Nisch days". The sisters responsible and some participants talk about their experiences.

Eighteen years ago, a former fellow sister had set into effect the idea of inviting people to Ulrika House for a day of contemplation and inner strengthening. She gave this day the name "Nisch Day", inspired by Sr. Ulrika Nisch. The name "Nisch" was intended to point out that we need niches in our everyday lives where we can unwind.

From the beginning, Sr. M. Bonavita, and a sister from Ulrika House have been organizing the days, for seven years with Sr. Margareta M. In the following we report on our experiences:

As the theme of each meeting, we choose one word of Holy Scripture that accompanies us throughout the day in prayer, in silence, in Bible sharing and in the common lunch break.

At first, these days were organized once a month during the winter half. Since the demand became so great, we began offering this twice a month for some time now. The growing

number of participants (20 on average) and the positive feedback show that the Nisch day meets a need of our time and that we can reach the people in their life situation with our offer.

The participants are very open-minded and grateful, especially for the impulses on the Word of God. They feel these to be down-to-earth and related to their everyday life and discover in them a personal source of strength.

Many participants - young and old - come regularly and feel at home



Left: Sr. M. Bonavita, right: Sr. Margareta M.

with us. Those who join us for the first time have experienced themselves as cordially received. This contributes significantly to a relaxed and happy atmosphere. Sometimes genuine friendships develop among the participants.

For us it is an enrichment to be on the way with the people in faith. To sense that people return to their everyday life strengthened and happy, encourages us to

prepare and carry out the Nisch day with all our strength and joy.

Let participants get a chance to share:

For me, Nisch day has been a time of retreat for years, a time out from everyday life and its demands on me. I can be here as I am, can say what moves me and let me be loved by God, by the sisters who live



Sr. Benedicta M. welcomes the participants

here, and by the people who come here. The encounters here are appreciative, benevolent and encouraging. The impulses to the Bible texts that we receive here are strengthening, very human and true-to-life and not at all elevated, but much grounded. That is why I am always anxious not to skip any Nisch day. I love these times of Bible study, silence, prayer and encounter.

Regina S

Since the beginning of the Nisch days I belong to it, and every time I meet people who, like myself, share their personal concerns and joys with Sr. Ulrika on Nisch day, close the "everyday shops" and unlock the inner "shops", pray together, sing together, observe silence, eat our provisions brought along in the pilgrims' room and have a Bible exchange. This living community gives me deep confidence and hope that I am never alone.

Christiane B

In 2014, after Hegne became my new home, I attended the Nisch Day for the first time. Always searching for people who believe and ask for God, for exchange, for

God's word itself and also for time for retreat and prayer, this offer of the convent touched me directly. And - since then impressed - I now come regularly. For me, the Nisch day is a filling station for the soul. It gives me impulses and "concrete thoughts" for the development and maturing of my faith and brings me together with people who have led very different paths, but are looking for the same thing. People with valuable thoughts inspire me anew. Where Jesus is the centre, the denomination plays no role. The approach to the Word of God that I would take home with me on Nisch day are all treasures and have helped me to love the Bible even more, to be even more fascinated by its message and to get to know its diversity and significance even more deeply! Thanks be to God that there are people who are a blessing and we may follow HIM together.

Linda S.

Nisch day - the very special day

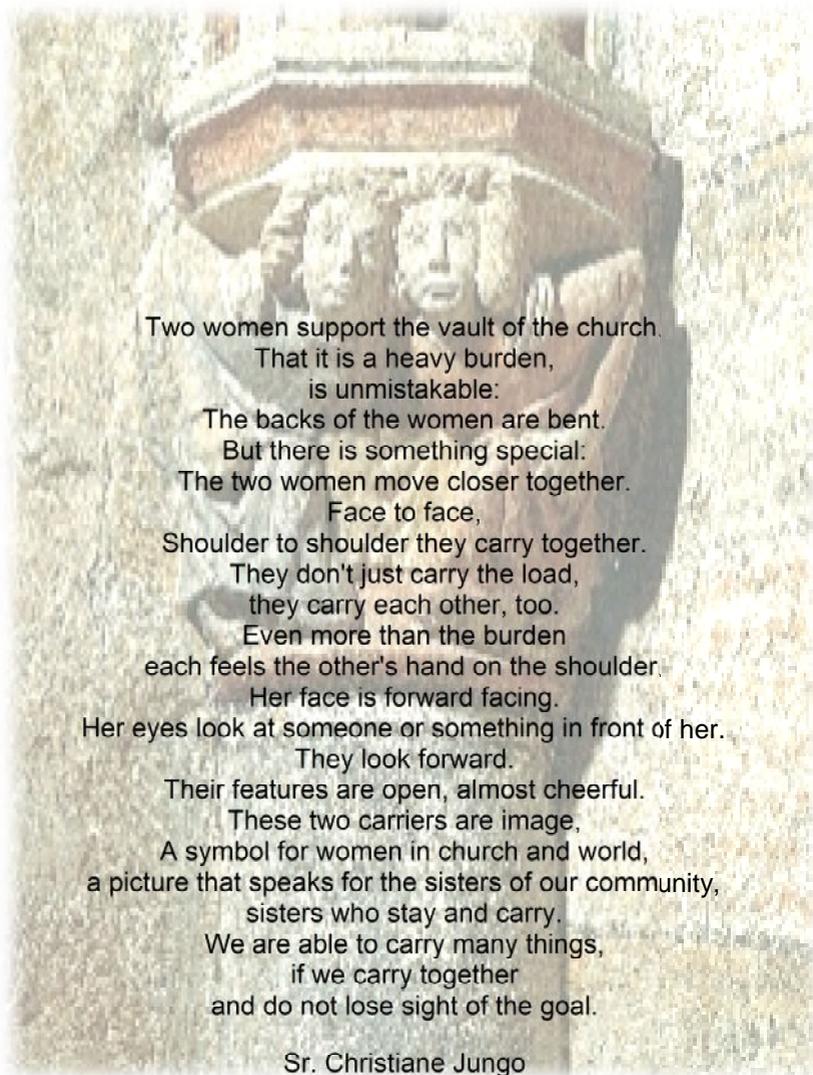
Sometimes there's a day like this, I'm particularly fond of. My heart is drawn there, there my mind, incessantly towards Hegne.

Here I meet dear people,
here I find peace,
here I stand with Jesus in
"you and you".
There is the place where I find
love and contentment,
all here are completely of the
same mind.
Whether praying, singing or
in silence,
here one can feel God's will.
Only with consolation one may
part from here...
soon is the next Nisch day.
Johann L.



Carrying Together

Thoughts on a column capital in Romainmôtier, 14th century



Two women support the vault of the church.
That it is a heavy burden,
is unmistakable:
The backs of the women are bent.
But there is something special:
The two women move closer together.
Face to face,
Shoulder to shoulder they carry together.
They don't just carry the load,
they carry each other, too.
Even more than the burden
each feels the other's hand on the shoulder.
Her face is forward facing.
Her eyes look at someone or something in front of her.
They look forward.
Their features are open, almost cheerful.
These two carriers are image,
A symbol for women in church and world,
a picture that speaks for the sisters of our community,
sisters who stay and carry.
We are able to carry many things,
if we carry together
and do not lose sight of the goal.

Sr. Christiane Jungo

50 Years Ago, Moving into the New Motherhouse

"Theodosia", Volume 84 No. 2/3, May/August 1969, Pg. 115

On 19th May 1969, after the first stage of construction, the main wing of the new mother house in Ingenbohl could be occupied. The following article had appeared shortly before in "Theodosia". The old Mother house had been constructed by modifications and additions to the Niggschen Hof. Apart from the dilapidated buildings, the lack of space and the lack of sanitary facilities led, after about 100 years, to the decision to construct an entirely new building.



Novices, representing all helpers

After a three year construction period, the building of the future Mother house is nearing completion.

Craftsmen, electricians and others are still busy at work to make the house ready for use by the scheduled date. In the second half of May there will be big "move". A

"cleaning company" consisting of 40 volunteers from different sister's families, has already arrived during Easter week to help with this task. And since the beginning of March, preparations for the move have been underway in the old Motherhouse: a separate committee has been



Old convent

charged with organizing the move. Each piece of furniture already carries a piece of paper - in different colours depending on its intended use - with the number of the future room into which it is to be moved. Other household goods, books, utensils, etc. are packed in boxes to facilitate transport.

This first wing represents only the first part of the future Motherhouse. Therefore a temporary solution has to be created for the rest of the construction period, because not all residents of the old Mother house can be accommodated in the completed new building.

So during the transitional period there will be some inconveniences, as sister would



Old and new construction in winter

try and adjust with available facilities. The younger sisters have occupied three floors of the retreat house. The Provincial Council and a larger group of Motherhouse sisters move provisionally into the Generalate area.



New building close to the old convent



Moving on temporary wooden bridges

But our good, elderly sisters finally find the long-awaited home "St. Anna" in the new wing: two floors with single rooms, their own refectory, a parlour and a small infirmary. The general working

rooms - sewing room, ironing room, laundry, mission department, etc. - will be accommodated in the screed for the transitional period.

And what will happen after the move? - In order to be able to continue building, the old Motherhouse must be demolished. The dilapidation was already determined years ago by responsible experts, and we ourselves had become convinced that a purposeful renovation of the old Motherhouse was no more possible. Surely our far-sighted donors would not have decided otherwise in this situation...



Ingenbohl, western wing after 50 years

Information from the General Leadership

The Formators' Congress will take place in Assisi from 18th to 27th September, 2019. Prof. Fr. Ludger Ägidius Schulte OFM Cap from Münster, Germany, was invited as speaker on the main topic "Personal accompaniment in formation". Mrs. Magda Emerich-Scholliers, Germany, will accompany during the congress as moderator.

From 4th to 23rd November, 2019, the General Visitation will take place in Province Italy with the theme "As a spiritual community journeying with the people". Sr. Marija Brizar and the General Councillors Sr. Anna Affolter and Sr. Dorothee Halbach will conduct the visitation.

Jubilee year 125 years India

The provinces of India celebrate 125 years of the arrival of the Holy Cross Sisters on the Indian sub-continent. On 22nd November, 1894, the first four European Holy

Cross Sisters arrived in Bettiah, in the state of Bihar.

The 'Jubilee Year' was solemnly opened on 19th February, 2019 in the Chapel of St. Theresa in Bettiah, the place of origin, and will end there on 22nd November, 2019.

Ten Sisters from each Indian Province are invited to participate in the closing ceremony. Several bishops will grace the closing Ceremony in order to express their appreciation that the initial motto of the Holy Cross Sisters, "The need of the time is the will of God" has achieved great things and is still alive and present in the commitment of the sisters throughout India.

A meeting of the Provincial Treasurers of the European Provinces will be held in Ingenbohl from 12th to 13th June 2019. The main aim is to exchange experiences and get to know each other.

Quarterly
of the Sisters of Mercy
of the Holy Cross
Institute Ingenbohl
CH-6440 Brunnen