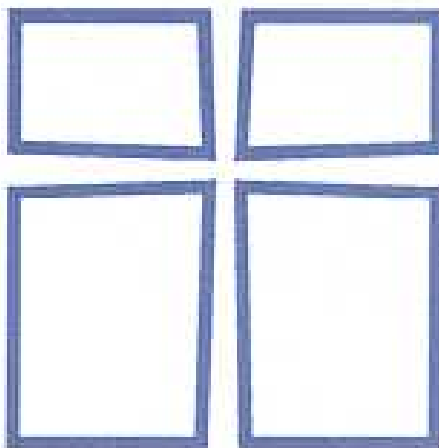


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# *Theodosia*

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Quarterly  
of the Sisters of Mercy  
of the Holy Cross  
Institute Ingenbohl  
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Stone cross in front of the entrance to the crypt in Ingenbohl. Image: Konrad Keller

## Editorial

Everything is changing, and changing all the time. We ourselves are changing as we grow older, and so are our living conditions, convent life, the Church, society, the world of work, technology, the climate, and the world political situation, are all changing. Some changes are foreseeable. We can (or could) adjust to such changes: We can initiate processes, scan possibilities. Other changes come as relatively surprising, so that they catch us unprepared.

*"Change is the only thing that is constant"*, said Heraclitus of Ephesus (about 540-480 B.C.). With this he expresses that changes are a part of life, that we cannot prevent them, and that we cannot avoid them. Changes are usually associated with pain and fear, because what has gone before is irretrievably lost, and because the new is not yet tangibly present. What can we do? Let go of what we are used to, look forward together, search for new ways, and clarify them. Above all, we need to live with great trust in God, who will be with us until the end of time (cf. Mt 28:20).

The following pages show us various changes. Presented lucidly, and in detail we learn from the affected sisters of the USA: *"Great Changes in the USA Province"*. The Theodosia wishes the "USA House", and all sisters, God's blessing for the future.

The Provincial Superiors and Assistants of the Western European Provinces meet regularly in times of change. Exchange, consultation and mutual strengthening are the goals of the *"Meeting of the Provincial Leadership of Western Europe"*. Sr. Petra Car reports about it.

Four younger sisters from Hungary share with us their experiences of change of a completely different kind: although they work in different professions, they consciously live their lives as Holy Cross Sisters: *"From the Daily Life of Our Sisters in Hungary"*.

We are heading towards Easter. Sr. Laurencia Merz shows us different faces of Easter in Bahia: "*Easter in Brazil*".

From Sr. Petra Maria Strobl we learn how the holy days in the Catholic Church of Taiwan, specifically in Guanshan, are celebrated: "*Easter in Taiwan*".

During the 1st Lockdown in 2020, a handwritten Bible was created in St. Gallen, on which people from many countries collaborated. The 3811 personally designed pages have become the *St. Gallen-Corona- Bible* in seven volumes, which now has a place of honor in the Abbey Library of St. Gallen. The text is taken from reports by *kath.ch and kathsg.ch*.

A "*Small Statistics*" shows in figures the changes of the last year, followed by a poem "*Be Grateful*".

The first Theodosia of each year pays tribute to our dear deceased sisters: "*Entered into Eternal Life*".

Sr. Christiane Jungo

# Great Changes in the USA Province

## Contributions from different sisters

As announced in Theodosia 2021,<sup>3</sup> this issue reports on the process that the sisters of the former USA Province have gone through in recent years. We give the opportunity to different sisters to express their views on this issue.

### Overview

Sr. Dorothee Halbach, General Councilor, the contact person

October 24, 2021, is recorded in the history of the USA Province. On this day in 1923, the sisters opened "USA House" in Merrill in the state of Wisconsin. The Sisters, after all these decades of great commitment to the needs of the time, made the change from the Province USA to the structure "USA House" after exactly 98 years. Sr. Marija Brizar, Superior General, read the official decree following the Eucharistic celebration on October 24. In a few lines, the document states that the Province will be abolished and the new structure "USA House" will be established. According to the content of the document, the decision "was taken after careful consideration and with the approval of the General Council (General Instruction 43, Constitutions art. 80, 82). It is also a response to the request of the USA Province to change its canonical status

from that of a Province (General Instruction 43) to that of a "House"(Canon 608).

Thus, from October 24, 2021, the Province no longer exists as a Province, but remains a separate legal entity under civil law. Although the sisters in the new structure "USA House" are under the General Leadership, they continue to organize their daily life independently, also with the support of a coordinator and the appointed small leadership team.

We are very grateful that the whole process could be carried out in a great mutual trust and in open discussions.

### Choosing our Future

Pat Cormack SCSC, former Provincial Superior USA

"Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished.

But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and



someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.” (John 21:18)

The process that the Sisters in the USA have just completed occurred during the years of my term as provincial. I have been invited to speak about this to many different groups of religious in the USA and I would also like to share about it with all of our sisters around the world.

This quote from the Gospel of John was used by Frank Morrissey OMI in 2016 to encourage the Collaborative Project Working Group of our region of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) to have the courage to choose the changes in structure and governance that could best meet our needs in the future.

In that spirit, I have asked myself how it is that on October 24, 2021,



New Team: Sr. Linda Songy, Superior; Sr. Pat Cormack and Sr. Kathy Lange

our province let go of its status as a province and became a house under the generalate. To understand how we have gotten here, you need to remember that we have been in the USA since 1912, primarily in rural areas of the country.

Given our motto that the need of the times is the will of God, we have engaged in a multiplicity of ministries including education, religious education, liturgy, pastoral care, nursing, social ministry, prison ministry, etc. We have often served in small towns with two or three of us engaged in a range of activities. Our largest corporate presence has been in health care and eldercare although we have sponsored schools as well. But those sponsorships are long past.

We have never been large. It took us 42 years to achieve the status of province (1954), and, at our peak, we numbered 117. Since 1962 our numbers have been steadily declining although that fact was under the radar for most of those years. Now we are 20 sisters, all but one over the age of 70 and a median age of 82. Until last year, we were located in multiple states but that spread has been narrowing since the early 2000s. Finally, in March 2020 we had all returned to Merrill.



Back row (left to right) Sisters Dorothee Halbach, Linda Songy, Pam Hodgson, Dorothy Niemann, John Marie Simien, Peggy Jackelen, Joelle Mauer, Mary Zita Klimek, Dolores Hrdina, Mary Anne Rose, Mary Angela Sackmann, Mary Michael Smits, Pat Cormack, and Marija Brizar. Front row (left to right) Sisters Loretta Schreiber, Mary Thomas Reichl, Kathy Lange, Kathy Wiesneski, Helen Huss, Carol Crosby, Celine Goessel, and Anita Hirt

The last 10 years have been a time of challenge, exploration, and discovery for those of us in leadership. Since the mid-eighties we have engaged regularly in long range planning and have tried to be aware of the changing shape of religious life, but we have found it difficult not to assume we would always be here operating in the same way.

In the spring of 2011, we published our most recent long-range plan that, among other things, called us to evaluate our property holdings. That summer, I was asked to share at our province assembly what I had been learning in my participation

in several workshops on religious life.

My time as a staff member of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (2007-2012) had given me access to information and experiences that made me urgently aware of the shifting sands of our life as a province. General Chapter and Provincials' Congress sessions had also made us aware of similar changes happening in other provinces. In the USA, the idea of two communities partnering so that the stronger one could help with legal and financial matters was just being surfaced. A few communities were facing some

difficult choices that they were willing to share about with us.

I decided that our penchant as a province for hands-on practical approaches would help me to share my concerns in a way that we could absorb better than through theoretical presentations. So, I went back to trace our membership statistics for the previous 50 years. It showed us that we had lost 71% of our membership. I show this decline in 10-year increments. After sitting in silence with that fact, I invited all the sisters present to stand up in age groups by 5-year increments. I asked them to look around at this very concrete and personal timeline.

Then I asked them to move to the position on the timeline that they would occupy in five years. After time to absorb that reality, I asked them to move up another 5 years and again another 5 years. By that time there were a few who were joking that they were in heaven while the rest of us continued to age.

At the conclusion of that summer assembly, we had agreed that we



Bell Tower, former Provincial House

would not continue to recruit new members and that we were moving toward completion of our mission as a province. However, in the next ten years we wanted to take that statement back multiple times. How hard it is to face our reality.

By the time we gathered to celebrate our 100th anniversary in the summer of 2012, I had been elected provincial and our team had been charged with the task of figuring out what it meant “to come to completion”.

We began that exploration while there were 32 sisters at a median age of 81. We continued to sponsor an assisted living facility for the elderly that was serving 85 persons (laity and some of our sisters) in what had been our provincial house. And we were still serving in multiple ministries in

6 states. One of our members, Sr. Carol, was serving in General Leadership in Switzerland. During the next three years we would move from sister to lay leadership in our assisted living facility (Bell Tower), and we would determine that our management agreement with a Franciscan eldercare system would not be sufficient to sustain the ministry for much longer. We would need to transfer sponsorship, that is, sell the ministry.

We also began to sell the homes that we owned outside of Merrill WI and sisters began withdrawing from paid ministries and moving to our residence on the same campus as the assisted living facility. Many of those returning promptly engaged as volunteers in ministries in Merrill that we had either helped to establish or partnered in beginning.

Leadership took every opportunity to explore with other congregations the ways in which they were facing a shrinking leadership pool. We brought a proposal to our 2014 General Chapter to include suspension of governance as a tool available to

General Leadership for supporting the aging Western provinces of the congregation. We heard about the steps being taken by the Italian province to use this method and thought that we, too, would move in this direction.

In 2016, we joined other congregations in Region 9 of LCWR to research and develop what would become the Wisconsin Religious Collaborative. Part of our research allowed us to offer a live presentation on Canonical Considerations for Leadership given by Prof. Dr. Myriam Wijlens of the University of Erfurt.

Established in 2018 by 9 institutes in Wisconsin and Illinois, the Wisconsin Religious Collaborative (WRC) is developing shared programs to assist the member institutes in meeting internal management needs. I serve as President of the Governing Board. Recently, the WRC convened a group of experts in canon and civil law for a think tank on governance options. We participated in this event.

By 2019, our province had

searched for and found a buyer for our assisted living facility as well as for our offices and residence located on the same campus on the condition that we could lease them back. At the same time, we engaged Sister Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA, Ph.D., J.C.L. to facilitate our decision-making about our provincial governance and options for the future. She met with the sisters several times in the year at Update meetings.

By June 2020, we had worked our way through discussions of five very serious options. We could do nothing, we could dissolve the province, we could remain a province with a delegate from the General Leadership, we could all choose to leave the congregation, or we could change our status from a province to a house.

Sister Marlene asked us to reflect on the comparison of descriptions of a house (Canon 608) and a province (Canon 621) from the Code of Canon Law. She helped us to see that we really did not have the capacity to remain a province. We could not sustain the number of leaders needed to

continue to function (provincial and three councilors) and our General Leadership could not provide the delegate because of the distance from the Generalate.

We knew from the early workshops provided by RCRI that the St Paul Franciscans had faced the same situation when they made the decision to covenant with the St Paul province of the Carondelet Sisters of St Joseph. The General Leadership of the Franciscans was based in Waldbreitbach, Germany. Their US Province could not provide its own leadership and their General Leadership could not send a delegate to the US. The partnership with the Sisters of St Joseph allowed them to provide the direction for the canonical and internal management functions while the day-to-day living arrangements could be managed locally.

We took a long loving look at our province reality and asked ourselves what was possible for us. We knew that some of the large houses in our provinces in Europe had adopted a structure that included a lay coordinator who handled the management of support services (housekeeping, food services, transportation, etc.) for the sisters in a local house.

We began developing a similar position that we call our Director of Transitions and Operations (DTO). The role of DTO directly parallels the lay coordinator role in our European provinces.

Since the fall of 2018 we have been contracting for this service Therese Malm. She is a lay woman with a longstanding relationship with our province. She and other members of her family have served on various boards and in staff roles in our sponsored ministries over many years. We felt comfortable as provincial leaders that she had both the capacity and the heart to understand our life and our mission.

The last step in our journey was to consider becoming a house. Sister Marlene showed us how Canon 608 describes a unit of governance called a House. Since our constitution supplied the structure for a house under the leadership of a province, we believed that we could adapt that structure to ask our General Leadership to make us a house under their leadership.

From the very beginning, our General Leadership has been providing us both the encouragement and the challenge

to take the steps we needed to make our movement toward completion as a province a reality. We asked for more contact by Sister Dorothee Halbach, the general councilor who is our liaison and that became an annual visit and regular virtual consultation with our Provincial Leadership.

The General Leadership pushed us to face our limitations and to choose our own future. Therefore, in July 2020, we were able to formally request that our province be suppressed, and the USA House be established. The General Leadership confirmed this choice and in spring of 2021, Sister Dorothee visited the USA and consulted with each of our sisters about who would be recommended for appointment as the first house leadership team. The General Leadership made that appointment in June 2021.

Finally, they set the date for this change in our status. On October 24th, our foundation day (the 98th anniversary of our arrival in Merrill WI) became the day when Sister Marija Brizar and Sister Dorothee came to install new leadership and to celebrate with us our transformation into the “USA House” of the Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross.

## Establishing the “USA House”

Sister Kathy Lange, Merrill, USA House

Sunday, October 24, 2021, marked the 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time and a day of celebration for the Holy Cross Sisters and Associates of the USA Province. This day marked the Foundation Day in 1923 when the Holy Cross Sisters established themselves in Merrill, Wisconsin, to staff and operate a hospital. Plus, it was the day that the USA Province transitioned to a House.

Several sisters shared comments about the day. One sister said, “For me, it was bittersweet. Here we were celebrating not only our changing status, but also our arrival date in Merrill. And we were having this celebration in the chapel where our sisters celebrated as they made Merrill their home. I am from Merrill, so the day had double meaning for me.”

Another sister commented, “I felt connected with all our deceased Sisters who made our ministry so enriching to the poor. By celebrating Mass this day in the hospital chapel, I felt their spirit, because I know they gained courage and energy every day as they worshipped in this same space.”

Several events marked the day’s celebration. Sisters enjoyed a noon meal together in Clare Center, along with Sisters Marija and Dorothee and our president, Fr. Jim Bartelme for the liturgy. The sisters took great care, both in decorating Clare Center for the meal and sharing in the preparation for the delicious food. Several sisters were responsible for sacristan duties and decorations in the hospital chapel as well. One of the sisters in charge of decorating said, “The thoughts stirring inside of me during planning the decorations for the Holy Cross Hospital Chapel were that we were celebrating in the chapel that Mother Alena Zahner and Sister Maria Theodosia Laufer spent



Clare Center, preparations for the ceremony

hours working on details for the construction and the furnishing of the chapel.

Sisters, Associates, and employees gathered at Good Samaritan Hospital (formerly Holy Cross Hospital) Chapel in Merrill at 2:30 p.m., to mark the closing of the USA Province and the establishment of the USA House. It was very fitting that the liturgy was held in the original chapel that was used by the sisters from those early years.

One sister remarked, "It was exciting and a special time of adding to the history of the hospital chapel in that we were celebrating in the same beautiful space where the sisters gathered for its dedication on January 6, 1936 and where our early sisters worshiped throughout the years with Eucharist, Liturgy of the Hours, professions, and funerals. We were connecting with all the sisters who dedicated themselves to ministering in the United States and the many changes they saw in their lifetime."

A beautiful candle, brought from Ingenbohl, was lit for the liturgy and was marked especially for the establishment of the House. The readings of the day were proclaimed, but the second reading was taken from

Philippians 2:6-11, which marks the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on September 14th. Fr. Jim proclaimed the Gospel of Mark, 10:46-52. Throughout his homily, Fr. Jim spoke of many events in the history of the congregation in the US, illustrating his research and study of our congregation.

The prayers of the faithful were read by Sr. Carol Crosby. Attendees were situated so that they were appropriately distanced and wore masks as a means of protecting each other due to the Corona virus. Fr. Jim was able to distribute Holy Communion to those in their seats as well as those who could come forward to receive.

After the Communion prayer, all were invited to be seated. Sr. Pat Cormack introduced the ceremony by giving some background that led to this day and then invited Sr. Marija to lead the congregation in the celebration.

Sr. Marija first read the decree from the General Administration which marked the closing of the USA Province and establishing the USA House. She then presented letters of assignment and installed the new leadership of Sisters Linda Songy, House Coordinator; Pat Cormack, First



Councilor; and Kathy Lange, Second Councilor. They will serve in office for the next three years. Gifts of a beautiful stone with signatures of the sisters of the General Administration were given to the outgoing team and the new leadership. After some words of reflection, we prayed the closing prayer and were dismissed to beautiful organ music, played by one of our sisters. As two of our associates remarked, “The service was very meaningful, and it was a day of mixed emotions—the end of one chapter, and the start of another. The journey continues, and we are happy to be a part of it.”

Everyone then gathered at the Agra Pavilion on the River Bend Trail in Merrill for a reception of coffee, desserts, and conversation. Gifts of roses from the associates and Sr. Linda Songy’s family graced a long table, along with pictures depicting USA Holy Cross history compiled by our archivist.

Situated near the pavilion is the cupola from the T.B. Scott Mansion, which was preserved after the Scott Mansion was demolished. The Scott Mansion was the first home of the sisters in Merrill. It was a gift from the city when the sisters first came in

1923. “If we could no longer have the Scott Mansion, it was wonderful to at least have the restored cupola positioned in such a beautiful place across the Wisconsin River from where the mansion once stood,” one sister remarked. Beautiful flowers had been planted around the square where the cupola now stood.

Also nearby is a permanent sign containing words and pictures illustrating the history of the Holy Cross Sisters in Merrill which will be a marker for all future viewing.

One sister summed everything up by saying, “All of our 20 sisters being together in Merrill help us to be more aware that the use of our individual gifts creates the strength to live into a new time in our beloved USA. In this way, we are given the opportunity to build community as we continue to carry out the motto of Mother Theresa: ‘Let us be courageous and strong.’” (Joshua 1:9)

### **God is with me**

Sr. Linda Songy, Merrill, USA House

Sister Pat shared with you so beautifully the details of the many years which preceded the day that we transitioned from being a Province to becoming a House.



Sisters' house in Merrill

And Sister Kathy beautifully described the day that we completed those years of researching, praying, discussing, worrying, comparing, wondering, working, trying to “let go,” grieving, and finally deciding the way in which we would like to live, in the light of our present and future reality. Now I would like to share with you some of the feelings and emotions that we experienced during this portion of our spiritual journey - the many years preceding our “transition” on October 24, 2021, the Celebration Day itself, and the few months following that special day.

First of all, how did we feel and what did we need during that new and special time in our lives as Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross, as we began to see the number of our sisters diminishing, year after year? We finally realized that there would be

important and difficult decisions facing us in the coming years. The members of our very last Provincial Team were repeatedly amazed and deeply grateful for the leadership that Sr. Pat gave us during these years of preparing for a new beginning. As you can probably see in her article, there were many legal, canonical and financial things that needed to be addressed, things that most of the rest of us would not have even known about, nor would we have been able to address them adequately.

Along with gratitude came feelings of fear, worrying, differences of opinions, grieving, and sometimes resisting to grieve. From the time we realized that we should stop recruiting or accepting new members, it became scary to accept the fact that soon, we won't have younger sisters to continue our mission or to care for

us in our elder years. None of us ever imagined, when we made our final vows, that one day we would be saying “goodbye” to our Province and that not very many years after that, there would probably not be a single Sister of Mercy of the Holy Cross in our beloved country. That was painful.

But along with the pain came an opportunity to be witnesses of our faith in the Word of God. When people would sympathize with us and say, “you poor sisters,” we didn’t falsely deny the pain we were experiencing. But we could honestly say to them, “yes, it is painful, but God has promised never to abandon us, and Jesus told us that unless a seed dies, it will forever remain just a seed. But if it dies, it brings forth new life.” So, we began to find comfort in believing that if we hold on to our faith and let our province die - and maybe even the way of life that we have known and lived and loved for so many years - only God knows what new kind of ‘Religious Life’ might be born into a world that needs it so badly.

Then came the Day of Transition and Celebration! It too was filled with a mixture of feelings and



Celebration in the chapel

emotions. We woke up that day to the realization that “this is really happening; we’re no longer simply preparing for it or wondering about it, it’s happening - today! We must let go of our province and make a new beginning.”

We are so grateful that we had such an abundance of blessings on that day, helping us to make this transition. I would like to share with you a few of those blessings:

- We were celebrating the 98th anniversary of the day when Mother Aniceta Regli brought our first Sisters to Merrill, Wisconsin, and built a hospital for them to begin their ministry in the small city that one day would become the central house of our province.
- We were allowed to have our celebration in the chapel of that same hospital, a place in which we had many happy

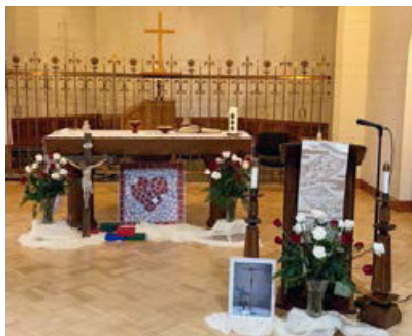
memories, even though we no longer own it.

- In spite of the Corona Pandemic, we were able to safely invite our Employees and nearby Associates to join us in our celebration.
- We were so happy to have Sr. Marija and Sr. Dorothee here with us, supporting us and leading us in the short, but beautiful, ceremony which officially transitioned us from being a Province to becoming a House, under the leadership of our General Administration. During that celebration, Sr. Marija shared with us wise and loving reflections. The sanctuary was graced with several special items that were reminders to us of the love and support that we were receiving from our Holy Cross Sisters around the world, our Associates, and our families. These “reminders” were beautiful red roses and two gifts from our Motherhouse. Sr. Marija and Sr. Dorothee carried to us in their luggage a large Mother Theresa candle, bearing the three crosses that we all know so well and a written reminder: “Establishment of the House, October 24, 2021.” They also brought us a beautiful picture taken in our Motherhouse

chapel. That picture included the large crucifix, a candle, flowers, and a Bible, open to a passage that was one of our readings at Mass. That passage (Phil 2:6-11) reminds us that, in whatever comes to us in our lives, our attitude must be the attitude of Christ.

- We received greetings and loving support from our General Leadership Team and many of our Sisters across the ocean.
- Our faithful priest shared with us a beautiful and helpful homily during our Eucharistic Celebration.

These blessings overflowed into our lives as we moved on to embrace our new identity as a House. During these last few months following our official transition, in addition to the blessings I have already shared



Symbols in the chapel

with you, we have been blessed in many more ways. For example, we are feeling the need and the desire to come together more often—to pray, to celebrate, to share a meal, to watch a video, and to just have fun! We also had wonderful spiritual experiences that continue to bless our lives and assist us in living our new reality.

The first one is the memory of the message which Fr. Jim shared with us on our day of transition. In his homily he quoted St. Joan of Arc, who said: “I am not afraid. God is with me. I was born for this.” He suggested that we apply these words to ourselves as we step into an unknown future. I have asked God for the grace to believe this and to live by it. I can’t count the number of times that I have looked at that quote, framed and hanging on my wall, and asked for God’s help in being faithful to it.

Our second spiritual experience was the result of a request that we had previously made to Sr. Dorothee. Since several of our Sisters are no longer able to spend a week in a retreat center, we asked Sr. Dorothee to lead us in a retreat during the time that she had planned to stay with us following our Day of Transition. She agreed and she did a

beautiful job. She touched the hearts of all of us at a time that we really needed it. The theme of our retreat was “My Life in God’s Presence.” And following the retreat, as I was telling Sr. Marija about some of our post-transition adjustments, she suggested that, as a follow-up to our retreat, Sr. Dorothee might be able to offer us (via ZOOM, of course!) a weekly reflection during Advent. Sr. Marija’s suggestion led to three more wonderful and helpful spiritual reflections.

And finally, it was heart-warming when one of our family members sent us a card which said: “We are thinking about you at this time of transition and new developments in your community. Your positive and faith-filled attitude in managing this difficult situation is an inspiration to us. We pray for the grace of Jesus to guide you as you move forward in experiencing new beginnings in your service to others and to each other.”

Day by day, I think we are growing in the ability to allow our blessings to overpower our difficulties. I pray that as we continue to move forward into an unknown future, we will all continue to be able to say with St. Joan of Arc: “I am not afraid. God is with me. I was born for this.”



Sisters and Associates after the celebration

## **Give expression to the Tender Mercy of God**

Sr. Mary Anne Rose and Sr. Peggy Jackelen, Merrill, USA House

We live in a single dwelling house some distance from “the Hill” where most of our community lives and Holy Cross business is carried on. Our USA community now numbers 20 sisters.

For several years our province leadership talked about “coming to completion.” As a province we knew we were dwindling in numbers and increasing in age. However clear to leadership this term may have meant, for many of us the meaning of “coming to completion” was an unfamiliar and unclear term, and not one we

wished to think about. Who would have thought our life in community and our ministries would end? Over the years we seriously accepted our Founder’s wish to meet the needs of our times. It was both a privilege to serve and a commitment we made.

In the late 1980’s we were aware of our aging and diminishing numbers and realized we no longer had enough sisters to continue the many ministries we had assumed over the years. Each of our three hospitals was in a different state, and it was difficult to oversee their individual operations. We made the decision to transfer the sponsorship of the three hospitals to other Catholic corporations.

Although we did not recognize it at the time, this was the beginning of our “coming to completion.” In 2019 we sold our assisted living facility (Bell Tower Residence, formerly the center of our province), as well as all the property on the entire hill. The impact of our transitioning aroused a whole gamut of emotions – painful loss, sadness, resistance, uncertainty, worry – to name a few. As a community we neglected to acknowledge and talk about our losses and what they meant to each one personally and corporately. We just moved on. Then came the pandemic with its quarantines and restrictions. The lack of personal contact with community and friends was very difficult. However, we were blessed with quality time to reflect on what was really important in our lives. Our shared prayer and reflection times prompted the two of us to reach out to the lonely with little notes and telephone calls.

The first year of the pandemic the stay-at-home restrictions was very difficult. We both had been remembering BTR residents and staff with birthday cards, Christmas cards, get-well cards. This was an important, easy connection for us to continue. Who couldn't use a little encouragement during the long

pandemic? Letters, sending cards, and making phone calls to the lonely and homeless came to be an important ministry for us.

We extended our writing campaign during the time prior to our national elections. We joined in a national card mailing campaign. Sometimes we just need a little reminder of the importance to vote. Our mailing encouraged 500 eligible voters to do so. That is a small number compared to the eligible voters, but the entire campaign was successfully completed with the help of many others who responded as writers. The voting response that year was very high.

As a retired nurse I, Mary Anne, still struggled with boredom and depression. I had energy and the ability to help people. It was a very difficult time for me. Both frustrated and scared, I began to search for more ways I could volunteer my time. It didn't take long before I became aware there are many individuals who need someone to assist and support them in their trials and sufferings, and I could still minister.

First, I looked around in my sister community. We are all aging. Driving is impossible for many. I offered to take sisters to medical appointments and help them

understand their health issues and how the doctor wants them to address the issues. Also, setting up their medications correctly is also important, so I offered to do that for an elderly sister.

As life became a little less restrictive with COVID, I began to install Lifeline Units in homes once again. This is an emergency call system for people living alone. Then we both volunteered to deliver nutritious meals to people in our city who are unable to prepare meals for themselves. The individuals on our list welcome a little greeting and a warm meal and they in turn are an uplifting gift to us. Occasionally we have come upon a problematic situation. For example, one day Mary Anne found one woman on the floor. She had been lying there for two days. We stayed with her until emergency medical assistance arrived to care for her.

Although we no longer have

corporate ministries, we have found many ways to assist others in need. They can be as simple as putting out an elderly blind lady's garbage each week or assisting in our local food pantry.

On October 24, 2021, our community of sisters moved from a "Province" to a "House." As we reflect on this experience we find little change in our day-to-day living. There were administrative structural changes as required by the Church and government. However, who we are, how we are connected internationally and with our mission – *to give expression to the tender mercy of God* – has not changed. With the technology of Zoom and Skype we are blessed to have even greater personal connections. Our God is always with us, guiding us as we adjust to the changes in our community and our lives and nudging us to respond to the needs of others with tender mercy.



## Meeting of the Provincial Leadership of Western Europe

### Sr. Petra Car, Provincial Superior Europa Mitte, Wels A

In difficult times it is good to get closer to one another. The Provincial Superiors and Assistant Provincials of the Western European Provinces have also recognized this. Regular exchanges and mutual support strengthen the sisters in their mission.

For the past ten years, the Western European Provincial Superiors and their Assistants have been meeting twice a year to exchange experiences. The first meeting was in April 2012, in Laxenburg, in Europa Mitte province. It began right away with a musical prelude at the Folk Opera in Vienna with the operetta "Land of Smiles" by Franz Lehár. A beautiful start with a new form of collaboration besides the Congresses and General Chapters, which are broader scope for our international Congregation!

The following were represented at that time:

- Province Europa Mitte
- Province Switzerland (still Mother Province)
- Province Baden-Wuerttemberg
- Province Italy
- Province Western Switzerland

The joy of meeting, the exchange of common themes and visits to

the renovated and expanded homes for the elderly and nursing homes in House Elisabeth in Laxenburg, to the Anna Home in Graz, and to St. Joseph's Home in Rein were the focus of the first get-together.

Already at that time, possibilities of inter-provincial cooperation were considered. The provincial leaderships in Italy and Western Switzerland had begun a process of creating awareness regarding their future. New forms of leadership for the future were being discussed. The Europa Mitte Province was on its way to introducing a coordinator to support Superiors in larger communities in delegable responsibilities.

A word from Henry Ford, an entrepreneur in the business sector, made sense for us to regularize these meetings: *"Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, working together is success."*



From left to right: Sr. Maria Marthe Schönenberger (PA Switzerland), Sr. Maria Paola Zinniel (PO Hegne), Sr. Tobia Rüttimann (PO Switzerland), Sr. Clara Mair (PA Europe Central), Sr. Susanne Bader (PA Hegne), Sr. Petra Car (PO Central Europe). PO=Provincial Superior, PA=Provincial Assistant

At each meeting, there was also a change of perspective, because each province invited us to its homeland and thus made it possible to look beyond the borders.

In 2015 we celebrated the 150th Death Anniversary of Fr. Theodosius as a whole Congregation. An exchange about the celebrations and events planned in the convents and institutions was inspiring and enriching, especially in regard to the "wandering shoes of our founder".

The question: "How can our co-workers identify with the employer "convent", inspired a multistep

redefining process in the Province Europa Mitte (brand process: What makes us special? What is special about us, with us?). This developed as a central theme into a "culture of love" with the three attitudes: Attentiveness, being with one another at eye level, and gratitude. The Provincial Leadership supplemented the guidelines of the Holy Cross Sisters to a "wake-up call and mission" with contemporary steps for action.

In the Province Switzerland, staff training includes information about the history of the convent and visits to the work places as important parts in the identifying work of the staff on the hill.

In the Province Baden-Württemberg, after the Provincial Chapter in 2013, the provincial leadership launched an organizational development process (OE), guided by the Vision 2020 - "Hegne Convent a distinctive place". The Hegne Values Compass (alignment with the values that are important to the convent), developed together with the management, gave and still gives direction and orientation to all co-workers in implementing the developed values: openness, togetherness, trust, responsibility.

The desire for the best possible conditions of care for our elderly and sick sisters has been present in all the meetings of the past ten years. The Province Italy handed over to an association continual care services, thereby relieving the Provincial Leadership of this burden. In West Switzerland, the new nursing home was opened with sisters from seven congregations, thus becoming a model.

In 2016, the provincial leadership of Switzerland made the "hill strategy" an issue. This included plans for the construction of the new St. Joseph nursing home, which is currently under construction and will be ready for occupation at the end of 2023.

The Province Italy attended the meeting of the Western European Provinces for the last time in autumn 2017, as now it has the status of a Province with a delegate. In 2018, the Province Western Switzerland decided to merge with the Mother Province in a process that was completed in February 2019.

In November 2019, the three remaining provinces met in Oberägeri for the 12th meeting with the topics that are still emergent and in the making: upcoming building projects, future projects in the field of education, lack of leaders in the religious sector, models of management to support the Provincial Leadership and community life in changed structures because of the aging of the communities of sisters.

From 20 - 22 January 2022, the Provincial Superiors and their Assistant Provincials of Central Europe, Switzerland and Baden-Württemberg met for the 13th time in ten years. The pandemic of the past two years had prevented the meeting from being held. So it was a great pleasure that the newly appointed leaders in all three provinces were able to meet again and discuss their experiences. Covid 19 and the handling of the obligation to vaccinate, the core assets and the

charismatic plan, as well as the distribution of competencies at the leadership level with regard to finances and real estate were the topics of discussion. (The *core assets* are about the asset management of the orders. It must always have only a serving function, and what it has to serve for is described in the *Charismatic Plan*). We were also concerned about the present formation and of the future in coming years, the synodal journey in all its facets as the journey of all Christians, which we in the religious life contribute to shape, because we are part of the Church and want to remain ever present in the needs of the times. Thus, Fr. Theodosius encourages us even today with his words: "The need of the times is the will of God" and "I need sisters who can fit in anywhere."

We are convinced that Spiritual communities survive when they maintain contemporary relevance. We have a future when we develop a keen eye for the real needs and longings of our fellow human beings today and live out the answer to them. We must ask ourselves if we have this attraction and see it as a mission to be among the people, to live with them, to reach out to them, even if we are few in Europe.

The coming together was found enriching by all because the situations in the Western European provinces are similar in many ways. Perhaps it is also a time to exchange with the Eastern European provinces - to take steps together, to remain in hope, and to share in the mission.

## From the Daily Life of Our Sisters in Hungary

**Sr. Gabriella Légrádi, Pilisborosjenő Hungary, Europa Mitte Province**  
**Sr. Eszter Maria Pehm, Sr. MáriaVasco.Sr. Zsuzsa Vizslay**

In what follows, sisters share with us details of their everyday life. These hopefully, will strengthen the mutual relationship and support for each other in prayer across all borders. Today we get an insight into the lives of four younger sisters in Hungary.

### **Sr. Eszter Maria Pehm**



Sr. Eszter Maria Pehm

My life as a Holy Cross sister in Hungary is spread across prayer, work and community. As a kindergarten teacher, I work in the local kindergarten in Pilisborosjenő. Teamed with a colleague, and helper, we take care of a group of children aged from 3-7 years. Since it is a state run kindergarten, faith and religion rarely finds a place in everyday life. Nevertheless, as a religious woman, I am very warmly received and accepted.

I am often asked how my being a Holy Cross sister becomes visible in this environment. My answer is: "Very simple. I am there, and I am a Holy Cross sister, and I do what lies in my power day by day, and I do not seek the extraordinary - according to Mother Maria Theresa." I am grateful to be in touch with the flow of life, to see and feel what young families are facing today. Sometimes I just listen to them and bring everything to God, who then does his miracles. All educators know that the work does not end at the end of the day. When they get home, they start preparing for the next day.

And then, in the rhythm of everyday life, there is also the community, where prayer, household chores, garden, community life, guests and celebrations regulate the time. Together with my two sisters Sr. Gabriella and Sr. Mária, we organize this daily routine. It is true that our fields of activity are very different - also with different

duty hours. However there are fixed common times, such as prayer times, meals and other community times, which are supportive and also help to keep the focus.

Four younger Hungarian Holy Cross Sisters live in Hungary. As part of the Province Europa Mitte, we are challenged to take good care of the material and spiritual heritage that our sisters have left us after all the years of war, communism and years of new beginnings in Hungary, in the spirit of our Constitutions. This is one of the concerns that touches my heart every day, and that I bring to God personally and as a community. I ask for your prayerful support, dear sisters, from all over the world!

**Sr. Gabriella Légrádi**

**Outreach to women in need**



Sr. Gabriela Legradi

My days are framed by the common Liturgy of the Hours (especially Lauds and Vespers). As far as other services permit, we do this together. Other important pillars of my days are daily meditation (for me, the morning is the best time for this) and the celebration of Holy Mass. I always have the opportunity to attend the latter, except one day a week. My apostolate is based on this foundation: apart from the specific services of community life, I am active in two areas. One is SOLWODI Hungary, an association of religious sisters for women in need; the other is the local parish (Pilisborosjenő and Üröm).

**The association SOLWODI Hungary (SOLidarity with WOMen in Distress)**

I was elected President for a five year term when the association was founded. My responsibility is to build and foster relationships and organize programs. At present, two of us are working with a sister from the CJ (Congregatio Jesu). We are in the office two days a week, and on other days we are on emergency service and work online. Our main mission is to raise awareness about the reality of human trafficking and modern slavery. We also join other governmental

and NGO organizations to combat this phenomenon and fight for its eradication. As religious sisters, our main field of activity is information and raising awareness within the Catholic Church in Hungary. For this reason we try to increase our knowledge and understanding by participating in various national and international conferences. Through our personal contacts with religious we have the opportunity to provide information and knowledge to students, young adults, priests, religious and parishes. In Hungary our association is the contact point to RENATE Europe (Religious in Europe Networking Against Trafficking and Exploitation), and SOLWODI in Germany and Austria.

Within the country, we are in contact with a foundation that runs a shelter. The house is mainly for women rescued from forced prostitution abroad. The house has a well-developed rehabilitation program for the women. We were involved in this even before the pandemic. We offer a cooking class for the women once a week. This is about much more than just cooking. Through us, they expand and build their new network of relationships. The time spent together in the kitchen is also a good opportunity for deeper

dialogue. During the pandemic, it required us to venture into online, which was fun at first because we were talking about recipes and trying out cooking ideas that we could show each other online. But over time, deep dialogues developed, and it became a kind of spiritual space to be together online. We talked and prayed a lot with the women. Before Christmas, we did a street mission together with the Salvation Army and a foundation. In January, we began searching together for ways to coordinate our various ministries. For me, this work is both difficult and beautiful. It is difficult because only small, insignificant things happen, although I invest a lot of time and energy. It is beautiful when I hear the stories of women in great need and get to know the individuals through them. Empathic listening is a gift for me, but I had the opportunity to develop this skill in me through special training. I can use these skills and knowledge not only in the SOLWODI offices but also in community work.

### **Activity in the parish**

For almost four years I have been a member of the Pastoral Council, which was established in the parish by the local priest. Four of us are working in this group: the

priest, the deacon, the religious instructor and me as a religious sister. This activity is perhaps the most difficult one to define in terms of time. In the beginning, we spent one afternoon a week planning and talking, but now, as a well-coordinated team and making use of the possibilities of the online world, we need less time. Our task is to promote and develop the faith life of the parish, to inform and spiritually support the various large and small communities by planning and organizing church events throughout the year, such as feasts, spiritual days, liturgical occasions. In this team, the priest and me are the driving force because the religious instructor and the deacon are family mother and father, so there is more for us to do. This ministry does require me to be on call almost all the time, but it is important to me as I have many opportunities to listen to people and talk to them directly. It is a good opportunity to involve them in the life of the community. Besides that, I help with cleaning the church one or two Saturdays a month. This also gives me a chance to have a good dialogue.

In both areas, I am a Holy Cross sister with the mission of bringing Jesus to the people and encountering Him in them through

the power of the mystery of the Cross. This inner attitude and the intense prayer life give me enthusiasm, strength and perseverance for my ministry.

### **Sr. Mária Vasco**



Sr. Mária Vasco

You must be eager to know how we live our life in Hungary. How do we live there as Holy Cross Sisters? When I was asked the question, at first I simply thought: praying and working. And the question would have been answered. Now, as I reflected on it further, I would like to say: it is a service through which I serve God and people. What does this service involve?

My day starts at 04:30 in the morning and ends around 10:30 p.m. After my morning ritual with



input from the Gospel, I go to school. My place of work is the "Austrian-Hungarian European School". I teach religious instruction. In Hungary it is called faith teaching for children and youth. My students come from well-to-do families and they want their children to have a good education. Despite this material security, I meet the poor faces of divorce, of harassment, of homelessness, of need for relationships, of loneliness and patchwork families. So, I try to offer them a trusting ground in my area, how they are able to come in touch with God and trust in Him. This also includes developing and fostering personal social skills. Every day I am challenged to practice mutual attention with the children. The founder of the School Brothers, John Baptist de La Salle, wrote to his brothers and teachers, "Touch the heart of the child." For me, it is an educational program that not only applies to my students, but also I practice towards my fellow human beings.

After the teaching hours, follow the services in the community work as an administrator and as an archivist. It is a silent service in

front of the PC and folders in the office. I take care of the archive documents, the history of the Hungarian province. I see and hear in the life stories of the sisters about what and how they have done, and for what they have given their lives. Different services, joys and sorrows, developments, processes, celebrations, history of persecution and renewals are found in the documents, but also moments in which the charism of the Holy Cross Sisters is quite inconspicuous, but nevertheless effective: Life in the mystery of death and resurrection! The past is in the archive and it points to the future. The cross is for us the bridge between the past and the future.

Now I return to the present to invoices, accounting, telephone calls, laws, e-mails, meetings, schedules and realization. And when everything is done, household services such as cooking, cleaning, washing, and noticing the events of the day become part of my relaxation.

As you can see, my everyday life is varied and many-sided. It needs

the art the creativity. And when the day comes to an end, it is good to come back to rest and surrender everything to God, saying with the Psalmist: "It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives sleep to his beloved." (Ps 127:2)

Offering myself daily, dying, rising, living, loving, and learning!

### **Sr. Zsouzsa Vizslay**



Sr. Zsouzsa Vizslay

"Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation!" (Mk 16:15). Pope Francis, in his 2015 interview to

the magazine, "La Civiltà Cattolica", said, "God asks us today (religious) to leave our nest and go on mission." In this sense, in the autumn 2021, I began to work for a company in business operations. My mission is twofold: on the one hand, to know better today's reality and thus be able to help better when someone is in need of help; on the other hand, to bring God and the Gospel closer to the collaborators through my being there.

I got a second dimension to my ministry in 2017, when I had the opportunity to get to know the world of blind and visually impaired people in Vakok Batthyány László, in a home and school for them. The Hummel Kornél Foundation, where I am a member of the Board of Trustees, helps disabled people to make their lives lighter and to take care of their spiritual needs. I also help in organizing and conducting the one-day event for visually impaired adults, which takes place once a month.

## Easter in Brazil

### Sr. Laurencia Merz, Salvador BA, Vicariate Brazil

Easter has different faces in Brazil. In this article we learn about the Easter of the Catholic Church and its preparation time, and about the celebration of the resurrection feast of the descendants of slaves from Africa on Good Friday.

#### **Influenced by different cultures**

Easter in Brazil is also the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, a celebration of joy and the beginning of new life. But the celebrations differ.

The Federal Republic of Brazil, with its population of 211 million, however, does not have a true "Brazilian face." Each of the 27 states has its own cultural features, although the national language is Portuguese. There have been many influences over the centuries: Dutch immigration



"Terreiro" a cult place with the bairan, drums and the typical spicy specialties

in the northeast, Polish, German, Italian and Japanese in the southern states. The state of Bahia is still influenced by Africa, even though 500 years have passed since colonization.

The Indian tribes still live their natural religions in the Amazonian states in the north. But all of them, wherever they live, celebrate in their own way the feast of the Resurrection, of liberation.

#### **The Easter of the Catholic Church**

Since I lived 30 of my 45 years in Brazil, in the state of Bahia, I would like to share with you how we celebrate Easter here. But I have to distinguish between how the Catholic Church celebrates Easter, and how the Africa-influenced population celebrates Easter in their places of worship, the so-called "Terreiros des Candomblé".

For us Catholics, Easter begins with Ash Wednesday and the weeks of Lent, and culminates in



Palm procession

the Holy Week with Easter Day. The National Conference of Bishops, with its 270 dioceses, has been preparing valuable holistic material for evangelization for 58 years. These are educational and socio-political themes that want to broaden our horizons and lead us to an inner conversion and liberation. Three times, ecumenical and successful collaboration with the Christian churches of the CONIC, has already been carried out.

The motto for this year is dedicated to education with the theme: "Fraternity and Education" with the slogan: "Speak with wisdom and educate with love" (Book of Proverbs 31:26).

After Ash Wednesday, during the five weeks of Lent, the current social situation will be confronted with the proposed Bible texts, discussed and deepened in prayer in the Bible groups and all pastoral groups of the parishes, according to the principle that has proven itself for years: See - Judge - Act.

The invitation to this year's inputs shows Jesus encountering the adulteress (John 8:1-11). His way of educating is different from that of the scribes. For him, to educate means: To cooperate in overcoming sin, to preserve life, to be inclusive, and to lead all to repentance. Jesus talks to the



Lighting of the Easter candle

woman and then writes on the ground: Love - Wisdom! There are no stones to be seen.

The "Campanha da Fraternidade" reminds us that educating is not an isolated activity, but a work that involves everyone: Families, schools, universities and the Church, according to an African proverb: "To educate a child, it takes a whole village."

Holy Week begins with the popular and well-attended Palm procession. The priests are among the people, and hear

confessions. The liturgy of the Triduum Pascalis is very well prepared in the parishes, and invites participation. The people are mostly very religious. Here in Salvador, the procession of the "Christ crucified" on Friday is well attended. People in large numbers attend this procession than at the Good Friday liturgy in the afternoon. The highlight of this week, however, is the Easter vigil. Almost everywhere children or young people dance around the Easter fire. The light of the Easter candle, the songs sung, and then the sharing of the light increases

the joy in the hearts of those present. It is an experience of new life, of being truly redeemed by Jesus Christ.

Even on Easter Sunday there are many people who celebrate the resurrection together.

And now the other resurrection celebration in Bahia!

### **Good Friday of the followers of the religion of nature**

The state of Bahia has its roots in Africa. The color of the skin, the life and the scale of values of the inhabitants of Salvador show this to this day. Since the immigration of the slaves a good 500 years ago, their religion has been "Candomblé", a monotheism with Olorum, the supreme god, and the various orixas (gods) created by

him. In the course of the centuries, the African people have equated their gods with the Catholic saints through syncretism (e.g. Jansã, goddess of water = St. Barbara, Oxossi, god of hunting = St. George). All their gods, and the Catholic saints, are venerated.

Good Friday was the only day off for the slaves, which they celebrated with cultic chants in the language iorubá, with dances, drums and their many typical culinary specialties, from 6:00 in the morning until late at night. That has remained to this day: Good Friday is for them like our Easter Sunday, a day of joy, celebration and freedom.

That is all, "EASTER IN BRAZIL - in the state of Bahia.

## Easter in Taiwan

### Sr. Petra Maria Strobl, Guanshan, Vicariate Taiwan

Where Catholics are a strong minority of the population, religious customs are all the more important. They are an expression of piety and a sign of togetherness. Here we are given a look into the rituals of Lent and Easter in a region of Taiwan through a report, and images.

#### Customs in Guanshan

Taiwan is an island of the Chinese mainland with 23.5 million inhabitants, of which about 300,000 are Catholics. So we are a small flock trying to live our faith in the environment of different religions. I can only try to tell you how we celebrate Easter here in the east of Taiwan.

The preparation for Easter begins with Ash Wednesday, a day of fasting. It has a special position in our country. Very often it is during the Chinese New Year, and that is something special. All the family members come home, and especially the first four days are a time of celebration. If Ash Wednesday takes place during this period, it is celebrated a week later. This is what the Bishops' Conference decided out of respect for the tradition of the people. This is especially important in parishes with more Taiwanese. Among the indigenous people, the New Year's celebration does not have the same high significance as



Maundy Thursday

among the Taiwanese, but here, too, it is celebrated together.

Lent begins with the ash distribution on Sunday. On Fridays, the Stations of the Cross are prayed together. Before Palm Sunday, Christians bring palm branches, which are arranged for the blessing and the procession. The entrance into the church is always very beautiful and solemn. When "Hosanna" is sung during the entrance song, all raise their branches into the air and wave them.

In most parishes there is also a washing of the feet on Holy Thursday. Unfortunately, the





Good Friday

adoration after the service is very short, but the silently going out at night after the service is very impressive. The Lord is alone...

On Good Friday, the Stations of the Cross are prayed on the ground outside the churches. Men or women often carry crosses. In the evening, the liturgy takes place in the main church. The Gospel is read with distributed roles. The veneration of the cross is very quiet and without words. Sometimes there is just silence or soft music is played in the background. The church is dark,

only candles burn on both sides of the cross.

On Holy Saturday, the church is crowded. There are chairs even outside. The entrance with the burning candles into the dark



Easter-vigil procession





Easter vigil

church, and the acclamation, "Lumen Christi" thrice, makes all hearts beat faster. Almost every year there are baptisms of children and adults during the Easter Vigil. After the service, sweet rolls, drinks and red eggs are distributed.

Easter Sunday is celebrated alternately in one of the outside churches belonging to the parish. It is organized and celebrated well! All participate in the Easter

service. Afterwards, there are various competitions, including songs, dances and much more until late in the afternoon. Of course, the common meal is not neglected.

This is how Easter is celebrated in Guanshan. In other places, there are probably other customs. But the common joy about the resurrection of Jesus and his victory over death unites us all.

## **The St. Gallen-Corona-Bible**

### **According to contributions from kath.ch and kathsg.ch**

During the 1st Lockdown in spring 2020, a handwritten Bible was produced in St. Gallen, for which people from Switzerland, Germany, Austria and many other countries contributed. In addition to the 950 manuscripts of the 1189 biblical chapters of the Bible and the 3811 pages, the resulting pages also contain illustrations and commentaries. On March 14, 2021, seven bound volumes of the St. Gallen-Corona-Bible were handed over to the Abbey Library after religious celebrations in three churches in the city. Since then, 20 facsimile editions have been printed.

### **Remedy for isolation**

A few hours before the complete lockdown in Switzerland on March 16, 2020, a small team of Reformed and Catholic pastors in St. Gallen looked for a way to overcome the threat of isolation. In times of crisis, it is important to return to what is basic and supportive. The Bible is not a cure for the corona virus, but it is an effective means of giving voice to one's own fears and concerns. That is why the project team of the St. Gallen-Corona-Bible invited people from St. Gallen, and the surrounding area, from Switzerland and finally from all countries to copy one chapter of the Bible in their own handwriting. The task was to find people to write the 1189 chapters of the Bible.

### **Writing connects and liberates**

For centuries, sacred texts were

copied, illustrated and annotated in the scriptorium of the St. Gallen monastery. We know that not only from the monastic tradition that copying texts can liberate us from the oppressive present. Those who copy old texts connect with the hopes, longings, fears and worries of those who have hoped and feared, suffered and sighed in the past. In this way, the all-determining power of the present is broken, because the past and the future come into view anew. Many of the 950 writers later narrated and reported about this experience.

### **Writing a piece of history**

Therefore, those interested were invited to deal with a chapter of the Bible by writing, illustrating and commenting on it. Each manuscript thus formed a piece of history, is part of a life story, and became a contemporary witness of experienced history.

What has emerged from this can be viewed on the website <https://www.coronabibel.ch/>. The St. Gallen-Corona-Bible is a unique collective effort of countless individuals who together have written a book full of surprises and mysteries, full of energy and spirituality - in a time of crisis in which hundreds of thousands have died worldwide due to the corona virus and the lives of many continue to be endangered.

Some writings are craggy-childlike, others swinging and dynamic, often plant drawings climb up the edges of the pages, some have painted doves and other animals, rainbows, crowns - and sometimes corona viruses. If you wanted, you could also comment on the text. Refugees also participated, people from all over the world - in the most diverse languages and scripts. That was simply great. This is really living church, it is a great community, a great community work."

The bound and artistically designed original St. Gallen-Corona-Bible, which consists of a total of seven volumes, was handed over to the St. Gallen Abbey Library in a solemn ceremony. There it is exhibited and preserved as a unique

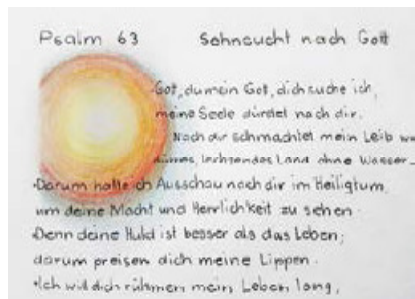
testimony of its time. May every single page of this Bible, wherever and whenever it is read, whether in the hospital or at the kitchen table, whether individually or collectively, become a source of strength to face the challenges ahead with courage and hope.

*Your word. A light. On our paths.*

The director of the St. Gallen's Abbey library said: "The Bible is the first book copied in the monastery of St. Gallen, already in the early Middle Ages, and it has now been copied again in a very special situation - of course it belongs to our collection."



Artfully decorated beginning of a psalm



Psalm 63. Both images from: kathsg.ch

## Small Statistics 2021

Total number of sisters:	2749
Sisters in province Switzerland:	356
Total no. of deceased sisters:	102
Deceased sisters of province Switzerland:	33
Entries:	55
Reception into Novitiate:	42
First profession:	25
Final profession:	22

## Poem: Be Grateful

### Be Grateful

for the call,  
to let go of what is familiar;

for experiences,  
that enrich;

for the courage  
to venture into the new;

for encounters,  
that encourage us;

for the strength  
to persevere on the way;

for the resistances,  
that make us grow.

for the realization  
that not everything can succeed;

To be grateful for this life  
that is gifted to us.

Max Feigenwinter, composer, Switzerland

## Entered into Eternal Life

From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021



Part of the sisters' cemetery in Ingenbohl. Image: Meinrad Küng

Sister	Native place	Born	Prof.	Died
<b>Switzerland Province</b>				
Adelinda Hasler	Hellikon AG	1931	1959	18.01.2021
Alena Hauser	Böttstein AG	1927	1958	03.06.2021
Bianca Guscetti	Quinto TI	1925	1948	13.09.2021
Claire-Françoise Besse	Bagnes VS	1930	1953	31.03.2021
Claudilla Kühne	Pfäfers SG	1934	1960	19.02.2021
Ermengard Büeler	Mosnang SG	1933	1959	02.04.2021
Gada Cathomas	Sumvitg GR	1933	1964	10.03.2021
Inge Benz	Marbach SG	1939	1966	27.06.2021
Irena Hufschmid	Niederwil AG	1941	1968	06.03.2021
Irmunda Scherrer	Kirchberg SG	1928	1962	20.06.2021
Lisbeth Kaeser	St. Antoni FR	1941	1962	14.05.2021

Maja Baumgartner	Pfäffikon ZH	1942	1967	27.01.2021
M. Alice Produit	Chamoson VS	1933	1957	04.08.2021
M. Antonina Räss	Appenzell AI	1936	1960	11.07.2021
M. Basilia Stadler	Kirchberg SG	1926	1953	22.09.2021
M. Benedikta Schnyder	Menznau LU	1922	1945	03.03.2021
M. Floriberta Koller	Appenzell AI	1924	1958	24.12.2021
M. Georg Amrein	Schenkon LU	1936	1958	01.02.2021
M. Luitgard Bühler	Bütschwil SG	1934	1957	07.02.2021
M. Piala Näf	Ittenthal AG	1925	1954	26.11.2021
M. Raphaela Bürgi	Wolfwil SO	1923	1950	07.01.2021
Mariehelen Vrečer	Ingenbohl SZ	1930	1955	18.01.2021
Marilena Stadler	Guntershausen TG	1927	1959	30.06.2021
Maximilla Muff	Neuenkirch LU	1929	1957	21.01.2021
Nicoletta Dolfini	Quinto TI	1940	1965	16.07.2021
Ottlilia Littner	Niederrimsingen DE	1929	1960	24.08.2021
Rosaria Maria Alliata	Locarno TI	1931	1956	17.08.2021
Ruthgard Schweizer	Degersheim SG	1936	1964	18.07.2021
Tabitha Müller	Lengnau AG	1931	1960	18.11.2021
Veronica Dazio	Fusio TI	1927	1957	28.11.2021
Veronica Meier	Dättwil AG	1928	1955	27.12.2021
Walfried Bühlmann	Hochdorf LU	1934	1962	04.03.2021
Zita Rosa Germann	Sitterdorf TG	1928	1953	19.10.2021

### Province Croatia

Eleonora Marija Juzbašić	Županja	1952	1975	07.02.2021
Evica Grdić	Nova Bukovica	1951	1974	11.11.2021
Felicitas Blažević	Turić BiH	1948	1970	08.02.2021
Heliana Kodba	Marof	1935	1960	17.10.2021
Hozana Vranjković	Gradac BiH	1934	1961	07.03.2021
M. Valentina Andrašević	Podr. Moslavina	1944	1969	03.12.2021
Marinela Herceg	Gor. Vukojevac	1945	1966	13.06.2021
Nevena Stražanac	Osijek	1941	1963	12.12.2021
Spomenka Andrić	Filipovo, Srbija	1924	1945	05.03.2021

### Province Czech Republic

Emiliana Báborská	Radějo, Mähren	1927	1948	27.08.2021
Marta Kronátová	Praha, Böhmen	1941	1972	24.01.2021
Petra Orbanová	Bystřice p. Host, M.	1968	1994	28.01.2021
Tekla Krahulcová	Nedašov, Mähren	1927	1950	17.08.2021

## Province Baden-Württemberg

Antida Baumann	Löcherberg	1925	1953	31.12.2021
Giselda Maria Adam	Mühlhausen b.W.	1931	1957	07.08.2021
M. Edeltraud Flesch	Endingen a.K.	1949	1974	09.06.2021
M. Heriberga Büchele	Freiburg i.Br.	1927	1956	07.12.2021
M. Iphigenia Burth	Herdwangen	1923	1954	25.01.2021
M. Monika Lang	Kenzingen	1929	1954	19.09.2021
M. Nivarda Strasser	Altheim	1932	1959	22.10.2021
M. Wendelgard Weber	Achern	1935	1959	21.02.2021
M. Wolfgang Strittmatter	Mühlhausen/Heg.	1934	1956	20.09.2021

## Province Slovakia

Gizella Némethová	Horné Semerovce	1929	1953	24.12.2021
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## Province Italy

Emanuela Maria Montesù	Trieste	1933	1955	26.02.2021
Irmgard Tauferer	Ritten-Klobenstein	1935	1961	10.11.2021
Rosalba Dell'Anna	Nardò	1933	1961	16.05.2021

## USA Province

Dolores Wagner	Porterfield. Wisconsin	1924	1951	26.04.2021
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## India Central Province

Helen Tigga	Patratoli, Chhattis.	1927	1958	18.10.2021
Maxima Minj	Keonjhitoli, Jharkh.	1944	1977	07.02.2021
Waldemar Kandamag.	Manjapra, Kerala	1942	1970	23.01.2021

## India North East Province

Anisha Hembrom	Alampur, West Bengal	1971	1997	17.04.2021
Harshita Tigga	Ambakona, Chhatt.	1957	1984	29.03.2021
Maria Kunnappally	Chirakadavu, Kerala	1936	1963	11.07.2021
M. Madlen Valikulathu	Kolapra, Kerala	1936	1961	19.04.2021
Pauline Kerketta	Pinrih, Chhattisgarh	1935	1964	12.10.2021
Theophane Elavumkal	Thidanad, Kerala	1943	1969	24.04.2021
Vandana Vazhakattu	Udumpannoor, Kerala	1945	1970	14.05.2021

## India South Province

Kusum Chemmamadiyil	Kumbalam, Kerala	1936	1971	16.05.2021
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## Mid India Province

Consolata Minj	Rajawal, Jharkhand	1943	1967	12.07.2021
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## Province Europa Mitte

Ambrosia Gattringer	Mauthausen OÖ	1939	1966	06.11.2021
Angelika Auinger	Klagenfurt Ktn.	1933	1957	22.08.2021
Barbara Achrainer	Hopfgarten T	1947	1970	29.09.2021
Beatrix Koidl	Langenwang Stmk.	1925	1949	25.01.2021
Blasia Schneeweiss	St. Georgen OÖ	1930	1953	13.10.2021
Bonagratia Rechtlehner	St. Marienkirchen OÖ	1929	1950	26.05.2021
Claudia Greil	Haidberg Bay.	1936	1956	18.08.2021
Cölestine Huber	Landskron Ktn.	1932	1953	19.10.2021
Consilia Bentele	Göttigshofen BW	1926	1957	19.01.2021
Edith Wagner	Langen a. A. Vbg.	1936	1956	19.08.2021
Hedwigis Eilmsteiner	Windhaag b.Fr. OÖ	1934	1960	12.12.2021
Hilda Scheuerer	Reichertsmühle Bay.	1939	1959	16.03.2021
Josefa Gstrein	Karres T	1943	1964	13.11.2021
Karoline Schmidberger	Mitterkirchen OÖ	1936	1962	22.07.2021
Lidwina Reisinger	Kürn, Bayern	1932	1957	04.08.2021
Maria Beatrix Pendl	Stumm T	1943	1968	11.03.2021
M. Bernharda Brand.	Grünburg OÖ	1923	1954	01.11.2021
M. Birgitt Engelmann	Bacsko Novoselo SRJ	1929	1955	08.01.2021
M. Johanna Wimberger	Haslach OÖ	1928	1955	16.01.2021
Mechthild Mascherbauer	Schwertberg OÖ	1931	1961	17.08.2021
Monika Steiner	Hart am Ziller, T	1935	1958	21.12.2021
Pia Maria Panzl	Schlaiten T	1931	1955	03.10.2021
Sibylla Haberl	Fladnitz Stmk.	1938	1960	17.03.2021
Silvia Fischer	Rohrbach OÖ	1931	1956	15.12.2021
Sophonria Picej	Stift Griffen, Ktn.	1939	1959	04.03.2021
Tarsilla Holzer	St. Peter a.Kgb, Stmk.	1924	1948	12.12.2021
Theresa Schmidt	Feldkirchen OÖ	1933	1961	11.04.2021
Theodora Buchelt	Aussig, Böhmen	1923	1950	17.08.2021
Walburgis Hellert	Lindach Bay.	1935	1959	15.12.2021
Wilburgis Granig	Radenthein, Ktn	1923	1951	24.09.2021



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