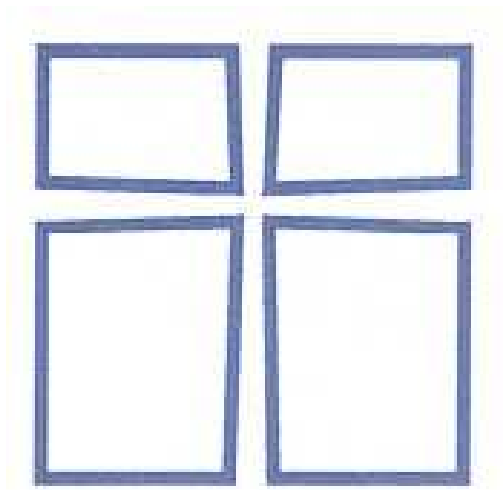

Theodosia



Quarterly
of the Sisters of Mercy
of the Holy Cross
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Pentecost, Westphalian artist, around 1380, today in Wallraf-Richartz-Museum in Cologne

Editorial

We are in the Pentecost season. The cover picture invites us to contemplate it, the first article refers to our motto for the year: "Moved by God's Spirit, going forward with courage". This requires openness and readiness. The circle of disciples with Mary shows us how: Those gathered here are united with one another. It is a looking up and looking at each other. All are receiving and all are giving. In songs and hymns of the Holy Spirit, the many verbs stand out: He animates, comforts, heals, releases, directs... The Holy Spirit moves to action. But first of all there is an act of receiving.

A sermon on the Feast of Pentecost by Richard Baus, the Spiritual Director of the Waldbreitbach Franciscan Sisters, lets us listen attentively and reflect.

What Sr. Jacqueline Barondeau, Superior General of the "Sisters of Divine Providence" in Ribeauvillé, said in a speech on the occasion of the bicentenary of her community, can also be an impulse for us: "What Can We Do for the Church and the World Today?"

When perusing previous editions of the "Theodosia", specifically those from 1918 and 1919, we come across some similarities with our Corona period.

The sisters from the province Croatia accompany young people from the Franciscan movement FRAMA, whose aim is to be a part of the living Church, which also has an impact on everyday life. Sr. Marta Kovač and young people have shared their experiences in: "Being with Young People - Franciscan Youth FRAMA".

The sisters of the Czech Province give us a detailed insight into their present mission. This was prompted by a query from the editors that we haven't heard from them for a long time. All the more surprising is their answer under the title: "Do What Lies in Your Power Day after Day" (Mother M. Theresa).

We hear about an unexpected request to Sr. M. Werenfried Maier at the archive in Hegne: "The Seven-Year-Old Lina on the Footsteps of the Holy Cross Sisters."

In the "Information from the General Leadership" we hear about the confirmation and the new appointment of the Vicariate Leadership in Uganda.

Sr. Christiane Jungo

Moved by God's Spirit, Going Forward with Courage

Richard Baus, Spiritual Director of the Waldbreitbach Franciscan Sisters (Germany)

Sermon on Pentecost Sunday B Acts 2:1-11; Jn 15:26-27; 16:12-15

We can recognize our motto for the year in the title line. Even though the sermon that follows pursues a different line of thought, the basic concern is the same: before one can continue giving, one must receive, before one sets out, one must be moved by the Spirit.

Dear sisters and brothers,
Is it not a bit surprising that on Pentecost Sunday we hear two different Pentecost reports? There was the passage from the Acts of the Apostles that tells us about a house where the doors are opened and people go out to boldly proclaim a very exciting message - and in the Gospel we hear Jesus speaking rather restrainedly about how he will send the Holy Spirit: The Father will take of what is his and give it to the disciples.

In the Acts of the Apostles we hear about a Pentecost with a lot of storm, roar and noise, that whole crowds of people come together to see what is going on there - and in the Gospel there is rather a quiet talk about the advocate whom he wants to send to the disciples, and who will first

of all introduce them into the truth. In fact, very different texts!

One may ask oneself: Which is right? Is Pentecost loud or soft? Is God's spirit a breeze or is it a storm? Is Pentecost when everyone storms out and speaks in foreign languages - or is Pentecost also when everyone first receives a gift and is introduced to the truth so that they are able to bear witness?

Well, I think they both are Pentecost. Pentecost is breeze **and** storm. Pentecost is soft **and** loud. But first one and then the other! As much as we wish for a church that again opens the doors and windows and draws people's attention to God again and attracts everyone, it probably needs first the quiet and tender, the peace and quiet in which we

can **hear** and **receive**. For how are people to pass on something when they have not received anything at first? How can people be courageous witnesses when they have not yet been introduced into the truth, when they do not yet know what it is all about?

For, we can only proclaim God's great deeds in a credible way when we have first experienced them at first hand. And Pentecost wants to grant us this experience: We need to let ourselves be filled with all that God wants to bestow on us. And only then we can pass it on. It is at this point that we begin to proclaim; this is how we can truly bear witness.

I came across an interesting article entitled "Warning of sewer pipe Christians" (Wolfgang Raiblein in the journal for pastoral care, 5.2018). It says: "Do you know what a sewer pipe Christian is? - Bernard of Clairvaux, the great Cistercian abbot and mystic of the 12th century, will enlighten you: 'If you are prudent, prove to be a bowl and not a sewer pipe. The sewer pipe receives and passes on almost immediately, while the bowl waits to be filled. In

this way, it gives what overflows from it without further harm.'"

It makes sense: One can let oneself be filled and filled - like a bowl - by the message of Jesus, and then something overflows as if by itself and reaches out to others; then I pass on something of the faith and love that are in me and of which I myself live. But you can also - like a sewer pipe - just let the Gospel pass through you without being touched and affected by it, without anything being changed in myself. Would that Pentecost be a part of my life!

To be filled and empowered - by the Spirit of Jesus, by the love of God, by joy; and then to pass it on to others: If you could say that about us Christians. But Bernard of Clairvaux was well aware that reality is often different. That is why he also gives a warning: "We have many sewer pipes in the church today, but very few bowls. Many would rather pour out than be poured in; prefer to speak than to hear. Many want to teach what they have not learned themselves before, and act as directors over others while they cannot have power over themselves."

Bernhard wrote these sentences 800 years ago, and they are as relevant today as they were in the past. Therefore: Beware of sewer pipe Christians! Those who speak pious sayings, but where little of the Spirit of Jesus, of the love of God and of joy can be felt: Beware of sewer pipe Christians! Beware of those who teach us and always know exactly what the truth is - without having struggled for it themselves and without really getting touched by the message of Jesus! And beware! Sooner than you think, you yourself could be a sewer pipe

Christian who simply lets the Gospel flow through you without being touched by it, without being inspired or challenged by it. For this reason - Bernhard of Clairvaux puts it this way: "First fill up and then pour out!"

First let Pentecost become a Pentecost in your own life - and then go out into the world! First of all allow God to forgive, give and love you -- and then go out into the world and forgive, give and love. Only then I know what I am talking about, and only then I am really able to give testimony.

What Can We Do for the Church and the World Today?

Sr. Jacqueline Barondeau, Superior General of the Sisters "of the Divine Providence", Ribeauvillé (Elsass)

On 26 October 2019, the Community celebrated its bicentenary. Theodosius had chosen this community to have the first sisters trained there. For this reason our community was invited to the feast. We were represented by Sr. Marija Brizar, General Superior, Sr. Verena Maria Oberhauser, Assistant General Superior, and Sr. Eva Teresa Zanier, Provincial Councillor, Switzerland. From the welcome address of Sr. Jacqueline Barondeau, Superior General of the sisters "of the Divine Providence" we would like to take some passages and share them with all Holy Cross sisters, because the messages apply to us as well.

Being alive today

"It is not a question of being a copy of the first sisters, but of being heirs of a living charism and thus a gift for the Church and the world." With a quotation from a Spanish theologian, Sr. Maria Ardanza Mendilibar, she showed how, despite our limitations, we have a mission to accomplish today: "It is possible that God, who established so many communities in the nineteenth century to alleviate the social needs of the time, needs us today as fragile women, as elderly people who accept and give their lives, committed to building solidarity and fraternal love within and outside their communities."

Sr. Jacqueline continued: "The future is unknown to us, but the important thing is that we are in God's hands and let ourselves be guided by Him. Edith Stein says: 'We do not know where He leads

us to, we only know that He is the one who leads us.' It is not the future that must worry us, but the way we are today, even in old age, that is a sign of God's love.

To prepare for the future, we must ask the question of how we live together and love one another, we must also ask the question of how we love the world, how we open ourselves to its concerns, how we allow ourselves to be formed inwardly by the Word of God so that this gift may flow out to all, as an opportunity of giving ourselves to the end. It is not a matter of becoming 'numerous' again, but of allowing ourselves to be formed by the Spirit of God so that we can be in the Church as He wants us to be, and to fulfil the tasks He demands of us. What can we bring tomorrow (and already today) to the Church, to the society of our time, we, the sisters of the Divine Providence, with our realities, our age, our fragility, our history?



Convent of Sisters "of the Divine Providence" in Ribeauvillé, Elsass (France)

- In a world marked by individualism and solitude, our communities can bear witness to fraternity that is simple and cordial.
- In a hectic consumer society and in a culture of wastefulness, we can speak through the simplicity of our lifestyle, through our minimal consumption and ascetic lodgings.
- In a world of solidarity that does not want to see fragile people, we have the opportunity to care for the poor.
- Against fears, intolerance and rejection of strangers, we have the chance to meet the other, welcome him and show everyone that he is an opportunity, not a problem. We are destined to open ourselves to the world.
- Against sadness, discouragement and loss of meaning, we are able to proclaim the joy of the Gospel.
- In a world full of noise, violence and rejection, we are

able to have an attentive ear and an open heart that listens to people.

- Against stress, excitement and racism, our devotion to God's providence is a source of trust and peace and a sign of God's infallible kindness.
- Against crises of all kinds, ecological, economic and political crises, also in the Church, we have to opportunity to take steps with others of good will to ensure the quality of life, to develop the concept of solidarity, to cultivate what is

free, to bring fraternity to heart, and to carry the world with our prayer.

- To build a world where education is very important, our sympathetic approach to bring out the best in people's hearts and enable them to grow both humanly and spiritually.

Every community and every sister can, in spite of her age, situation, place of living and health, offer all this and thus help to prepare the way for the coming of the Kingdom of God".

Perusing the Pages of the “Theodosia” 1918 and 1919

Corona pandemic has been turning many things upside down; we would like to look at the past to see if everything had gone according to plan. While turning the pages of earlier editions of the "Theodosia", we are amazed about some things. In 1918 the Spanish flu changed everyday life and left strong traces. There were also closed borders that made a General Chapter impossible, and required a postponement.

From the "**Theodosia**" **No. 3, October 1918** we learn that the Spanish flu did not stop at the convent. At the beginning of July, the retreat was discontinued so that sisters from outside could leave immediately, and there were not too many sisters on the hill at the same time. The retreat in Estavayer-le-Lac was postponed to August.

The Red Cross also requested sisters to care for the sick soldiers in barracks and on the border, for example in Pruntrut, near the French border, 1000 soldiers were sick at the same time. Once the flu had subsided, the Red Cross had given a paid vacation of 14 days to the nursing sisters who had helped out.

However, in the first wave of the flu in July 1918, a young sister in her first year of profession in Ingenbohl had succumbed to the pandemic. It is said that the closed coffin was taken unaccompanied to the cemetery chapel. The mother then named a



few sisters who were allowed to attend the funeral.

The "**Theodosia**" **No. 1, January 1919** reports: "It may not be forgotten that in the year 1918 the General Chapter in Ingenbohl was to have taken place, including important elections of the General Leadership for the whole Congregation, as for each individual sister. All preparations had already been made. However, due to the strict controls, several obstacles had to be overcome; it succeeded - except for one. And that one was the decisive factor. The participants of an entire Province could not obtain the

necessary passports to travel to Switzerland, so the General Chapter had to be postponed.”

Editor's note: After the First World War 1914-18, the borders were closed to some extent. The General Chapter was therefore postponed to 1921 and opened by Mother M. Aniceta Regli on June 16. The requisite election of the new Superior General after 15 years was in favour of Sr. Theresia Beck. Sr. M. Agnes Schenk, the future Superior General, became the Vicar General.

The “**Theodosia**” **No. 1, January 1919** also reports that during the second, even stronger wave of the Spanish flu in October 1918, 190 sisters fell ill in the Motherhouse simultaneously. In addition there were also the many sick in the

local communities. The schools were closed. Many teachers were also in the service of the sick, especially in hospitals, where, for example, 23 sisters and candidates were suffering at the same time in the Theodosianum in Zurich. The death of nine sisters and four novices is also reported. Most of them were under 30 years of age and were mainly infected while nursing the sick.

The "Theodosia" concludes the report with the statement: "Thousands, even millions of people have gone through more sorrow and grief than we have, suffered more than all of us. At the end of the year, we have many reasons to thank our loving Father in heaven for all the protection from danger, from further afflictions..."

Being with Young People - Franciscan Youth FRAMA

Sr. Marta Kovačič, Priviaka, Province Croatia

Since 2001 sisters in Croatia have been engaged in the lively Franciscan youth work. In "FRAMA" young people are spiritually accompanied under the guidance of Franciscan sisters or brothers. The various activities have as their goal to be a part of the living Church and to live in solidarity with brothers and sisters.

A word first

As Christians we believe that the Holy Spirit leads the church and makes it ever new, young and alive. When we look at the event of Pentecost, we see that it is an event that has confused many, both from the apostles' point of view and even more so from today's perspective. Although the disciples expected the power from above according to Jesus' promise, they did not know how the descent of the Holy Spirit would take place. From this first event of the Spirit throughout the history of the Church up to the present day, we can discern the action of the Spirit, even if it often goes beyond our imagination and expectations. But one thing is certain: the Spirit of God guides the Church and directs history towards its goal.

FRAMA – Movement in the Church

The action of the Holy Spirit is revealed in a special way through the charisms and gifts he gives to

the Church. Church movements are one of the effects of the gifts of the Spirit of God. Their aim is to discover the richness of the faith which originates from baptism. When this happens in communion with others, the beauty of the encounter with God and with human beings becomes even more evident.

FRAMA is a movement in the Church that began in Italy in the 50s of the 20th century and soon spread all over the world. FRAMA was founded in Croatia in 1992.

The Franciscan Youth, abbreviated FRAMA, as the name suggests, is a group of young people who feel called by the Holy Spirit to live the Gospel in fraternity, following the example of St. Francis of Assisi. FRAMA youth strive to recognize Christ in every person. These are young people who want to build the Kingdom of God with all people of good will and who, with full responsibility, want to carry out their commitments as pupils, students or staff members by

living the values of the Gospel in their own families and in their surroundings.

Why FRAMA?

It may seem strange at first sight why we as Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross work with FRAMA. Isn't there something more appropriate and something more in keeping with our charism to dedicate ourselves to work with young people? The answer is very simple: the Franciscan Rule! As Sisters of Mercy of the Holy

Cross, we commit ourselves to the Rule of the Third Order of St. Francis of Assisi. Our founder himself, Father Theodosius Florentini, was a Capuchin. Therefore, this is a legacy on which our spirituality and charism are based.

Encouraged by a very beautiful and positive experience of working with FRAMA through the Franciscans, our sisters also chose this type of pastoral work. The preparation of the sisters



was long and very intense: openness to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and discernment in prayer, discussions with the Friars Minor, familiarization with ecclesial documents and literature, participation in various FRAMA meetings, testimonies of Franciscan Friars and FRAMA youth...

In 2001 the Franciscan March was organized, the eighth in a row, series, since the beginning right in akovo. It was a strong impulse to start something new, which was at the same time challenging, exciting and very attractive for the youth. There was a feeling of momentum, enthusiasm and excitement.

Contribution of the Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross in their work with FRAMA

The main contribution of the sisters in charge in the fraternities is that they exercise the role of spiritual assistant. "The spiritual assistant is a witness to Franciscan spirituality, and the fraternal bond of religious men and women with Franciscan youth; he/she promotes fidelity of FRAMA to the Franciscan

charism, communion with the Church and unity with the Franciscan family; cooperates especially with youth formation" (Statutes). In addition to the above, work with young people requires the following characteristics of the assistant: to be a mature person and Christian, to express in life an evident sense of belonging to the Church, to have pedagogical skills, to be able to identify and deal with new problems of youth, to have a steady and intense prayer life, to be able to address young people in a positive way, to work together, to be open and creative. The presence of a spiritual assistant is very important. She must be able to listen, to share experiences, to be patient, to participate in discussions and,



especially, to be lovingly present in the lives of these young people. She is called to recognize and promote the faith formation among young people. She must therefore know how to receive and share. The quality of the work of a particular fraternity is largely determined by the spiritual assistant, since he or she is the one who will ultimately direct it. Young people, full of ideas and creativity, are not yet mature enough to act alone without spiritual guidance. It requires a person who knows how to guide in the right way, who has healthy views, who has a clear vision and a clear goal before him/her. Therefore, it requires genuine authority that awakens life in those entrusted to its care and

that skillfully removes obstacles.

The sisters, as spiritual assistants, meet regularly and, with the help of the young people, prepare weekly group meetings, accompany the youth systematically, are available for spiritual sharing and are happy to listen to their ideas, needs and problems. Above all they accompany the young people with prayer.

In addition to the regular weekly meetings of FRAMA members, there are also meetings at regional, national and international level. These are: Pledge ceremonies, spiritual chapters, school for animators, spiritual renewals, the Franciscan march and others.



In their hometowns and in the parish, FRAMA members are also recognizable because they participate in various activities, such as Liturgy and devotions (the youth choirs, the Mass readings, praying the Rosary and the Way of the Cross), charity activities (home visit to the elderly and infirm, fund raising activities for the poor), various activities in the parish, such as preparing the church for the great feast days and so on.

Although FRAMA officially meets once a week, most of the fraternities also have other activities, such as learning to play instruments, various workshops, dance groups, etc. These are all forms of community spirit that create a relationship between young people.

A special feature of the FRAMA activities led by the sisters is the spiritual renewal program in summer on the island Bra im, which has been organized by FRAMA akovo for ten consecutive years.

Personal testimonies

It is best way to hear the personal testimonies of young people who know what it means for them to be a FRAMA member:

FRAMA helps me to build myself as a person and as a Christian. The Movement has taught me a lot, especially about fraternity. We must always be there for each other and help others, as St. Francis did. He should be a model of true community for us. The FRAMA also brought me to be closer to God. I joined two years ago. At that time I was in a stage of my life where I was questioning my faith and was distancing myself from God. The FRAMA members gave me support at that time and with their help I returned to the right path because they showed me true love and belonging. Then I realized how great and precious God is. He gave me new brothers and sisters, and new friendships. He made me a different person who strives to be faithful. I want to continue being a member of FRAMA because I still have a lot to learn.

Klara Mandi

I joined the FRAMA because some of my friends also became

members. The FRAMA has helped me to change myself and to be more active. It is wonderful to take an hour on Fridays to meet and pray together. I want to be faithful to God and for everything that we receive at FRAMA.

Mateo Vukovi

The FRAMA gave me everything: love, fraternity, community, and - most importantly the opportunity to deepen my faith here. Here I realized who God is for me, what He does for me to make me happy. The FRAMA helped me to be sensitive to others. I want to be sensitive to the needs of others and serve them, both in the community and outside. I want to become a better person; better daughter, sister, friend and a FRAMA member.

Antonija Lonar

The FRAMA is a way, and a way to practice Christianity in my youth. It gives us the opportunity to work for God and teaches us to recognize God in the people and things around us. It helps me to draw closer and get to know the spiritual life, which often seems a mystery to young people. Meeting with priests, religious men and women also offers many

opportunities to know something about God and to build a true relationship between man and God.

Mato Mišić

The FRAMA means a lot to me, because when I joined it, I slowly began to understand the importance of faith and relationship with God. It is the first religious community I joined on my own, inspired by a friend. The FRAMA also means a lot to me because there are many people here whom I see every day and they are also my best friends. It provides me with additional strength because I know that I keep growing in faith together with my friends and the people whom I love very much. In FRAMA, we are all one community indeed, and I love it the most when we sing.

Stjepan Bešlić

FRAMA for me means true community and fraternity. Being a member, I can say that I have grown and matured as a person in my religious life. Serving in this community gives me tremendous strength, especially the joy and cheerfulness that I share with other people.

Dinka Šimić

For me, the FRAMA is a second family, where I can always find support and which accepts all of us. The FRAMA is a place for personal and spiritual growth and for deepening our relationship with God, but also a place where we make new relationships and friendships with people from our local fraternity and from all over Croatia. The FRAMA recognizes our talents and helps us to develop and appreciate them. The FRAMA is love, joy, community and peace in the soul, which we get from every meeting, and every common prayer.

Antonija Bradari

For me, the FRAMA is a wonderful experience of life, and a well taken decision. Here I connect myself to my friends and to God at the same time. I am grateful for everything we do here and I believe that the FRAMA has formed me as a person. It also means for me to leave all my problems to God through prayer and fellowship.

Šimun Barberi

As a merciful Sister of the Holy Cross and spiritual assistant of the FRAMA, I would like to express

my personal experience in short and my joy of being a part of this wonderful story. The story is about God's love that guides and leads our lives. In other words, these are visible steps of God in our human history, especially in my life; that I have the opportunity to be enriched by the lives of young people who are open to God. It is truly grace indeed to be part of this joyful community, of genuine encounters and clear motives. I am grateful to God that I am able to accompany the young people on their way to becoming adults and maturing in faith. At the same time, the meetings do not permit me to remain confined to my own little world in all my questions and in all my searches, but they encourage me to find new ways to meet Him who always welcomes us with open arms.

May the Spirit of God continue to guide these young people, as well as us sisters who share with them the experience of faith, so that we may continue to be receptive to His inspirations, as He has been for the last nineteen years, and may the future unfold as He desires.

Sr. Marta Kova i

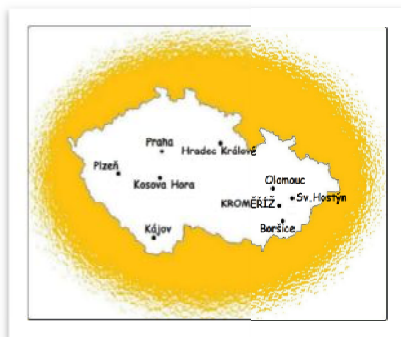
"Do What Lies in Your Power, Day after Day" **Sisters and acquaintances of the Sisters of the Czech Province**

The "Theodosia" 2009, 1 presented how the sisters lived and survived during the communist period. The following pages now bring testimonies and personal experiences of the sisters and co-workers of the Czech Province about their tasks and their mission today, and we are delighted to see such new life. Now, in this time of corona virus, many sisters are engaged in new activities as described in the letter of Sr. Marija Brizar, the Superior General, to all sisters, dated April 21, 2020.

A woman who serves in the church

As we wear the habit, we can occasionally experience situations like the one I have had recently: in the street, a little child asked his mother, as they passed me by, "Who is this, mummy? And the response was, "That's a woman who serves in the church." How rightly the mother said that, I thought to myself. A consecrated person's life is shaped by God, and we religious mostly work in or for the Church. So I'm a woman who serves the Church and, above all, works for the Church.

Thanks to Fr. Theodosius, we sisters go to different places where God leads us, so that we may work there for His glory and for the good of his people. In the Czech Province we dedicate ourselves, according to our possibilities, to pastoral work, teaching in the schools and boarding schools, pastoral care and nursing the sick in hospitals and elderly in nursing homes. We also work with people also work



Places of work of Holy Cross Sisters in the Province Czech Republic

with people on the periphery of society and in various religious institutions. Our elderly sisters support all our activities through their prayers and sacrifices.

The following contributions from the sisters and from those who journey with us show in how many different ways we journey with the people in our province.

It's good that we are here



Sr. Luisa and Sr. Emanuela at the catechesis in the group

A few years ago, I took the responsibility for conducting spiritual renewal for girls from 10 to 17 years old. These take place several times a year in our provincial house in Krom iž. I find it important that in the meantime a team of sisters and young women has been formed who themselves used to come to the renewal programs. They come from the wide neighbourhood. The younger they are, the more alive the convent becomes. I find it interesting how quickly the cheerful activity can calm down, e.g. at worship time and vice versa. I am very glad that many girls stay in contact with us and come to us until they reach adulthood. Perhaps it is because they feel accepted and comfortable with us.

Sr. Emanuela Vévodová, Provincial House Krom iž

The need of the time is

In our Constitutions we read from Fr. Theodosius: "The need of the time is the will of God." Seven years ago, when I began to participate in the spiritual renewal programs for mothers, I was afraid if I was capable of doing it or not. Until then I had been leading renewal program for girls, which has now been taken over by younger sisters. The idea came from an acquaintance and was welcomed by Sr. Miroslava, our Provincial Superior. Since mothers from my hometown were to come for the first renewal program, I requested to be allowed to take over the task and later to give it to another sister. I have now been through 14 of these renewal programs, and next one is due in June.

The renewal programs begin each Friday evening with dinner, with Holy Mass and a talk by a physician. On Saturday the program is as follows: Lauds, talk by a priest, Holy Mass, lunch, talk, sharing, dinner, vespers and adoration. Sunday morning is scheduled as follows: Holy Mass, breakfast, talk, lunch. After that the mothers go home. They are accompanied the whole time by a priest who is available for confession or for a personal meeting. A sister (usually Sr. Emanuela) accompanies us at the table and in the chapel.

The friendship among the mothers continues outside of these meetings. If they have concerns, they contact us by e-mail with the request for prayer, and we also send each other Christmas and Easter wishes.

People from our circle of friends also come to our chapel for Holy Mass and adoration. On Sunday we meet outside the chapel, have a short chat and wish each other a blessed day. In the chapel we also have an older man who after many years found his way to the sacraments. After I had entrusted him to our Lord, I was amazed at what I saw. Sometimes he comes for religion classes. As he lives alone, he sometimes needed someone to listen to him.

In conclusion I would like to say: I consciously place myself totally at the service of our Lord, and I repeat: "What you want, my Lord, not what I want, because only you know what is good."

Sr. Františka Šmajstrová, Provincial House Krom íž

Circle of friends and benefactors

Faith also has a character of dialogue. This is how we see the need for interpersonal dialogue with believers, when we meet during regular Holy Mass in our chapel at Krom íž. We recognize

several only by sight. In the past there was no time to get to know each other and build personal relationships.

Four years ago the sisters came with the suggestion to build a circle of friends and benefactors of the convent. In the beginning they contacted parishioners to ask if they would be interested in regular meetings. To their surprise, they found that the people were eager to come together, to encourage each other and learn from each other, and to grow spiritually.

In time, not only people from the original group, but also younger ones, even entire families with children, for whom the sisters always prepare a children's program, came around to participate in the program. In our community the shyness soon disappeared and mutual trust grew. Our meetings, which usually take place three times a year, are always characterized by great openness. The program is quite varied. We begin with common praise and thanksgiving, with personal petitions, with the prayer for the gifts of the Holy Spirit for our meeting. This is usually followed by a talk by a priest, and then a discussion on various topics. Thereafter we have a common Holy Mass with the sisters in the convent chapel, lunch and then a siesta.



Mothers' meeting in the provincial house in Krom íž

During this time we have the opportunity to meet sisters who also like to participate. The sisters continue with the program in the afternoon. They share their experiences of life and activities, or we discuss other religious topics. We conclude our meetings with a common prayer.

We take home the rejuvenation experienced at the meeting with us. Each one of us is different and experiences faith differently. In this way, the meetings allow us to deepen our relationships and to exchange views on how we are able to fulfil the will of God and our own mission in our families, in the Church and in the society. We

thank the sisters for their prayers and their solidarity. We would like to continue to come to your friendly home and share with you about our life of faith.

Ing. Ji í Jachan, Krom íž

Table tennis tournament in the convent - why not?

For years we invite - members of the Salesian youth movement - on St. Stephen's Day (26 December), young and old from our parish communities to a table tennis tournament at Krom íž. In 2019 it took place for the 17th time. We are extremely happy that since 2015 we have been able to meet for this tournament in the Provincial House of the Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross. The local

dining room serves as a playroom. We swap the dining tables with table tennis tables - and so our meeting can begin.

In 2019, more than 50 players came together, starting with the pre-school children, who held the table tennis bat for the first time, and enjoyed the game very much, up to experienced players at a more mature age. We are always very happy when the Holy Cross Sisters support us in the game. This time Sr. Daniela, Sr. Zdenka and Sr. Emanuela played with us.

Usually the whole families come here and spend a pleasant afternoon together. During intervals and between the individual competitions, you can talk with the sisters and with each other, enjoy the convent atmosphere, enjoy Christmas cookies or sit down comfortably and watch a film.

After dramatic duels, the challenge cup was awarded for the last time to a talented player only twelve years old, who defeated even the experienced adults.

But the most important part of this tournament is definitely not just playing and winning. Some people



Sr. Emanuela and Sr. Daniela in duel

actually come to the convent for the first time in their life and get to know the Holy Cross Sisters, their mission, their work and their life. We are very grateful to the welcoming convent atmosphere and to the combination of sports event and convent life, and we are already looking forward to our tournament in 2020. Until then, dear Holy Cross Sisters!

Salesian youth movement, club Krom íž Martin Stacho and Vlá ka Kapounková

In the office

While working in the office I am often in contact with people. Recently, when I was delivering letters, a nurse told me that she liked the way I always smiled. She's only been with us a short time. So I can see that she is observing her surroundings well. I smiled back, said nothing and just thought that I was not always so cheerful. It is true that we

Christians should see something of the good news of the Gospel, and so also of the Holy Cross Sisters.

It is a distance of about 2-3 mysteries of the Rosary from the convent to the post office or to various government offices in the city. I usually hold the rosary in my hand on the way and meet many people. Recently a man stopped me and told me that a youth group beat up his friend. What should he do? You want him to forgive them? I encouraged him to do so, even though it was difficult for him and his friend and it took time to forgive. The boys probably didn't get enough love from their parents. I told him not to do the same to them as they had done to him. On the next day, I met young people and did not expect them to greet any strangers in the city. But they greeted me with "Good day" and some even with "God bless". I don't know if this is what made me smile. In any case, it strengthened my belief that not all young people are bad, as the young man had told me recently. In each of them I can find at least a little bit of something good.

In the evening I visited a resident of our Holy Cross Home who does not receive many visitors. First she spoke about what she was happy about, how the good Lord gave her a gift in her serious illness. Then I told her about my life story, also about forgiveness, and how I talk to Jesus about my hurts.

These are a few fragments from my everyday life that belong to the great mosaic of God in which we are all connected to each other in our different paths of life.

Sr. Alena Mojáková, Provincial House
Krom íž

Let the little children come to me

I have been teaching at the parish school for eight years. Once a week I teach religious instruction to the children of 1st and 2nd classes. I teach the bigger children in practical subjects (cooking, sewing, cultivation, and workshop) and art in the 6th class. Since December 2019, Sr. Emanuela also has been teaching art, and Sr. Víta leads the children's choir (Schola). The three of us can share our experiences better.

The school is one of the topics that I regularly discuss with Jesus. Each of us is unique and has his/her own language of communication. He is well versed in these languages. One must constantly look for new ways to get to know oneself and others. Since I am very busy, I don't meet the other teachers of the school very often. But I know that I can get advice or information about students from them at any time.

Sr. Old iška Zálezáková, Provincial House Krom íž

I was asked if I would like to lead the children's choir in the parish school. Since I already have experience in singing, playing some musical instruments, and I was with children before, I agreed. The children are very good, they quickly learn to sing new songs and also sing beautifully. My work is my song of praise and I enjoy it as much as learning new songs.

Sometimes I have the opportunity to meet parents of the children. A mother, for example, shared with me her great difficulties in which the family is trapped. It's good to know that besides my job, I also meet people on my way who are in need, and this happens more

frequently. They need our guidance and support.

Sr. Víta Foltová, Provincial House Krom íž

Our journey with seminarians

The Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross have been working in the Archbishop's Seminary at Olomouc for 30 years. We experience sorrows and joys with the seminarians who prepare for their ministry as priests, and we also help each other. Our work here in the past was more extensive: cooking, cleaning up, washing clothes, basically doing everything related to the household in this large building. There are only a few of us here at the moment, so we are not able to take up as many tasks as before.

Our service has more of a spiritual character. During the university examination time we intensively pray together with the students and express our joy at their success. We take part in their feast days through lectern or acolyte services, help with the ordination of deacons and priests. On this occasion we also meet their relatives.

Every year in the seminary there is an altar boy day in which we also participate. Together with many altar boys we celebrate the Holy Mass, enjoy their games and competitions, rejoice in their victories, talk with their companions, with their parents or with the priests. If necessary, we assist them with washing the dishes in the dining room or with cleaning up. We are trying to make a home here.

Sr. Václava Fárková, Sr. Kamila Kostílková and Sr. Martina Tomeková



Sr. Kamila, Sr. Martina and Sr. Václava on the balcony of the seminary in Olomouc

Among the homeless, and those in need of a hospice

It is amazing as I reflect on who is with me on my path through life. I feel like a car on a wide highway - some cars drive next to me, others are there just for a while, and then they disappear. I

perceive that not only am I journeying with other people, but that others are also journeying with me and enriching my life. I am intensively accompanied by my family, where I received the model of the living faith. Then my religious family was added, and finally my "Caritas family", which includes my professional colleagues at Caritas. On the journey of my life there were also countless priests, friends and classmates.

For two years I have been living in the community of sisters in the seminary in Olomouc, so I am also close to our seminarians. Today, when there are few vocations and the Church experiences many scandals, it is necessary to support each other in faith and focus on Jesus, even if our boat is often tossed to and fro in the storm.

In a special way my life is connected to the homeless. I meet them not only in my work, but often on the street in Olomouc. I always greet them in a friendly way and give them a smile.

Last year I came unexpectedly to the outpatient hospice care. The



Sr. Leona in office with her palliative team

politicians in our country are making intensive efforts to establish palliative care for the seriously ill. It is a challenging mission as we lack palliative doctors, nurses anyway. Well, being with the dying is not attractive. The doctors in the hospitals usually try everything medical until the last breath. Patients and dying people often do not even know the truth about their approaching death. Therefore, the Church and Caritas are supporting and promoting outpatient palliative care as much as possible.

Sr. Leona Martinková, Seminary in Olomouc

I want to go to heaven

We cared for a cancer-stricken mother with five children. She was aware both of her serious illness and of the fact that her time would soon be over: she lived alone with her 15-year-old son and her 18-



Sr. Damiána on the way to a sick person

year-old daughter, the older daughters had already moved out. This woman had a great desire to stay at home with her children. The children took turns to serve the mother. But the situation was disappointing. This woman was very grateful that we came to her home, cared for her and devoted ourselves to her children. After a few visits we talked about faith. Above her bed hung a large cross and a picture of Jesus that she herself had painted. She explained that she was a believer; she visited a community of believers and also took her younger children there. But she was not baptized. We shared about being strengthened during illness, about the sacrament of baptism. Finally she expressed her desire to be baptized. I arranged a meeting with a priest right away for the following

evening. The priest came, and after a relatively short conversation, the sick woman said: "I believe that Jesus died for our sins, I believe in God and want to die reconciled, I want to go to heaven. Her faith was simple, but firm and determined. "I can find no reason why I could not baptize you," replied the priest. The mother called her children together so that they could be present at the baptism. It was a beautiful and unforgettable moment. Her face was serene and radiant. We continued visiting them every day, taking care of them and talking to the children. While leaving she always wished to have the sign of the cross on her forehead. Due to the difficult situation in the house, she finally agreed that we should bring her to the hospice. I believe that she met the one she believed in and looked forward to meeting him with great joy.

Sr. Damiána ápová, Hradec Králové

She walks, and how fast!

I would like to share with you an experience with our colleague in our hospice, Sr. Ludmila. I expected that working with her would be limited only to official



Sr. Ludmila at the nursing home

matters. However, she constantly surprises us the way she is actively involved in other areas. As an example I would like to mention our charity run. She literally took part, and how fast she could walk!

Sr. Ludmila was known to me before she was working in the hospital. She was a specialist in wound healing there. Now she is a very popular sister in the residential care and in our hospice. If all sisters should be like this, then thank you very much for such gifts!

MUDr. Barbora Matulová, physician in the outpatient hospice in Sedl any

In the heart of the diocese

I find it interesting that there are sisters in our Province who are engaged in several ordinariates of different dioceses. At the beginning of my mission I felt that this did not particularly correspond to our charism that we should be active in the schools and with the people on the margins. But now I have come to the conclusion that these tasks are also suitable for us.

Right in the first few days when we were in Hradec Králové, a priest visited us. He had passed by the place early in the morning and had seen the light in the Bishop's chapel. He wanted to share with us his joy about the fact that the sisters pray and as a result the ordinariate "lives".

We offer both a spiritual and a natural environment. This is appreciated by many priests, for whom the ordinariate is now not just an office but a "home". Regardless of our works in the house and in the administration, we create life in the heart of the diocese. In our mission we come to know the Church not only as sacred, but also as a living

organism of human community. Today the church is experiencing many hardships and scandals. This is a challenge and a chance for us to give special support through prayer. All of us are in the same ship and we belong to one another. Each of us is a member responsible for the inner richness of the Church. For this reason I am grateful that I can grow here and experience this time with God in the center of the diocese.

Sr. Zuzana Maceková, Hradec Králové

Service in the church

We live and work "in the heart of the Olomouc Archdiocese" and experience our mission as a service to the Church, which today has to face difficult times. We strive to provide a secure background for bishops and priests so that they can carry out their duties well through our joyful and committed service. We cook, wash, pray, arrange various events and visits (e.g. official visits of the Mayor), the Nuncio, the Prime Minister, the foreign guests and the meetings of various groups. When priests fall sick, we provide nursing care for them, take them to a doctor. Our Archbishop as well as the priests are happy that we create a joyful atmosphere and they are grateful for our services. We are ready to



Sr. Jind iška during a music lesson



Sr. Ester und Sr. Miriam in ordinariate

carry out other tasks: one sister teaches religion, another one offers music lessons (flute), we take part in various events, such as pilgrimages with the Curia staff, spiritual renewals during Advent and Lent, guided tours of the Cathedral, singing Vespers, and adoration. People from outside the church also come for the Holy Mass in our chapel. We are happy to receive frequent visits from the sisters and candidates. People from the parish community often come to us, asking for prayer and expecting encouragement. Someone said that it was a joyful and loving place. We also visit some families. Together we strive for unity, for the good fulfilment of the tasks entrusted to us and for openness to the suffering and joys

of the local Church and the people around us.

Sisters from the community in ordinariate in Olomouc

Mission of the Holy Cross Sisters in the Archbishop's Residence in Olomouc

I find the long-standing commitment of the Holy Cross Sisters in the Archbishop's Residence in Olomouc, blessed for the following three reasons:

- Through their ministry they form "the face of the Archbishop's residence", not only for the diocesan Archbishop, his two Auxiliary Bishops and the five priests who come here almost daily on ministry, but also for the staff and many others, including non-believers, who come into contact with the ordinariate.

- The sisters also contribute to the evangelization. Olomouc is full of students and tourists. The sisters are bearing witness to their religious vocation in the post-modern era.
- The third reason is important for their congregation. The environment here is no usual convent, and according to my experience such sisters also find a home here who, for certain reasons, need temporary changes that contribute to their spiritual as well as personal renewal. After a certain time, the sisters are then able to continue their consecrated life in another religious community.

Mons. Josef Nuzík, Vicar General, Olomouc Auxiliary Bishop

I have been working in Olomouc for almost 50 years, and the whole time I could spend in close proximity to Holy Cross Sisters. So I was able to clearly see and experience the benefits of their service. I was able to celebrate the Eucharist with them in their chapel, preach and hear their confessions. I am convinced that their mission in the Archdiocesan Ordinariate is irreplaceable. They pray for the diocese and its

leadership and also for those who entrust their concerns to them. For us priests, they prepare both a spiritual and material background (eating, washing) so that we are able to devote ourselves to the service of the church. The difference between the service of the sisters and the secular staff is very noticeable. I am very grateful to them for their commitment, and I am aware that it is not always easy for them. May our Lord bless them and strengthen them!

Mons. Josef Šich, Olomouc

Touch with the Eternity

We work in the internal department in the hospital located under the Petín hill in Prague. It is a Christian hospital in Prague, which belongs to the Sisters of Mercy of St. Charles Borromeo. All our working days are filled with care, treatments, collaboration with our colleagues, fatigue, meetings with the relatives of the patients through morning and evening prayer for all. Sometimes there are also priests, whom we know, in our hospital. If there is some free time left on the working day, we pay them a short visit, e.g. Fr. Michal, a Franciscan who was recently engaged in pastoral work, became bedridden in a few weeks. We prayed the rosary with him. He hardly ever talked about

his ailments, only now and then he would say, "I never thought that blessing hurts so much." He was able to share with us the difficulties that his illness brought. As he could hardly eat, Sr. Pavla prepared ice cream from Nutridrink for him, beautifully garnished with mint, raspberries or fruit. The portions became smaller and smaller. Fr. Michal



Fr. Jordán and Sr. Pavla



Sr. Thea, staff and students at the hospital at Pet in-Hügel

loved watching the ice cream being garnished.

In the fall of 2019, a 95-year old Dominican friar, Fr. Jordán, was admitted to our hospital. We agreed that we would pray breviary with him and at his place. We could observe how close he was to our Lord, e.g. how he prayed the Our Father together. With such sick and God-orientated priest one feels, as it were, being in touch with Eternity. In these precious moments at his bed we were able to stand under the cross like Mary or John. After our prayer he always thanked us and Sr. Pavla replied: "You are like a living temple." And then, accompanied by his blessing, we went to other sick people. We understand our small help for the suffering priests as a great grace of God.

Sisters from the community in Biskupská Street in Prague, working as nurses

With the help of God conquering evil through goodness

The Holy Cross Hospital in Prague became our place of work shortly after the restitution of goods and buildings that had once

been confiscated for decades and are now being returned to us as neglected). So after 70 years we Holy Cross Sisters returned to our original place of work in October 2019. Two of us work as nurses; one sister is assigned to the office. There are mainly elderly people in the hospital. For some, it becomes a place from where it is impossible to get back to their own homes.

There is a shortage of qualified female employees. As the average age of those so far is high, improvements are being implemented rather slowly. We learn to be patient and forgiving when we introduce new things as well as train and encourage our co-workers. As we work, we must gradually overcome their mistrust as well. Some of the co-workers were exploited by the state and are not used to working well together. Many internal hurts make the whole thing laborious, but every now and then there are also beautiful experiences, for example, the co-workers gratefully remember that the sisters gave them homemade Christmas cakes during Yuletide.

We are confronted here with great material and spiritual poverty, which we try to overcome through our smiles and kind words, and

we are also actively involved in improving the environment of the hospital. It is a challenge for us when people scold, complain or contradict us. We must always learn patience and humility anew. We submit the injustice experienced by our co-workers to the Crucified Lord. He gradually teaches us how to love in a motherly and unconditional way.



Sr. Anežka Marie, Sr. M. Faustyna and Sr. M. Sofie in front of the Holy Cross Hospital

We dedicate ourselves totally to the care of our old and sick patients. A kind word, an honest look or a smile can immediately work wonders. We try to protect their endangered dignity as much

as possible. We hold the dying by the hand and pray with them and for them. We do not hide the state of their health from the family members and accompany them when they are worried or have difficulty in saying goodbye before their loved ones depart from this world.

Our most important task and need in this place is to carry out the works of mercy and to be especially patient in the face of adversity. Together with our co-workers and patients, we are on the way to major changes and improvements. We pray to our Crucified and Risen Lord that we may succeed in this and endure it.

Sr. Anežka Marie Viktorinová, Sr. M. Faustyna Bobková, Sr. M. Sofie Koukalová, Praha - Vyšehrad

The Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross in hospital chaplaincy

For almost ten years, I have been working with women who are pastoral assistants in hospital and nursing home pastoral care. These women understand very well the cross and the suffering of the patients, their relatives and co-workers. They accompany them in their insecurities, in their search for hope, in the questions and



Sr. Tobia as hospital chaplain in the Faculty Hospital Olomouc

answers about the meaning of life, about dying, but also about how they can experience their own faith during an illness.

I was able to meet Sr. Tobia and Sr. Maxmiliána, my colleagues at the Faculty Hospital in Olomouc, who with their great commitment and humility are dedicated to the sick and became my good friends. I like meeting them very much and it is a great privilege for me to serve the sick with them.

Dr. Marta Hošálková, coordinator of the hospital chaplaincy in the Olomouc archdiocese

**"The Lord is my Shepherd,
there is nothing I shall want"**

When we are journeying with our Lord, and with Him we approach



Sr. Marie Goretti attending the Mass in the hospital

the people, we really lack nothing. I can have this experience every day when I attend the patients in the hospital, when I listen to them, when I talk to them or pray with them, and when I bring them Christ in the Eucharist. Then I experience especially His presence, His closeness and His mercy.

I am happy about this and at the same time I am grateful that I can be active in the pastoral care of the sick. I can bring comfort, encouragement, joy, love and hope to every sick person - the hope for a new life! Most of all I can bring new life in them through the Eucharist. It strengthens and awakens new life in people. I was able to experience several times that Jesus through me gives gifts to others and illuminates their way. I am not alone with my weaknesses, but He is there with His strength, power and love.

I believe that I have witnessed a miracle: the recovery of a sick woman through Christ in the Eucharist. She was in hospital in a hopeless condition after a serious car accident. She underwent many surgeries as well as treatments, but all in vain. Without the devices no organ would function. She was in coma. The doctors gave her very little hope of survival. Her husband confided her situation to a sister and she passed it on to me. I met her parents. From them I knew that she was baptized. So I called a priest to give her the anointing of the sick. Afterwards I visited them regularly when I brought the Eucharist to oncology patients in the hospital. I always prayed briefly at her bed, placing a small pouch with a host on her chest and believing deeply in God's power and help.

After half a year the woman began to wake up. Little by little the individual organs began to function. She slowly began to communicate and after another half year she was able to walk and return to normal life. Later I spoke with her a number of times, as well as with her parents, who sincerely thanked us for her recovery. They also celebrated Holy Mass. I believe it is indeed a miracle! In this way the living God works in every sacrament.

I often accompany sick people on their last journey. I invite priests to administer the sacraments, and I have experienced reconciliations with many dying people. While talking to the patients I hear many life stories, tragedies, problems, but also encouragement. We can share the experiences and pray for each other.

Every day I also meet the hospital staff. We sisters present their requests and concerns, as well as those of the sick, as petitions to our Lord during the Holy Mass. I thank Him that He guides us and that we can come to Him and take others along.

Sister Marie Goretti D ímalová, Provincial House Krom íž

New challenges, new ways

I have been working in church organisations for more than 20 years; in the last 15 years mainly as an accountant, finance director and consultant. I met the Holy Cross Sisters five years ago when a solution was sought for the integration of women's orders and congregations into the church structure. Thanks to this meeting, we began to look together for ways to create a church network

for organizations inspired by the idea of being church people in the care of the sick in a good social environment and in spiritual accompaniment.

In 2019, together with a team of experts, we secured the taking over the management of the SDI hospital in Prague. The last occupant used this building for many years almost free of charge, he hardly cared for the area and therefore the hospital deteriorated for years. The negotiations for taking over the management of the hospital were very complicated and lengthy. In the end we succeeded in taking it over. At present, the management of the hospital has been stabilized; the nurses are setting new standards and replacing the existing staff.

During our collaboration, we have managed to establish the basic structure of a network of church health care institutions under the care of the church organization CURAFIDES. These include some ecclesiastical health facilities, for example the Holy Cross Hospital in Žižkov or the Saint Elisabeth Hospital Na Slupi. Through this idea we could make the mission of

the Church and of religious orders and congregations visible (Holy Cross Sisters, Elizabethan Sisters, Sisters of Mercy of St. Charles Borromeo). Now we are trying to save costs through the synergy of individual services (e.g. accounting, laundry, housekeeping, catering). At present, this plan is taking on a concrete shape. We are looking for common ways; we also are collaborating with other church hospitals.

The Holy Cross Sisters are for me a model for proclaiming the Good News without any pretence: they truly seek for Jesus, who is present in every human being. They are even not afraid to take complicated decisions despite difficulties. They are able to own up their failures and learn from them. On the other hand, they are aware that every person and also their congregation has limits that should not be crossed in order not to endanger themselves and others. Therefore I wish that they may tirelessly continue their work and thereby transform the world and the people all around.

Ing. Mgr. Tomáš Petr j, PhD

Simply go the way of the Lord

We have been in Kájov since 2012, when we took over this

shrine from the Sisters of Mercy of St. Vincent de Paul from Munich. These sisters worked here from 1999 - 2012. They saw their mission praying for the reparation of the injustices suffered during the Second World War, because this place is still marked by the violent expulsion of the Sudeten Germans after the Second World War. The sisters also worked together with the community and developed numerous activities for children, families and the aged.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the church and the entire area began to be renovated. The borders were open and pilgrims from abroad, especially from Austria and Germany, streamed into Kájov. The Way of St. James also passes through Kájov to Santiago de Compostela in Spain. Therefore a simple shelter was built for pilgrims. Our assignment includes various tasks: Cleaning up, floral decorations in the church, preparation of the liturgy, opening of the church to pilgrims and tourists. We very often organize guided tours in the church.

In addition, together with members of the parish and the local school, we organize a procession of lights in honour of St. Martin, encounter with St. Nicholas, and prepare live nativity scene... In the parish hall there



Sr. Karmela at making lanterns for the procession on St. Martin's Day

are handicrafts afternoons for children and adults a couple of times a year: before Christmas we make Advent wreaths, before Easter we colour Easter eggs and on Mother's Day we make hearts for the mothers. We also participate in the "Church Night". There are also Vicariate Conferences for priests, catechists and family meetings in the parish.

For several years we have been teaching religion at the high school. One of our sisters is working in the hospital pastoral care in eský Krumlov. From time to time homeless people come to us or people in a difficult life situation. On such occasions, people can get to know us, and as a result, they often approach us when they need support or someone to listen to them or to pray for them.

We strive to follow God's guidance and work for the good of the people. We are there for those who seek. This area is considered one of the missionary areas of our country, where communism still has a strong impact. It seems to me that the words of our founders aptly express our commitment: "Simply go the way of the Lord and seek nothing extraordinary". (Mother Maria Theresa) and: "Trust, God leads you." (Fr. Theodosius)

Sr. Karmela Chromíková, Kájov

Thanks to the efforts of the Holy Cross Sisters in Kájov, life in the town, in the parish and at the shrine is becoming more alive. Many people from Kájov come to the regular handicraft afternoons. The live nativity scene and the procession on St. Martin's Day are also very popular, and the sisters even organize carol singing. You can hardly imagine Epiphany without a carol singing group. The sisters always come up with meaningful activities for children and adults during Advent and Lent.

The Schneedorfer couple - members of the parish

Our construction company, Vidox s.r.o., based in eský Krumlov, carried out the reconstruction of the "Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary" along with the Chapel of St. John Nepomuk in

Kájov in 2018-2019. On this occasion we had the opportunity to get to know the Holy Cross Sisters and to work with them effectively, especially with Sr. Karmela, who was our contact person. The sisters helped us a lot throughout the whole process and tried to accommodate us within their possibilities. Together we solved the various problems that arose during the construction work. Therefore, I would like to thank all the Holy Cross Sisters in Kájov for their willingness and cooperation, without their help and knowledge of the Church we would not have been able to bring these monuments to their present state.

Jan íha, site manager Vidox. s.r.o.

The Holy Cross Sisters in Kájov are proof for our family that faith is still alive and that people of today are still approachable. The sisters not only look after the church and the entire pilgrimage site in Kájov with great care, but they also take care of us parishioners and all inhabitants and pilgrims in Kájov. Their special contribution to the natives is the various events they organize for the parish and for the general public (live nativity scene, plays on St. Martin's Day, singing at the nativity scene). Despite their great commitment to work,

they find time for each of us. They never miss a smile and a few words of encouragement during the meetings. Since we are a young family and we strive to bring up our children in the faith, the sisters in Kájov are making a great effort to help us. They not only take care of the children during the Mass, but also organize many events and activities for them, and above all they are the role models for the children. The children are always looking forward to seeing them and are happy to participate. May the sisters have enough strength and enthusiasm for their strenuous mission! In these stressful times there should be more such oases of peace and joy and we wish God's blessing to all sisters in Kájov.

Ro ovs from Polná, parishioner from Kájov

We have been working with the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross since the beginning of their mission in Kájov. It is hard to imagine life in Kájov without their work, and some of our joint events are already a tradition. A very beautiful tradition is the live manger, which the sisters perform

together with our students in the church every year in the afternoon of December 24. A lot of people come here for that. For the sisters, however, there is much preparatory work: Compiling texts, preparing costumes, directing the play and rehearsals. All the children look forward to the rehearsals, as the sisters always prepare delicious homemade cookies and tea for them. Already in autumn the locals find out

whether there will be a live nativity scene this year too. Likewise the lantern making before St. Martin's Day is very popular, then the procession with the lanterns and also a short skit on the life of St. Martin as well.

We are very happy that the sisters always visit our Easter fair. They also help us by carol singing at the Christmas tree or in the St. Nicholas Church in Boletice.



Live nativity scene in Kájov

To show our gratitude to them, we the parishioners and the carnival procession visit them on the feast of Lucia and Ambrose.

For me, and certainly for everyone in Kájov, it is a joy even to meet the sisters and exchange a few words with them. I could list dozens of examples of our collaboration. Probably all who read these lines may feel that we are very happy to have sisters living among us in Kájov, that they are interested in us and that they fit into our community life.

For the community Kájov and for the kindergarten and the secondary school Kájov Lenka Augustinová, the Directress of the Secondary School and Kindergarten, Member of the Community Council

The love of God was poured into our hearts

In my pastoral work I meet many people, and I accompany many of them in their search for or rediscovery of God's love, and I care for those who are preparing for their wedding or want to baptize their child in the parish. I often meet couples who know very little about God, and our meeting is the first personal encounter for them in a church environment. I am always amazed by their openness and their inner beauty. Some return for a baptism

for their children, some also attend our community meetings or get baptized themselves. I spend most of my time with the catechumens and the newly baptized. Many of them also contact us later when they want to share their worries and joys with us, as we are probably the only practicing Christians they know. And so the number of those, who allow us to sow the seed of the Word of God in their hearts, is growing.

I also go through the streets of Prague at night: I visit women in brothels and also those who sell themselves on the street, most of them because of their desperate financial situation or because they are forced by someone. In some cases they are real victims of human trafficking. These women are grateful for a few moments late in the evening, for understanding words, my words of consolation as well as my prayer. And it always surprises me how happy they are about a piece of paper with a short Bible quotation or a small medallion bearing the Immaculate Virgin. We journey with them, but I believe that some of them overtake us on our way to the Kingdom of God.

Sr. Klára Marie Stráníková, Prague – Vyšehrad

I am very grateful to our Lord that I can be a member of a small ecumenical team, together with Sr. Klára. The collaboration with her is very good. I appreciate her openness to different ideas, her sensitive attention and her great support in prayer. I admire her faithful service, which she carries out even on days when she has completed other very strenuous and tedious tasks before. I am very happy that we are able to sow together the seeds of God's mercy, of love and of tenderness in the hearts of many women.

Lenka Hrušková, Prague

Open gate - Being with people

Greetings to you from Kosova Hora, a village in Central Bohemia! I, Sr. Tereza, work in a small school and I am the Directress of catechesis in the parish. Sr. Ludmila Lukášová, a nurse, visits families within the framework of the outpatient hospice called "Flügel" (wing). We both meet many people every day. Nevertheless, we felt that we were missing something important, namely informal meetings with our neighbours and the inhabitants. As we have been living here for more than ten years, we dared to organize a garden party for the public in our

parish garden. We invited a popular music group and the afternoon was called "Open gate". Everyone had the opportunity to come over, have a chat, and refresh themselves at our place. Our close colleagues helped us. Last year the fourth "Open gate" had already taken place.

Among the many people were also elderly parishioners and even the neighbors. They appreciated the opportunity to meet and have coffee together, otherwise there are hardly any such occasions in our country.

At the last garden party, we also celebrated the first anniversary of the outpatient hospice "Flügel". They praised and thanked the nurses for their difficult but very important work in our area. It is an ecumenical project which receives no financial support from the



Garden party in Kosova Hora

state. Therefore it was possible to financially support the garden party.

In the Czech Republic, one can sense many prejudices against nuns and the church. After such events, we can always be happy about the way people greet us with a smile when we meet each other on the street. They do not need us, but Jesus and his open arms and his very heart. We want to journey with the people, support each other and help them on their way to the Kingdom of God, where the gate is always open and the tables are full.

Sr. Tereza K enková, Kosova Hora

An afternoon in Kosova Hora

It is Monday afternoon and we are on the way to the parish hall in Kosova Hora, not far from Sedl any. Our final goal is the so called atrium, a room on the first floor. Here one finds countless treasures: small tables and chairs, papers, crayons, pictures, cans, nut shells, but also a small altar, cups and small jugs and many more items. All this is so that the children can touch the "church" and get to know the Bible, prayer, liturgy, God, and of course other

children. My daughter Ani ka enthusiastically enters it. I stay in a different room with other mothers. Some of them drive 15 km to get here. At the beginning the children sing a song to the guitar, and then there is a rich program with Sr. Tereza. Actually the parables of the bible are presented. Today the parable of the leaven is performed. Waiting to see what happens with the sourdough never bores anyone. Helenka counts the sheep by the good Shepherd; boys prepare the altar and try to light the candles (of course under supervision). After a while the children check their doughs to see what has happened. The time is over very quickly. Then everyone is looking forward to seeing everyone next week.



Sr. Tereza in the school

Our parish is quite big, but families with children are few here. We appreciate very much that our children can still meet each other. We are so grateful for the commitment of Sr. Tereza. In the meantime, children from both non-believing and non-practicing families also come here. Sister Tereza also devotes other days of the week to older children. In conclusion, I would like to say: Thank God for them!

A mother

The Lord has done great things for us, so let us rejoice

13 years ago Fr. Ondřej Salvét was active in our parish. After a funeral, when the Father spoke for a long time with the sisters, I urged him to hurry, and he replied: "Don't be so hasty; what we are discussing here is worth more than ten funerals." Since then, the Holy Cross Sisters have been working with us, and I notice that he had reason to react in this way at the time.

The sisters transformed our abandoned parish hall and the untidy garden and of course the church into beautiful spiritual places. They take care of the

flower arrangements in the church, plant flowers for it themselves, mow the lawn and organize concerts, spiritual renewals, prayers for world peace ... The people from a wide range of surroundings love the offers.

Sr. Tereza teaches in the primary school in Vysoký Chlumeč. She is known for her creativity. She also devotes herself to catechism, which she prepares for children, young people and also for adults.

Sr. Ludmila works as a nurse in an outpatient hospice. Both sisters help our priest at the liturgy of the word in the home for the elderly and bring Holy Communion to the sick at home or in the hospital.

We are very grateful that our Lord has sent the Holy Cross Sisters to us. I personally thank them every day. They give me great support in my very old age (80).

Anna Šeháková, surveyor in Kosova Hora

Journey with the people

How easy it sounds "Journey with the people". It is so obvious and yet... Sometimes I find that there are too many around me and other times there is nobody. God wants me to live in a big city,

which I don't particularly like. But here I am. I meet many people and let them look at me, since there are not many religious sisters here.

I always see the same faces during the Holy Mass and in front of the church. I also meet my neighbors every day. Some are very friendly; others probably don't like to see me. I greet them especially kindly, with a smile, so that they may see a simple person behind the habit, whom they need not fear. It is for such people, I believe, that the Lord has sent me here. I also meet children, young people and adults at my workplace every day. I accompany them inwardly on my way and wish them happiness for their future. I hold another group of people by the hand, so to speak. They are my helpers, sisters, role models. I need them so that I don't get tired on my way and stop. He who does not create can give nothing as a gift. And finally I go with people who have already overtaken me on my way to eternity. I would like to get advice from them, ask them so many questions, but this is no longer directly possible. This fact hurts, but it also gives me hope.

These are for me some experiences while journeying with people. For some, hopefully, I am also a sign that they feel that God does not leave them alone.

Sr. Benedikta Veselá, Plze - Jíkalka

South Moravia is a beautiful country

The Holy Cross Sisters came to Boršice in 1970. A lot of things have changed since then. In the beginning 23 sisters lived here. They were busy with sewing and making embroidery. Recently, the sisters' house was rebuilt and a home for the elderly was constructed. This is managed by Caritas. Three Holy Cross Sisters still live here. We share the simple life with the home residents, participate in events and eat with them. Our service is above all, a spiritual one. We take care of the chapel, bring Holy Communion to the sick, have time for them, listen to them, pray and sing with them.... We are amazed how important it is to accompany the people on their final journey "home". Occasionally we experience something touching, encouraging and beautiful, at other times something more akin

to the suffering of the Crucified one.

Each year the Corpus Christi procession comes to an end at our home. The priest then hands the monstrance to an old priest, a resident of our home, who, supported by others, blesses everyone.

Sr. Veronica Janíková, Boršice

Trust, God leads you

Our community works in a missionary area. The last time numbers of worshippers at the Sunday Holy Mass were enumerated in the Pilsen diocese, we were altogether less than the audience at a football league match. Therefore, for some people a usual encounter with a religious sister becomes a special experience. During our activities



Sr. Michaela as hospital chaplain at the Holy Mass.

we meet a lot of people of different age groups. We work in the ordinariate, Sr. Beata teaches in the primary school, Sr. Iris works in the middle school and Sr. Michaela accompanies the people in their old age. Collectively we believe that the most important thing is to gain the trust of those we come into contact with so that our Lord can then make a greater impact. This is especially felt by Sr. Michaela, who has been working in the nursing home pastoral care for seven years. These people especially feel very lonely and useless. It is very important to show them that we like them as they are today, that we are not afraid to touch them or sometimes even hug them. Sr. Michaela says that she herself can learn a lot about how to live through the last stage of life; she herself is already a senior citizen. She is very happy if she can teach people - sometimes after many years - to accept the sacraments (confession, Holy Communion, anointing of the sick) or accompany them to Holy Mass.

Sisters from the community in Pilsen

In the end, the only thing we can say is:

Merciful and crucified Jesus, we are walking in your footsteps.

Bless each of our steps on the way to the realization of our vision.

Seven-Year-Old Lina on the Footsteps of the Holy Cross Sisters

Sr. M. Werenfried Maier, Hegne, Province Baden-Württemberg

Sr. M. Werenfried is an archivist at the convent Hegne. In the following article she tells how her lonely work often can bring unexpected joy and color.

It started with an e-mail

On January 23, 2020 I received the following e-mail:

Subject: Perhaps you can help me

Hello, my name is Lina B., I am 7 years old and live in Merdingen (Germany) I go to the Hermann-Brommer School in Merdingen in class 1. There we have a project called "Merdingen from a child's point of view". My 3 classmates and I have chosen the theme "Sisters' garden and the three sisters". We were already in the village and asked the elderly people if they could remember the names of the sisters who worked in the village from 1887 to 1971. But no one could remember it. Not even old photos are available any more. The only thing we found in a newspaper cutting was a text on the opening of the sisters' garden at the Katharina-Mathis-Stift: "Here, from 1887 to 1971, the Holy Cross Sisters of the convent Hegne, whose mother house is located at the western end of Lake

Constance, cared for the sick and were in charge of a kindergarten. They thus took up important tasks for the village Merdingen. After the sisters' house in Merdingen was demolished, the community property lay vacant." Perhaps you could help me further and you may have some old photos, or the names of the sisters. That would be really great. May I use a photo from the internet of your convent for our project work? I'm really looking forward to your reply.

She conveys loving greetings from Lina B. (after consultation with the parents the surname should be abbreviated)

This mail was followed by a lively digital exchange, in which I always addressed Lina, although I knew that her mother helped with all correspondence.

These antecedents

Underlying the question is the following historical fact: In the time period mentioned, there were 33 Holy Cross Sisters working in the

village, whose names I could send to Lina. According to the mayor, the sisters had "the village changed beneficially".

After 45 years, the memories of the work of the Holy Cross Sisters were to be brought back to life - by creating a sisters' garden in 2016 where the sisters' house was originally located. This was made possible by the Paul Mathis Foundation, which had constructed a residential building for 18 senior citizens on the adjacent premises. They not only financed the layout of the **sisters' garden**, but also its centre - a sculpture with **three sisters** in dialogue. This should be a place of encounter for Merdingen. The inauguration was attended not only by many people from Merdingen and the founder's family, but also by the artist Wolfgang Eckert, and four sisters from Hegne.

The task of Lina

The teachers from Merdingen walked with the pupils through the village and visited all the historical places, houses and sights. Following this, the pupils could decide for a project. The youngest of class 1, decided on, "The three sisters in the sisters' garden".

I admit that this made my old teacher's heart beat faster and I



Lina in sisters' garden

wanted to support seven-year-old Lina. I did so, for example, with the letter of resignation of 1971, which contains the reason why the sisters left Merdingen. Lina wanted to know this from me. She also wanted to know why a contract with the convent could not simply be rewritten (I gave her a copy of the contract with Mrs. Pankratia Widmer from 1887). The answer to this was in the inauguration speech of our Sr. Benedicta-Maria Kramer, the former Provincial Superior, which Lina's parents went through with her. Also important for Lina were the pictures from the chronicle,

which I could send her by e-mail (old and new sisters' house, the last three sisters stationed in Merdingen) - and our pictures, which we had made at the inauguration in 1976.

In the meantime, Lina has presented her project at the school and received much praise (she is very proud that even the mayor wants her work). It was even more important for me to thank Lina's mother for so eagerly supporting the historical thinking of her eldest daughter. Moreover, it cannot be taken for granted that a school can enthuse primary school children for historical project work.

A surprise at the end

The end of this story came as a surprise to me as well: Family B. has booked a weekend with two children, grandma and aunt for six people in our hotel to get to know



Lina with Sr. M. Werenfried in Hegne

Hegne. Lina knew nothing about it – and it was a great surprise for her, because it was her secret wish. This visit became true on the last hotel weekend in March 2020, before the Corona virus closed our doors.

This meeting was not only informative, but also humanly warm. After all, an archive can still be useful!

Information from the General Leadership

Appointments

On March 20, 2020, the General Leadership has appointed the Vicariate Leadership for the Vicariate Uganda for the next three years:

Vicariate Superior: Sr. Genevieve
D'Silva, 2nd term
Assistant: Sr. Veera Bara
Councilors: Sr. Rose Nakit-
ende
Sr. M. Sylvia
Nabitaka

The inauguration on May 8, 2020 has been postponed indefinitely due to the 'Corona Pandemic', and as Sr. Veera is in Sicily for the Migrants Project and cannot travel to Uganda due to travel restrictions.

We sincerely thank the new or re-appointed sisters of the Vicariate Leadership for the Vicariate of Uganda for their readiness to accept this demanding mission. We wish them strength, courage

and confidence for the task. May God's blessing accompany them!

We are very grateful to the outgoing Provincial Councilors with all our hearts for their willingness to remain in office for an indefinite period and wish them all the best and God's abundant blessing for their future mission.

On our own account

In November last year, the Swiss National Library in Bern informed us that it would like to include the "Theodosia" in its collection.

The National Library celebrates its 125th anniversary this year. Its collections include books, newspapers and periodicals, websites, maps and atlases, university theses, publications of associations, official publications and musical documents from all language regions of Switzerland, both in printed and electronic form, so the extensive collections now also include the "Theodosia", starting with 2020, No.1.

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