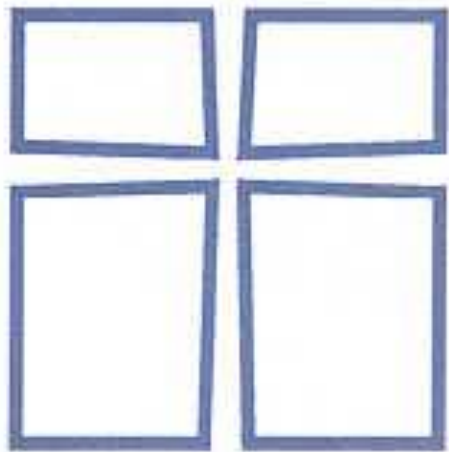

Theodosia



Quarterly
of the Sisters of Mercy
of the Holy Cross
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Stone cross from the crypt

Editorial

In 1886 Mother M. Theresa wrote to a sister: "Your task, as you already know, will be a difficult and arduous one; but you must not despair because of it, but look up to Him from whom all strength proceeds and who sustains the weak reed. In particular, be constant in prayer; for it is from there that you will constantly receive the necessary grace required." (June 4, 1886)

She would have written these words also to the sisters in the new General Leadership and also the General Treasurer, who began their terms of office on January 8 and March 15, respectively. They were elected during the General Chapter held on August 18, 2022 in Altötting.

The sisters briefly introduce themselves through the Theodosia and give an insight into their state of mind and their motivation for the new tasks. The attached pictures are fanned as impressions of the special celebrations in the Motherhouse. We thank the sisters for their Yes to this service for all of us.

Among the texts there is also a homily by Fr. Emmeram Stacheder, our Rector ecclesiae. A painting of Mother M. Theresa let him find fitting words for the farewell of the sisters of the former General Leadership.

Father Theodosius' thoughts on the office of a manager about 160 years ago fit in with the change in the General Treasurer's office.

The delegates at the General Chapter enjoyed the presentations of Fr. Xavier E. Manavath, CMF from Bangalore,

India, under the theme "Community -international, intercultural, prophetic". The Theodosia brings the 1st part of it in this edition.

Three of our sisters have been running a social service center in Patna for three years for Dalit girls and women, who are on the lowest social rank of the Hindu society. According to our charism, they are carrying out the mission: "Education against poverty".

Committed people in the Amazon region are working on a "Musical Workshop Project" to transform the world with music. The project was initiated by Sr. Ledineia Pereira dos Santos.

In the information from the General Leadership, we come to know about an appointment and about the forthcoming visits of the General Team to different provinces.

Each year, the first issue of the Theodosia lists all the sisters who have passed away worldwide in the past year.

On a personal note: Some readers of the Theodosia have noticed that the issue 2022, 3 was missing. Unfortunately, there was no notice that the internal documentation with contents from the General Chapter appeared as 2022, 3. I would like to apologize for having overlooked.

Sister Christiane Jungo

Farewell to the Former General Leadership

Homily on Saturday, January 7, 2023 in the convent church

Father Emmeram Stacheder OFM, Ingenbohl

Dear Sr. Marija, dear sisters of the General Leadership, dear fellow sisters,

In the refectory of the Theresianum Community there is a beautiful picture: Mother M. Theresa at a door with a manuscript in her hand. We do not know if she is going away or if she is going to a meeting with the sisters. The left hand on the door handle, in the right a manuscript. This is how she looks at the viewer before she walks through the door. What is written on the manuscript is indecipherable. Perhaps it is a farewell speech, perhaps an encouragement to the sisters. Whatever the case, Mother M. Theresa does not look as serious and stern in this picture as she does in other pictures. Perhaps it is a feeling of relief at being able to give up something that has become difficult.

"He left Nazareth to dwell in Capernaum, which is by the lake." This verse of the Gospel is found in today's passage. If your home, Sr. Marija, is by



Mother M. Theresa (painting in Theresianum)

the lake, I do not know, nor do the other sisters in the General Leadership. In any case, you set out to live and work for the Congregation here in Ingenbohl, which is on the lake, for several years, even decades. At that time it was a departure, a change of the past, a change of place, even a change of country: Croatia, India, Austria.

And now it is the same again. This time in the opposite direction, to the starting point. In between are years of change in the Church, the religious congregation and the world. We ourselves have changed. So have the place and situation from where you left.

The words of Bishop Manfred Scheuer remind me of what he said during his inauguration as Bishop of his home diocese at Linz: "Everyone is pleased with my return and quite a few believe that we can now resume where we left off. At the same time, we forget that everyone has gone his/her own way during this time, which has changed and shaped him/her and his/her life. Not only the time has become different, we all have become different. So it is a coming back from a quite different way and in an entirely different task. This may prevent us from over-expectation."

In a certain way, you, dear sisters of the previous General Leadership, and you, dear Sr. Marija, like Mother M. Theresa, are standing at a door. The hand on the door handle pointing to the future and looking back at the sisters, places and tasks. Viewing many beautiful encounters, experiences and hours that gave courage and strength. Glancing

back at some difficult things when it concerned the Congregation. Looking back at some things that were difficult to bear and about which one could not speak to anyone because they were very special and yet it was necessary to decide. The hand on the door handle, the glimpse at what remained with a manuscript in the hand, or better, with what remained, like written things. On the other side of the door a new living space! That which accompanies you, to Croatia, to India or Austria, wherever.

I wish you the attitude of Mother M. Theresa at the door, detached and grateful, the door in your hand, going from one space to another, from one place to another.

We all are grateful for what you have done for the sisters and the whole Congregation in this place, by the lake. With this I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude, especially to you, Sister Marija. I wish you a good relaxation, a great release from your previous responsibilities, but you will be missed on the "hill". God be with all of you who have up to now helped to shape the future of the Congregation! And what men cannot reward, may the Lord complete it and make you feel it. It is He who has called you on this journey. Amen.

Official Start of the New General Leadership

On the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, January 8, 2023, during the Eucharistic celebration, Sr. Marie-Marthe Schönenberger, the new Superior General, was entrusted with the office. Her election had already taken place on August 18, 2022, during the General Chapter in Altötting, Germany.

As an expression of connectedness with all the sisters, at the beginning of the celebration a candle was lit for each Province and Vicariate and for House USA, and a candle was lit for each sister of the new General Leadership.

Sr. Marija Brizar, the former Superior General, symbolically handed over her office to Sr. Marie-Marthe, her successor,



Sr. Marija and Sr. Marie-Marthe



Former and new General Leadership: Sr. Roseline, Sr. Rahela, Sr. Verena Maria, Sr. Elsit, Sr. Lucila, Sr. Pratima, Sr. Dorothee, Sr. Marie-Marthe, Sr. Gabriele, Sr. Marija, Sr. Anna, Sr. Sheeja

with a lighted candle and the key of the old Mother House.

Sr. Marie-Marthe had been the Provincial Superior of the Mother Province Switzerland from 2008 - 2017, and after an interim period, served as Assistant to the Provincial Superior. As Superior General, she is assisted internationally by Sr. Gabriele Schachinger, her Assistant from the Province Europa Mitte, and five other Councilors, Sr. Sheeja Kolacherril, India South Province, Sr. Dorothee Halbach, Baden-Württemberg Province, Sr. Pratima Minj, India North East Province, Sr. Rahela Lacković, Croatia Province, and Sr. Roseline Kujur, India Central Province.



Brick with key from old convent



The new General Leadership: Sr. Marie-Marthe, Sr. Gabriele, Sr. Sheeja, Sr. Dorothee, Sr. Pratima, Sr. Rahela und Sr. Roseline (from left to right)

The Sisters from the New General Leadership Introduce themselves

In order to get to know each sister of the new General Leadership better, the editors of Theodosia have asked them a few questions. We thank them for allowing us to be part of their thinking, their motivation and their confidence. We assure them of our support in their responsibilities with our best wishes and prayers..

Sister Marie-Marthe

You bring a lot of experience to your office as Superior General. What are you most grateful for when you look back?

I would like to refer to a quote by Sören Kierkegaard: "One can often only understand life backwards, but one must live it forwards." Sometimes I felt like I was experiencing failure or inability. And yet these were precisely such moments that opened up a different perspective or new opportunities. The accusations against individuals of our fellow sisters and against our community of sisters as a whole in connection with children's homes were difficult to bear, but we bore and bear them together as one community. I am unspeakably grateful to God for this community experience.

After Mother M. Theresia you are the 10th Superior General. Looking at our history shows you many beautiful things, but often also difficult ones. What

gives you courage and confidence today?

Our community gives me courage and confidence. God has sent each one of us here and now with a unique mission in life. We are all called to be messengers of God's infinite love. I trust in God's providence and in the work of the Holy Spirit. For me, the motto of the General Chapter 2022 expresses this concisely: "Moved by God's Spirit, going forward with courage."



Sr. Marie-Marthe

You have the double name Marie-Marthe. What does it mean to you with regard to your new office?

My name has little to do with two sisters of Lazarus, Mary and Martha. I have placed my life under the protection of Mary, the Mother of God. My middle name, Marthe, expresses my devotion and relationship to Marthe Robin, a French mystic who died in 1981. In my personal encounter with her, Marthe told me as we parted "Walk in joy and hope." And so I also see this walking in joy and hope as my mission in life. I try to live out this joy and hope and to pass it on to my fellow human beings. I do not always succeed, but my life is in God's hands and He can change everything for the better at any time.

What worries you most at the beginning of your term of office?

We are experiencing a time of upheaval. I keep asking myself how the political and economic conflicts will affect our worldwide community. Will our sisters be able to continue their mission without being disturbed, or will they have to face persecution or even expulsion in certain areas? But ultimately, these are the same concerns that Father Theodosius Florentini and Mother Maria Theresa had. Perhaps it is precisely these times of upheaval that are an essential part of our

charism: to stand by people in need.

What are you looking forward to?

General Instruction 47 states, "It provides with the preservation of the spirit of unity and love within the entire Institute." In our common vocation as Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross, we want to commit ourselves to carry out the work of our founders and our sisters in the following of Christ. Thus, as a fellow sister, I am happy to be able to meet many of our sisters in their respective places of life and work. The future of our Institute is in the hand of God, but in the here and now we are shaping tomorrow. In the words of our Blessed Mother Maria Theresa, "Do what lies in our power, day after day." No one asks more of us.

Sr. Gabriele

What gives you strength and confidence when you think about the future?

"Trust, for a God guides you and will not let you sink. Trust, but cooperate."

This word of Fr. Theodosius is a good motto on the way into the future. Knowing that we are guided by the confidence that God knows our ways and walks with us gives me strength and confidence again and again.

But also the certainty that we and I as a team are not alone on the way, that we are on the way with many fellow sisters and that they trust us as leadership, that we search and ask together, that many support us, strengthens and gives hope.

To be at the place where our Congregation was founded and to be able to go to the crypt of Mother M. Theresa again and again is a great gift for me. The crypt is a place of strength for me, I can simply be there with all my joys, worries, fears and concerns and I know they are in good hands there.

Mother M. Theresa advised a sister: "Do what lies in your power day after day". What does this advice mean to you?

This advice from Mother M. Theresa is reassuring for me, as it enables me to let go. There are times when the work and the task grow over one's head and one does not know where to start first. But this statement conveys to me that I do not have to become over-giving. If I put in what is possible for me in a good way, that is fine. I don't need to think that I have to do everything. But: Step by step. Look for the particular day and not immediately the whole term.

Since the election day on 18 August 2022, many things have changed for you. Which change



Sr. Gabriele

was/is the biggest challenge for you?

Being elected to the General Leadership has the consequence of leaving home and thus letting go of what is familiar and dear to me (my fellow sisters, friends, family members, my country with its culture).

Even though the Hill was familiar to me from my time in religious formation (almost 40 years ago) and many visits to congresses, chapters, various meetings, now it means being away from my home country for a longer period of time and living in an international community, getting involved with the many sisters and cultures, differences and dissimilarities in the Congregation.

In addition, there is the language barrier, since my English is still very much in need of improvement and I can neither speak nor understand Portuguese or Chinese.

What are you looking forward to?

Getting to know the different sisters, their cultures, their way of life, will certainly be exciting and broaden your horizons. And to experience and help shape the Congregation worldwide! I already got a first impression during my visit to Taiwan, which was very enriching.



Sr. Sheeja

Sr. Sheeja

What gives you strength and hope when you think of the future?

Besides the personal and community spiritual practices, every day I spend some extra time with the word of God. In this way, I feel animated by the spirit of God. I get the strength needed for the daily unfolding of my life in the General team. Reviewing my Religious vocation on a regular basis gives me immense strength. I believe that it was not my doing, but the Spirit of God filled me with zeal on the day of Pentecost in 1980, the day I entered the convent.

The spirit leads you where it will. When I think of the future my hope is that the spirit of God will keep working in me to go ahead with certainty and purpose. I try to answer my Call according to the need of the time. I trust that the LORD who went ahead of the Israelites in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light will also lead me through unknown ways with hope into the future.

How meaningful is the saying of Mother Maria Theresia, “do what lies in your power day after day”?

I am entrusted with certain responsibilities, and I keep doing them with the purpose of contributing to the realization of our charism and vision. Our vision 2028 speaks of the journey

together as pilgrims with the people. It makes me aware of the presence of my sisters near and far in different parts of the world. I hold them in my prayers and remember them and their realities. That is my journeying within the congregation. My various engagement in the General team is also a chance for identifying in trust, and love with the people at large. These are some ways how I understand what Mother Maria Theresa says, "do what lies in your power day after day."

What are the challenges in the responsibility of the General team?

There are lots of challenges in the tasks of the General team. The demands of this responsibility are plenty. It needs a lot of thinking, reflecting, knowing, deliberating, discussing consulting, researching, planning, letting go of nonessentials, and holding fast to life-generating facts. The changes in the General team and the happenings in the provinces, vicariates, and the House USA are invitations to be in search of new ways. Moreover, Religious life everywhere is in a process of continually evolving but in different phases and aspects. Amidst all these situations making sense of my consecrated life, in the footsteps of Jesus with the initial enthusiasm of my Vocation is a challenge. These developments also involve helplessness, disappointments,

and loss of energy and strength. But my spiritual pursuit gets me back to the Source of my life.

What gives me joy in life?

My vocation is my greatest joy. I find no other alternative to my belongingness to the sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross. From various Congresses and Chapters, I get glimpses of unity within the entire congregation. This I consider as the strength to carry on with my responsibility. My passion is to be involved in the mission of the provinces/Vicariates. I am very happy that the work of the General team is accompanied by the prayers of all the sisters. This is also a joyful experience for me.

Sister Dorothee

What gives you strength and confidence when you think about the future?

Eight years ago I began my first term of office in the Leadership. Many different experiences (encounters, visitations, congresses, meetings...) have led me deeper into the Congregation, it is dear to my heart. Through all the learning processes I have been able to recognize God's guidance, from which I draw much strength and hope. With the richness of the past year, I have begun my second term of office in

the team, trusting in God's guidance. This fills me with deep gratitude..

Mother M. Theresa advised a sister, "Do what you can, day by day." What does this advice mean to you?

It is a wonderful word that Mother M. Theresa gives me to take with me on my way. For me, day after day means step by step, I don't have to be able to do everything. I contribute with what God has given me as a solid foundation. With the possibilities that are gifted to me, I carry out my mission. What is in my power, I give joyfully and that just day after day.

Since the election day on August 18, 2022, a lot has changed for you. What was/is the change that challenged you the most?

By August 18, it was clear that I



Sr. Dorothee

was standing for a second term of office as a councilor. The transition during the Christmas season, the change from one leadership to the other, was challenging. The celebrations and the moments of saying goodbye made me realize that everything has a beginning and an end. Life moves on and does not stop.

What are you looking forward to?

I am looking forward to being able to contribute to the team in a co-responsible way and to let it be a new team experience. I am also looking forward to the tasks ahead and to the implementation of our new vision. There is a lot of work ahead of us, but also the promise of future. The most joyful experience for me is that God has accompanied us in everything with His blessing through the last term of office. He will continue to walk with us on all our ways during this term of office!

Sr. Pratima

1. What gives you strength and confidence, when you think about the future?

When I think of the future, what comes to my mind is this verse from the Gospel of St. John. "Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit." (Jn 15/ 5-9) Being firmly rooted in the Lord, nurturing my personal

relationship and deepening my faith in Him I can be effective and bear much fruit in my mission that is entrusted to me.

Life in different communities and various responsibilities especially my work in formation have taught me to accompany and listen to sisters irrespective of their age, culture and background. This I see as a great strength for my service as a general councillor.

Mother M. Theresa advised a sister, "Do what you can, day by day." What does this advice mean to you?

It is the first time that I am working in another country with an international team. Learning a new language, acquainting myself with the new cultures and understanding the mentality of different people are challenges that I am faced with. Being aware of my own limited experience and knowledge I am open to seek help and learn from others.

Therefore, I find the words of Mother Maria Theresa, "Do what lies in your power day after day" especially appealing to me at this time of my life and I value them. They soothe my anxious, uncertain and inadequate feelings and give me strength, comfort and encouragement.

Since the election day on August 18, 2022, a lot has changed for you. What was/is the change that challenged you the most?



Sr. Pratima

Leaving behind the known and the familiar and moving into the unknown and unfamiliar is something that challenges me from deep within.

What are you looking forward to?

I am looking forward to giving my selfless service in the new general leadership team that is called to discern continuously the need of the time and the future of the congregation. It demands total commitment, critical thinking and interior freedom. It is my earnest desire to discern and recognize the Spirit working in me, in all the sisters and the members of the general leadership team. I am also looking forward to meeting many sisters, getting to know their life and mission and to be closely part of our international family.

Sr. Rahela Lacković

1. What gives you strength and confidence, when you think about the future?

God guides our Congregation and I believe that we sisters can be joyful witnesses of the Gospel in today's time, which is often torn by wars and serious calamities. God sends us to people through our dedication and work, our prayer, patience, love, care, simply by being with people.

At difficult moments I am guided by the thought: "The Lord is with me, I will not fear" (Ps 118:6). God gives meaning and strength to our lives, and if we live with him and for him, then we can go into the future full of hope and joy, in all fragility nevertheless. (Vision 2028)

Mother M. Theresa advised a sister, "Do what you can, day by day." What does this advice mean to you?

We should always count on God. We often feel that our own - as well as our collective powers - are small and limited. But it is HE who knows them, knows how great they are, and takes care of them day by day. If we trust in God day by day and do what is in our power, He can bring hope into the



Sr. Rahela

lives of our fellow human beings through us even today, as He did through the lives of our founders.

Since the election day on August 18, 2022, a lot has changed for you. What was/is the change that challenged you the most?

Since August 18, many things have really changed in my life: Work, community, home, place of residence, fellow sisters, language. But the One for whom I live and serve is the same. He already gave me a new community, a new home, a beautiful nature that I admire every day. I want to move forward with renewed joy, dedication and concern for each sister and our Congregation. It is challenging to learn several languages in such a short time, to get used to a

completely new way of working and to suddenly start anew after many years of experience and work. The verse from the Psalm gives me strength: "Commit your ways to the Lord, trust in him, and he will act" (Psalm 37:5).

What are you looking forward to?

Being at the service of nearly 2700 sisters of our worldwide congregation who live and work in different parts of the world is a great responsibility for me, but also a great richness and joy. I look forward to meeting and getting to know many of our sisters personally, seeing their fields of activity, sharing in their joy and success, as well as sharing difficult moments with them. I look forward to working with the other sisters in the General Leadership in searching for the ways that God wants to lead us today.

Sr. Roseline

What gives you strength and confidence when you think about the future?

Confronted by the struggles and difficulties of life, I am reminded of the crucified Jesus, present in the Blessed Sacrament. He went through his public life, punctuated



Sr. Roseline

by struggles, difficulties, misunderstandings, and betrayals, even by his own followers. Despite all that He continued with His mission in this world, that culminated in His death of the cross. Abandoned by everyone, as he lay dying on the cross, everything in His life would have seemed a waste. And yet, we all know how that was to be the beginning of a new life for the world – “the grain that dies.....” Mother Maria Theresa Scherer must have had that image of the life of Jesus in her mind when she said, “Simply go the way of the Lord and seek nothing extraordinary”.

Jesus, the victorious King of the Universe, is my inspiration too.

Ingenbohl, lying in the lap of nature, with its panoramic beauty reminds me of the new resurrected life. The tall, strong mountain calls me to have strong faith in Jesus, and to be ever grateful for all that surrounds me, especially the abundance of natural beauty that adorns this landscape. Here one is continually drawn to “choose life”, and to dispose oneself to be that instrument in the hands of God, to give witness to His Love. Again, as Mother Theresa said, “Much can be done with and for God”.

Our Founders placed utmost trust and confidence in God’s Providence as they resolutely confronted challenges and emerged victorious. Deep within me, I too feel confidence in God’s grace accompanying me. This is not to ignore inexperience or inadequacies linked to the present onerous responsibilities that I am entrusted with as part of the General Team, but the attitude that Mother Theresa

would advise a sister of the cross to have, “Do what lies in your power. Be patient, persevere, pray and trust God”.

Various avenues open up offering challenges to be an effective instrument in God’s Hands, to work for His Kingdom. The election day on August 18, 2022, brought me to such a fork in my journey with God, inviting me part of something hitherto unfamiliar, requiring a lot of trust in God’s grace. I take comfort in the belief, as God told Israel through prophet Isaiah, “ See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands”, (Is 49:16). The crucified Son on the cross strengthens me. I believe in the transformative power of God’s assistance in my doubts, fears and worries in the struggles ahead. I am also confident in the silent presence and support of Mother Maria Theresa Scherer as I plod ahead. She reminds me to be, “patient, persevere, pray and trust in God”.

Farewell and a New Beginning as General Treasurer

During a solemn service on March 15, 2023, Sr. Jaroslava Kotuláková was given a farewell as General Treasurer and Sr. Mirjam Jerković was newly assigned to the office. Sr. Marie-Marthe Schönenberger, the Superior General, thanked Sr. Jaroslava for her more than 18 years of competent service.

She then handed over to Sr. Mirjam the responsible task as General Treasurer. We thank Sr. Jaroslava for the many accomplishments in the past, and we wish Sr. Mirjam God's blessing for what is to come.

The two sisters have answered some questions for the Theodosia, questions on looking at the past and questions on looking at the future. We thank them for sharing this with us.

Sister Jaroslava

You were our General Treasurer for over 18 years. You have had experience in various aspects that we have no idea about. Looking back now, what was particularly challenging in your task?

The task of the General Treasurer is multifaceted. It is carried out in close cooperation with the General Leadership. As I began my work, everything was new to me. I had to learn everything - the language, the culture, the international community, the laws in Switzerland, Switzerland as a country as a whole, establish new contacts

and above all, manage the economy of the worldwide Congregation. Responsibility and trust in God's guidance were not always easy for me to balance. Faithfulness to the charism often demanded courageous action from me. It was important for me to consider and justify the consequences of all decisions about the use of my assets. That is why I often took along the decisions into prayer, in order to feel in silence what could be the right way. Our financial resources are not separate from our charism; on the contrary, they are a tool in the service of our charism.

What was particularly interesting and enriching?

I found this task very interesting and enriching in different directions. I got to know the Congregation more intensively. The contacts with the provinces/vicariates were very enriching for me. I regarded my task as my mission. As Fr. Theodosius said, "God leads us to different places to work for His glory and for the good of the people." I felt it strongly in my mission here in Ingenbohl. I even discovered that my internal phone number 2108,

reminded me of the date of my final profession (August 21).

The most interesting and enriching thing for me was that the first meeting of the European Provincial Treasurers could take place here in Ingenbohl, and also that a video conference was made possible for all the Provincial/Vicariate Treasurers with the theme "Charismatic Plan and Patrimony". I am grateful that during the last General Chapter we were able to approve for the whole Congregation a Charismatic



Sr. Mirjam and Sr. Jaroslava

Plan that gives the basic orientation for asset management at the Institute as well as at the Provincial and Vicariate levels. Many more things could be shared simply: I am extremely grateful for the time I have spent working here in the Generalate of the Motherhouse.

Being a treasurer is probably not the "dream profession" of a young religious sister, who entered the convent for religious reasons. What motivated you in your multifaceted tasks?

For me, the life and charism of our founders are the great motivation of my vocation. During my vows, which I took secretly, I received a small picture from Sister Gertrud Furger, who was the Superior General at that time, with the saying of Mother Maria Theresa: "With God and for God, we can do many things. This accompanies me with great strength inwardly. Therefore, every task in the convent until now has been for

me with this meaning - "for God and with God" - "dream task", although I never thought that I would become a treasurer in the convent.

What would you still like to tell us before we say goodbye?

I would like to thank you very much for the years spent on the convent hill. I was privileged to be here, where our founders worked. I was able to follow in "their footsteps" every day... I really appreciated every meeting with the sisters, and I am very grateful to my fellow sisters for all the help I received, especially at the very beginning of my task. I wish Sr. Mirjam, my successor, much joy, courage, trust and God's rich blessing on this responsible and challenging task. "God will guide you, have trust!"

Sister Mirjam

You will assume the office of General Treasurer on March 15.

Would you please briefly tell us what your tasks have been so far!

Yes, on March 15, I am to assume the office of General Treasurer. After I made my final profession, I took charge of a nursing home for people with dementia. Four years of work in this project was followed by two years of pastoral work in our house in Rijeka and in the Youth Center of the archdiocese.

The themes of “money and spirit” contain a great tension. What do these topics do to you ; because your motivation for the convent was certainly a spiritual in nature ?

Yes, that's true. I cannot say that I simply have to struggle with this tension. In today's world, a young person enters a convent to distance oneself from the world and then from

money. I must admit that the role of the General Treasurer was certainly not my idea of religious life. At the same time, I believe that God knows why He does something and allows it.

What are you looking forward to?

With all your good will, you certainly also have worries when you think about the future!

I look forward to God's surprises. When you start anew, there are many ways God can pleasantly surprise us. On the other hand, to tell you the truth, I have many worries. My personal shortcomings and difficulties, language, inexperience, instability at the global world level.... all this is a heavy load on my shoulders. But I believe that God will strengthen me and raise me up.

Thoughts of Father Theodosius on the Office of a Manager

Background: It is interesting for us to read what Fr. Theodosius thought about the task of an manager about 160 years ago.

The most important work of Father Theodosius is known as the "Legends of the Saints ". In four volumes he takes over in each case under the date of a saint in a first part a short representation of the life from existing sources. In another part he adds insights and teachings from the life of this saint for the present. He calls this part "Lesson".

Fr. Theodosius did not want to simply leave the saints in the past, but to show that they have something to say for the present as well. (The first volume was published in 1860. At his unexpected death, he had reached All Saints Day in the fourth volume. Fr. Honorius Elsener OFM Cap and Fr. Viktor Brunner OFM Cap completed the work in the spirit of the author).

Father Theodosius writes on the Feast of St. Boniface:

The life of St. Boniface up to his conversion shows us how a manager must not be, and at the same time how he should be.

A manager must not consider himself the owner of the property, but only the manager of it in the name of his master and for him. Therefore, he may not use it as he pleases, may not seek his own benefit with it, but it



Fr. Theodosius (painting in Motherhouse)

belongs to his master; in his name and on his behalf, according to his will and for his benefit, he should take care of the entrusted goods and business... If a manager acts as an owner, seeking his own benefit, it is sin, presumption, injustice and theft.

He must therefore take the greatest possible care of what is entrusted to him, avoid harm and promote advantage. That is what he is employed for: for a fortune can be let go to ruin without a paid manager.

A manager must not leave his subordinate workers to their own devices, nor be indifferent to how they behave, but must watch over their activities and conduct; he must not give himself up to idleness, gambling and drinking, but must cooperate to the best of his ability and generally set a good example... How much good can managers do if they precede their subordinates in

word and deed, encourage the good and restrict or remove the bad?

Finally, a manager must not be an eye-servant, but must fulfill his task diligently and because of God... Dear reader, if you are entrusted with the care of someone else's good: be faithful to your temporal master, like God himself; avoid his harm and promote his benefit; be active and vigilant; set a good example to all and do everything with diligence for the sake of God....

Prayer: Saint Boniface! Grant me the grace always to take care of the goods and transactions entrusted to me according to God's will, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

From: Legends of the Saints, third part, Orphanage Paradies Ingenbohl, Canton Schwyz, Edition 1888

Community - International, Intercultural, Prophetical

Fr. Xavier E. Manavath, CMF, Episcopal Vicar for Religious, Archdiocese of Bangalore, India
Presentation at the General Chapter 2022 in Altötting Germany, Part 1

Reflections on religious life in general

Thank God, we are meeting in the aftermath of the Corona Virus and its universal impact. (Note: This statement was the author's assumption.) We are all hit by it worldwide, universally and massively. We are forced to take a fundamental re-look at life again, thankfully not just religious life, but the whole of human life and all its interactions, including religious life and its community life. This is truly significant. But for the time being, let us look at what has been assigned to me, *Religious community life*.

1. Re-visioning of the foundations

Before we address the question of community, there is a much more fundamental question we need to ask. What are the essentials or the key values constitutive of our identity as



Symbolic image: Time changes (clock of the old church tower)

religious men and women? Let me begin with the narration of a story of *the three philosophers on a train journey*. An awareness of the fundamentals and the courage to recast them into new forms is necessary for any authentic renewal of religious life. I would call this process a **“re-visioning of the foundations.”**¹

¹ I am deeply indebted to two scholars: Adrian Van Kaam, cssp and his seven volumes work on Formative Spirituality and the Science of Foundational Human Formation and Diarmuid O'Murchu, msc and his several works on religious life such as *Religious Life: A Prophetic Vision* (1991), *Refounding*

Religious Life (2015) etc. I draw on the foundational theme tracing as developed by Van Kaam and the concept of 'refounding' as developed by O'Murchu. They taught me how to read history formatively and more imaginatively and embrace its outcomes in more discerning ways.

The assumptions upon which we reconstruct the religious life in the 21st century are radically different from previous epochs. While I hold on to and endorse – the *Sequela Christi* (the following of Christ) as the basic rationale for the vowed life, do I really know what this “following” truly means today, in the world of our times; it calls for a substantial redefinition arising from contemporary Biblical scholarship and a rapidly changing Christian consciousness.

2. Religious life in a domesticated mould

The crisis we face today is not just one of decline of vocations; rather it is rooted in the very understanding of religious itself, either in India or in Europe. This is our common crisis. Once we clarify this, we are better prepared to deal with whatever crisis we face. To me, there are many distortions in the way we understand and live religious life.²

We are currently living a domesticated form of religious life which is conditioned by a particular socio-cultural and historical mould.³ It is a situation where we all get so used to or conditioned by a particular, historical, regional, and socio-cultural mould that restricts and blurs our vision. It is a vision of life, though grounded in the present, stifles, blurs and suffocates our way of seeing things around, making it a “tunnel vision.” We see only what is in front of our eyes. Various are the problems that result from such an *entrenched* living: institutionalism, routinism, ritualism, doctrinalism, legalism, regionalism, fanaticism etc.

In such a domesticated living, fidelity is often understood as blind conformity to certain features of the vowed life in the past. We conveniently forget that what the Spirit of God wants from us is creative fidelity, a “dynamic fidelity, adapting forms, if need be

² If time permits, we shall watch a polish movie, titled, *Corpus Christi*.

³We could call it as the problem of *entrenchment*. We see only what is in front of our eyes. Philosophers call it, the problem of *restrictive consciousness*. It is a vision that remains closed to the Spirit of God

who, in fact, continuously opens up our horizons. See Xavier E. Manavath, CMF, “Working through the Entrenchment in Religious Living,” *Sanyasa: Journal of Consecrated Life*, Vol. VII. No.1. June 2012.



Symbolic image: Community intercultural, prophetic (ceiling convent church)

to new situations different needs, in complete openness to God's inspiration" ⁴. This fidelity must be to certain fundamental and core values, an "enduring archetypal wisdom" born of the Gospel, which we are called to embody.⁵ Unfortunately, this fidelity is often perceived as a

static and blind identification of those values with certain forms that are historically conditioned and such forms cannot stand up to discerning scrutiny in the evolutionary culture of the 21st century. We simply are not open to the evolutionary forms of expression of those

⁴ *Vita Consecrata*, art. 37.

⁵ *Archetypes* - derived from two Greek words: *arche* meaning first and *typos* meaning type or form. Archetypes have been adopted by both anthropology and psychology to name and explain those sublime energetic forces that transcend our rational and common-sense modes

of understanding. All archetypal truth is spiritual in nature, often transcending the doctrines and structures of the formal religions. In Christian language, we consider the Holy Spirit of God to be the energizing source and sustaining power of all creativity, embodied foundationally in archetypal values.

values.⁶ We look for monolithic uniformity in the midst of the diversity of the forms of those values and expressions, leading to a kind of cultural imperialism, subordination or suspicion. Instead of accepting the urgent spiritual and cultural challenge to engage more responsibly with God's world (the earth) entrusted to our care, we fall on the spirituality of the *fuga mundi* (flee the world), understood as an escape from this vale of tears to guarantee individual salvation in a life hereafter. Correspondingly, the evangelical counsels are seen more negatively, in disciplinary and moralistic terms rather than positively, appreciatively and creatively in

ways that nurture and transform life and world around us.

3. Loss of a sense of historicity

Added to this is the tragedy that we study everything else systematically except religious life which is our very home. Little do we realize that we belong to a charismatic movement, initiated by the Holy Spirit, centuries ago. It is as old as the history of the Church; originated at a certain time, in a certain form, in a certain context and has evolved and expressed itself successively in various forms all through centuries, following a pattern of rise and fall of these forms in the midst of the changes in the church and in the world.

⁶Currently, Sr. Ilia Delio OSF, Director of Catholic Studies at Georgetown University (Washington, DC) is the best known proponent of this evolutionary perspective. Largely inspired by the vision and writings of the Jesuit priest and palaeontologist, Teilhard de Chardin, she integrates a range of different insights from both science and theology. See Ilia Delio, 2013. *The Unbearable Wholeness of Being*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2013 and *From Teilhard to Omega*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2014. Another inspiring and well informed source is John Haught, distinguished re-search professor, Georgetown

University, Washington, DC. See Haught (2010); (2015). How the Darwinian understanding of evolution can be integrated with mainline Christian theology is compellingly illustrated by theologian Elizabeth Johnson's *Ask the Beasts* (2013). A fine overview of both the Teilhardian and Darwinian perspectives, infused with deep spiritual wisdom, is provided by the American journalist, Carter Phipps's *Evolutionaries* (2012), while Barbara Marx Hubbard's *Conscious Evolution* (1998) provides a popular introduction for those coming fresh to the topic.

Thirdly, as religious congregations, we are often wrapped up in the history of our own congregations, as Holy Cross in the present form that we are familiar, a version of the entrenched form of living. Diarmuid O'Murchu, MSC writes: "Sometimes, we are so wrapped up in the story of an individual Order/Congregation, we miss the empowering richness of the larger landscape of the vowed life."⁷ Charisms are often identified with certain ministries, like skills in teaching, health care, social work, and are seen disassociated from the bold, pioneering, innovative and fiery charismatic vision born of contemplation of the Gospel. Instead of being domesticated by a conventional church and society, we need a wider vision, made of a fusion of horizons.⁸

In any attempt for renewal, we must search for this "empowering richness" that comes from a vision of the larger landscape of religious life. Such a vision can illuminate our collective past, ground our present-day transitions, and provide a liberating hope for possibilities beyond our ultimate demise. Amid the waves of change (cycles of birth, growth and Decline) there are enduring truths and these tend to be encased not in legal or institutional structures but in certain core archetypal values, which themselves will require new language and cultural containers if their enduring truth is to remain relevant. We must search for, discover and recast them if we are to be relevant. We lose sight of our *Fundamental Charism* as religious as we hold on to our

⁷O'Murchu (2015), 4

⁸ Pope Francis writes in this context. "Recounting our history is essential for preserving our identity, for strengthening our unity as a family and our common sense of belonging. Recounting our history is essential for preserving our identity, for strengthening our unity as a family and our common sense of belonging. More than an exercise in archaeology or the cultivation of mere nostalgia, it calls for following in the footsteps of past generations in order to grasp the high ideals, and the vision and values which inspired

them, beginning with the founders and foundresses and the first communities. In this way we come to see how the charism has been lived over the years, the creativity it has sparked, the difficulties it encountered and the concrete ways those difficulties were surmounted. . . . Yet everything proves instructive and, taken as a whole, acts as a summons to conversion. To tell our story is to praise God and to thank him for all his gifts." Pope Francis, *To all Consecrated People*, Apostolic Letter (November 21, 2014).

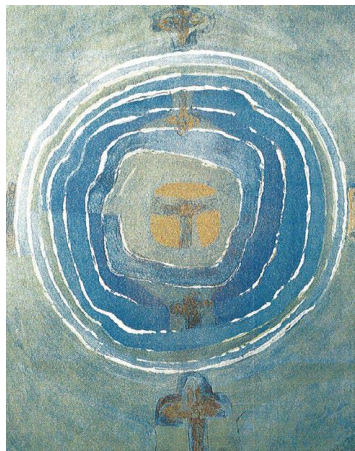
specific charisms in a “dangerously exclusive and idolatrous fashion.” What we share in common is theologically and culturally more significant than what sets us apart.

4. Searching for the essentials and re-founding them

In one of the Ecclesial Documents on Religious Life, we read: “Historical and cultural changes bring about evolution in the lived reality, but the forms and direction that the evolution takes are determined by the essential without which religious life loses its identity.”⁹

4.1. Assisted by a historical and formational perspective

Since for most of us in religious life, our vision about the evolving reality of religious life is narrow, we cannot rightly understand and



Symbolic image: Searching for the essential (Tau sign Irma Bamert)

interpret what is happening to us today. This is where history comes to help us today. In the words of Diamurid Omurchu: “For me, it is the history of Religious Life, more than any other aspect that grounds my hope and enables me to make sense of what has been transpiring over the past several decades. Within the historical overview I detect an unfolding pattern which helps to make sense of the rise and

⁹See *Essential elements in the church's teaching on religious life as applied to institutes dedicated to*

works of the apostolate, Document from the Sacred Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life (1983), 4.

fall of Religious Orders and Congregations over time.”¹⁰

History of Religious Life has long served as a beacon of light amid the confusion and painful letting-go that characterize every era of decline, death and birth of a new form.

We all know that the present form of religious life is in crisis.

- Certainly we would like to live at those historical moments when Religious Life was growing and flourishing.
- But ours is a different kind of moment, not of triumph and glory, but of decline and disintegration, not just in Europe but even in India, though not as fast as in Europe.¹¹
- While many Religious talk and write about this downward phase, few embrace its unfolding with hope. Denial is quite widespread,

amid a subdued complacency that is resistant to any kind of disturbance of the morbid status-quo.

- Let’s die in peace seems to be the unspoken undercurrent.

We need to gratefully acknowledge that ours, too, is a moment of grace. It is certainly a type far more unsettling and prophetically disturbing than that of our triumphant moments. However, beneath all the confusion, our Lord is calling us to “live with integrity – and even with fresh vision – in the midst of the fragmentation all around us. In these Calvary times, as in every dark night, seeds are fermenting, maybe even beginning to sprout. It takes discerning hearts to see where the enduring hope is arising.”¹² It is in this context that I see your search for reflections on your Congregational Community: International, Inter-cultural and Prophetic at this General Chapter.

¹⁰ Omurchu (2015), 3.

¹¹ It seems that we are not handling this crisis well as priest anthropologist, Gerald A. Arbuckle chronicles. Our entire culture is addicted to a false sense of immortality, so alien to the natural world where everything evolves through the organic process of birth-death-new life. We dread chaos and we can’t

stomach the thought of extinction, the need to let go when we have done our work. We need to grieve and mourn our losses, thus freeing ourselves to welcome the new breakthrough of resurrection possibility. See Gerald A. Arbuckle, *The Francis Factor and the People of God*. New York: Maryknoll, 2015.

¹² O’Murchu, 3.

4.2. Engaging in an act of creative fidelity

For me, every re-founding, including of our own congregational community, is a gift of the spirit, a divine initiative, and from our part, we need to respond as an ACT OF CREATIVE FIDELITY, of which John Paull II talks about in *Vita Consecrata*.

- We must always remember that we are heirs of the early Christian monastics, portrayed as ascetical heroes, battling the forces of evil in the lonely isolation of the desert-wilderness, a kind of white martyrdom sought out to complement martyrdom of the blood, the ultimate mark of Christian heroism.
- Though we renounce the ideology of a patriarchal hero, we must seek to reclaim the deep, ancient wisdom inscribed in both monastic and apostolic forms of consecrated life.
- What it implies is that reverence for the past traditions alone may not be enough anymore. They were often based on erroneous assumptions derived from the philosophies and sciences of the time that are no longer applicable today. Some of the past forms could be built on out dated, worn-out or one-sided philosophical presuppositions.
- Some of our structures and traditions may be too ill for meaningful and relevant existence today. We are unable

to let them go because of fear that comes from a wrong understanding of fidelity.

- Real need to rethink and regroup religious values in dialogue with the pluralistic world that we live in. For example, consecration, communion, mission, chastity, poverty, obedience, spirituality, fasting etc. are all values which were lived out in different forms; they need to be rethought and re-grounded.
- We must know that fidelity must always be to the value that can express itself in a variety of forms and not to a particular form.
- Creative fidelity, therefore, calls for discovering timely, relevant, appropriate and effective forms of living our consecration, communion and mission. We need to search for "new wineskins."
- Called for in this process are shifting of our assumptions, positions, world-views, horizons, spirituality etc., and elucidating the essentials and re-articulating the essentials in new forms.
- The true heroism of this age, and every other, is the search for a creative discipleship of the incarnational Christ, striving to realize a deep love for God, in and through the compassionate empowerment of people and planet alike and nuanced through the charismatic perspective of the Sisters of the Mercy of the Holy Cross.

- In this model of creative discipleship of Jesus, the ideology of the hero must give way to the archetype of the lover. Religious life is all about an 'asceticism of love. It is no longer a case of imitating a sacrificial, suffering hero, but of embracing the daring empowering mission of the Gospel imperative of the New Reign of God on earth. When we seek first this Gospel prerogative, we are invited to a following of Christ (Sequela Christi) that is much more about the transformation of this world, and all the inhabitants of planet earth, rather than a privileged escape to our own salvation hereafter. It is a creative endeavor in which we can become co-creators, a participative challenge of displacement, huge risk, and enormous creativity.¹³
- Evolutionary transitions throughout the ages – whether understood in cultural, social or religious terms – calls us to let go of past securities, so that we are more open and receptive to the new things God is co-creating, as the emerging future lures us forth. And nothing can escape such evolutionary emergence. In this evolutionary process, nothing sacred is lost entirely, but can be so transformed that it requires discerning wisdom to see the rich interweaving of the old and the new in all that unfolds.
- For many people, these are daunting times full of disturbing challenges. But let it be known that so were the parables of Jesus as initially experienced. Christian discipleship was born out of a massive paradigmatic shift, despite the continuities with Judaism which modern Scripture scholars like to highlight. We are co-disciples in the endeavour of making all things new (cf. Rev. 21:5). Let's embrace the task with vision and hope!
- So much by way of Introduction. Let us pray for "the grace of re-founding.

¹³ Walter Brueggemann writes so prophetically in the wider context of what is happening today. "Our known world is under judgment and is ending, the known world of moral certitudes, technological superiority, political dominance, and economic monopoly. All of the energy used to keep that old imperial world intact is not helpful, is wasted, and is in fact a way of disobedience. . . . There is a kind of conspiracy of deception that keeps the dominant values in our culture credible. We cover over the realities of human hurt and human hope with slogans of mastery, control,

and security. . . . To some extent we have all become apostles of continuity, extrapolation, and derivation. Such a view of newness that is not real newness makes us grudging and fearful. It urges us to keep the wagons tightly in a circle. Such a view of the future robs us of vitality because we believe that what we have is the only source of anything in the future. W. Brueggemann, *The Hopeful Imagination*. Minn: Fortress Press, 1986, 17, 28, 29. More in Brueggemann in *Reality, Grief, Hope: Three Urgent Prophetic Tasks*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014, 92, 101, 120.

From the Everyday Life of Our Sisters at Jeevdhara Social Service Centre, Lodipur, Patna

Sr. Serena Muttattumalayil, Sr. Sony Augustine, Sr. Suman Ekka, India North East Province

Three years ago, our sisters in Patna took over a social service center that corresponds very much to our charism: the promotion of the Dalits, especially girls and women. The Dalits are still considered untouchable and impure according to the religious distinction in Hinduism. They are on the bottom rung of the social ladder. Discrimination against the Dalits continues despite constitutional guarantees from the Indian government. They are still excluded from social life in many areas and pursue 'unclean' jobs such as washerman, hairdresser and garbage collector. The center "Jeevdhara" is a blessing for many.

A Call to be on the way with and for the poorest of the poor in the society. "Compassion is the ultimate expression of highest self," says Russel Simmons.

Social Service Centre

In the year 2020, a long-cherished dream came true for the sisters who are engaged in the field of social work, especially those who are working with Dalits and Maha Dalits - known as the Musahars which means the Rat eaters. Jeevdhara Social Service centre at Lodhipur was inaugurated on 2nd February 2020, a community with 3 sisters, Superior of the community is Sr. Serena Muttattumalayil, Sr. Sony Augustine is an experienced social service field worker, Sr. Suman Ekka for various services in the centre. These dedicated sisters bring hope and dignity for the hostel Dalit girls who are at Jeevdhara - a secure place for

them to live and learn. In Jeevdhara, they have opportunity for various skill development courses, like tailoring, computer education, cooking, gardening etc. The whole purpose is to emancipate these girls and women.



Sr. Suman, Sr. Serena, Sr. Sony



Sr. Sony in dalit village

We are ever grateful to foundation Maria Theresia Scherer Ingenbohl, for supporting financially to build up this Social Service Centre at Lodhipur. We are ever indebted to “Meggen Mission – a Bridge to the World” from Switzerland help us every year with a good amount to go forward empowering the Dalit children, girls and women.

Now we would like give you readers a glimpse of our mission activities in empowering our Dalit Girls and Women who live below human dignity.

From the life in the Social Service Center

Jeevdhara Social Service centre, as its name signifies, gushes a life-giving stream of compassion in 25 villages in three blocks of Bihar. The vision of Jeevdhara is-empowered and self-reliant society. Sr. Sony Augustine along with 31 staff reaches out to villages and organizes various socio-economic empowerment programs like: -

- Empowering Women, Adolescent, Youth and Children through inclusive education camp; skill development program to improve their quality of life.
- An intervention to improve health, status of infant and children through better nourishment camp.
- Ambedkar Purna Dal– creating leaders among Dalit children.
- Self Help Groups - making Women financially independent.
- Financial Support for Higher Education of Dalit Girls.

Through these significant social interventions promote:

- Intellectual pursuit of the Dalit

community, socio-economic empowerment of women, protection of human rights, skill development of youth and enhancement of social capital have created springs of dignity, equality and freedom.

Jeevdhara opens up an avenue to meet their basic needs. Many women come to our centre, just to pour their heart out in their pain and agony. Just listening itself heal them to some extent. When there is a dispute or attack in the Musahar village, they either run to us or call telephonically to be at their

side.

Heart-breaking real-life painful situations are hard to endure. For an example a 12-year-old girl came to our campus in tears. Despite her interest to continue studies, her parents wanted to marry her off. She told us that she was frightened to return home. Since we were helpless, we had to send her back home. Unfortunately, after a few months she was compelled to marry. Mostly girls, are married at a very early age and frequently to older men. The results of early marriages are a lengthy widowhood.



Dalit girls at Jeevdhara hostel

Sangeeta was born in a backward Dalit family. She got married at the age of 16 as it was a customary practice in the region, sad to note, on the first day of her marriage, Sangeeta realized that she had married an alcoholic who had an illicit relationship. Her married life turned out to be a very bitter one with more violence and abuse than any human being could possibly endure. In such challenging situation, residential program commenced at Jeevdhara, Lodipur for the adolescent girls was an audacious stride. Today 51 girls stay at Jeevdhara and pursue their educational career. Now, when we look into their eyes, we catch the sight of hope and courage in them. The first batch who completed their schooling have moved out to Mangalore, Karnataka for their further training as nurses. A big change, a huge challenge taken up!

Since a year and a half, a 5-year-old girl called Riya, is staying with us at Jeevdhara since a whose mother is

mentally disturbed and father, is a drunkard old man, who never bother the well-being of the child. She had a younger brother born healthy, but lack of care died. Therefore, we brought her here when she was three and a half years old, and now she is very smart, full of life and started her schooling. Thus, life at Jeevdhara is full of surprises and creative sharing of what we are and what we have with these our less privileged sisters here and in the villages. Any time a knock is expected in their need, either for some material help or for an attentive listening. Life gives us a lot of contentment, when we are with the real poor and needy and experience the providential care of our God at every turn. What our founders said, come true in our life, "Trust, it is God who leads us."

Presently, Jeevdhara turns out to be an abode of blessing for widows. Skill-based training offers them confidence to face challenges and enhance the quality of their lives. A production unit is

set up for them, 18 widows are working there and finding income their daily living.

Jeevdhara becomes handicapped amidst cases of hunger death. Recently, half a dozens of cases were reported where dead bodies were thrown into river Ganges, as the relatives didn't have sufficient money to cremate the dead bodies. Children prefer to go for picking up rags rather than going to school. For picking up rags offers a stomach full meal at the end of the day. But, if they go to school, they might go to bed in empty stomach. There are cases of younger girls being misused by the higher castes. In case, they

file a suit, the girls are beaten up.

As Jeff Brown, the author of the Uncommon Bond says, "Compassion is not just a word. It's a way of being. It's not just a concept. It's love in action." Its challenge and invitation to make visible the motto of our congregation, "The need of the time is the will of God."



Education to fight against poverty

"Music can Transform the World"

A Musical Workshop Project in the Amazon Region

Sr. Ledineia Pereira dos Santos, Salvador BA , Vicariate Brazil

The great musician Ludwig van Beethoven knew that music can transform the world. In this spirit, courageous women and men in the Amazon region of Brazil are supporting a musical project for young people.

The Musical Workshop Project

It was initiated for children and young people to learn how to play musical instruments, such as the recorder, guitar, keyboard, etc. The children live in the district of Itapeaçú in the city of Urucurituba - in the Amazon region of Brazil, where our sisters began their mission five years ago. The project was initiated out of my concern that the children were without opportunities to develop their talents and gifts. In addition, mothers were seeking help for their sons and daughters to protect them from use of drugs and violence and from the risk of suicide.



Living in Amazon region

This reality touched me deeply, and I began to talk about it in the community and with the Vicariate Leadership. At the same time, I was looking for a way to change the present reality. Thus, the idea of a music-related activity was developed as I had realized that the children and adolescents could handle instruments with such ease. I also knew about the impact of music in people's lives. So we made a decision to initiate a musical-workshop-project.

The beginnings and first achievements

It began in 2020 with 70 participants of the age group 7-18 years old. Distance learning was planned three times a week with a young animator who supported the children during this time. All students who participated in the recorder lessons were able to buy their own flute, which enabled them to practice at home.

The project made the faces of the participants shine, the empty time was used positively, the contact with drug addicts was eliminated,

it also stopped the temptation to commit suicide.

By the end of six months, the project was known throughout the community. The community asked the children to perform during religious and social events.

The budget for the music project was for the duration of six months, from May to November 2022, but the involvement of the children and the volunteer work of teachers and helpers made it possible to extend the activities until December. The Christmas performances motivated the children to expand the repertoire with Christmas carols and make the celebration of the birth of Jesus very special. With the presence of teachers who taught online, the rehearsals became more lively. Since children and teenagers were already on school vacation, rehearsals took place every day for several hours. After the rehearsals, everyone was more confident and better at playing the flute, guitar and with the percussion instruments, so that it was possible to prepare an agenda of performances and activities for the end of the year. The first presentation was the reception of guests at the graduation ceremony of High School students from the district of Itapeaçu AM and its neighboring villages.

The next day we made a film for the live channel Facebook of



Sr. Ledinaia

Prelazia (similar to a diocese). On the eve of Christmas after the celebration of the Word of God, the performances took place in the village of Terra Preta (Black Earth), 9 km from the district town. The transportation was done by truck that brought them to the village. Everyone enjoyed the adventurous journey, as it was dangerous due to the road conditions and the uncertainty of the transport. The group divided for the performances in the chapels of St. Sebastian and Immaculate Heart of Mary. The singers contributed to the special atmosphere of the celebrations. The official performance with the complete repertoire was on Christmas Day in the community of São Sebastião. The relatives of the young musicians were present to witness this great event. It was a touching moment. At the end of the performance,

the children received gifts from the villagers. In fact, at the beginning of Advent, the children had been invited to write their wishes and place them on the "Tree of Solidarity" that was placed in the chancel of the church. Those who liked could take an envelope and take care of providing a gift for the day of the performance. It was a special night for all.

The next day was a free day for community games, soccer and lots of music. Everyone brought something for the common refreshment. It was a happy afternoon with a lot of emotions.

We ended the year's activities with a closing ceremony together with the students' relatives and some representatives from different villages. They were given certificates. During this moment we remembered the birth of the project, the challenges we had faced and the progress we had made. It was also an

opportunity to thank everyone from near and far who had helped make this dream come true. We ended the celebration with a dinner together.

We look forward to 2023 with great hope that the project will continue to support and strengthen the talents of children and youth in the district of Itapeaçú and neighboring villages. We intend to continue working with the students who began the process in 2022 and to start new groups in the villages of São Sebastião, Terra Preta and Immaculate Heart of Mary. Recorder courses will be the first activities there. The dream is becoming a reality. We understand that not everyone has the same ability and affinity for an instrument therefore, we want to expand the project with dance and drama, offering new opportunities for more children and youth. We need more hands to help us extend this chain of goodness.



We are always in need of support from people for the remuneration of teachers and helpers and for the purchase of instruments.

An experience of Sister Lidia Boito:

I can only confirm what has been written. I saw with amazement how shy children and young people opened up and became accessible. I noticed not only the progress in playing, but they gained self confidence and communication skills, showed perseverance in practicing, even when it became difficult for some of them. Some teachers from these students noticed progress in learning, and their concentration in class improved as well. Making music has many positive effects, especially in listening to each other, interacting with each other, in the family and in the school.

Although I am no longer in Itapeacu, I am delighted that with new enrollments, the music project is expanding, and the existing groups are continuing.



Information from the General Leadership

Appointment

On March 10, 2023, the General Leadership appointed Sr. Dorothea Maria Oehler as Provincial Councilor for the Province Baden-Württemberg for the course of the already existing term of office. We wish Sr. Dorothea Maria a good start in her new task and God's blessing.

Taiwan from February 19 to March 6, 2023.

From June 1 to 15, 2023, the entire General Leadership will be visiting individual European Provinces: Province Slovakia, Province Czech Republic and Province Europa-Mitte. May God's blessing accompany them throughout their journeys, encounters and discussions.

Visits

Sr. Marie- Marthe paid a visit to the Province Italy from February 11 to 21, 2023. Sr. Dorothee visited the House USA from February 17 to March 5, 2023. Sr. Gabriele had a visit to the Vicariate

Small statistics - 2022

Sisters with Final vows	2500
Junior Sisters	192
Candidates/postulants	112
Novices	37
Reception into novitiate	33
Sisters with First vows	46
Deceased sisters	94

Entered into Eternal Life

From 1st January 2022 to 31st December 2022



Part of the sisters' cemetery in Ingenbohl

Sister	Native place	Born	Prof.	Died
Province Switzerland				
Adelmut Ackermann	Mels SG	1936	1963	02.08.2022
Alfreda Maria Blöchliger	Ernetschwil SG	1927	1952	20.02.2022
Aniceta Schuler	Lachen SZ	1935	1960	05.04.2022
Anmarie Brogli	Zeiningen AG	1925	1954	25.07.2022
Arntraud Koller	Alt St. Johann SG	1929	1958	11.11.2022
Beda Högger	Gossau SG	1931	1960	09.11.2022
Clotilde von Arx	Egerkingen SO	1934	1959	02.05.2022
Dagmar Käppeli	Mühlau AG	1934	1961	24.09.2022

Fernanda Pagani	Caneggio TI	1930	1958	13.08.2022
Gabriela Beata Schildknecht	Waldkirch SG	1926	1951	25.01.2022
Gerda Maria Stäuble	Sulz AG	1932	1961	17.10.2022
Gianna Solèr	Lumbrein GR	1932	1957	12.05.2022
Guida Hüttenmoser	Rorschacherberg SG	1936	1965	04.03.2022
Guido Maria Bruhin	Schübelbach SZ	1930	1955	21.04.2022
Gustaviana Müller	Spiringen UR	1937	1962	16.12.2022
Irene Leib	Warth TG	1933	1958	06.10.2022
Juliette Andrey	Oberschrot FR	1943	1967	21.12.2022
Marie Rose Henger	Altdorf UR	1948	1971	13.03.2022
M. Assumpta Tinguely	La Roche FR	1935	1959	20.11.2022
M. Denyse Schouwey	Hauteville FR	1929	1954	16.05.2022
M. Ermina Müller	Bütschwil SG	1927	1951	12.07.2022
M. Gottfrieda Obrist	Sulz AG	1928	1953	06.07.2022
M. Lilia Stauber	Zetzwil AG	1929	1952	09.09.2022
Pia Rosa Lehmann	Schmitten FR	1931	1954	09.11.2022
Regina Maria Imhof	Attinghausen UR	1945	1975	30.04.2022
Regula Holdener	Oberiberg SZ	1945	1974	10.05.2022
Stephanie Lüchinger	Oberriet SG	1935	1959	07.12.2022
Zoe Maria Isenring	Ganterschwil SG	1938	1965	12.04.2022

Province Croatia

Dobroslava Marinić	Viljevo	1925	1951	23.12.2022
Emerana Knežević	Golinci	1937	1958	19.01.2022
Jakobina Miličić	Štitar	1941	1963	23.04.2022
Lauda Adamović	Rakitovica	1930	1955	05.03.2022
Marcelina Živković	Podr. Moslavina	1942	1965	08.07.2022
Margareta Jakobovac	Drenovci	1933	1956	20.04.2022
Bernardica Golubičić	Bošnjaci	1932	1968	11.05.2022

Province Czech Republic

Boleslava Fialová	Poličná, Mähren	1920	1948	21.03.2022
Mariella Sklenářová	Bratřejov, Mähren	1931	1972	24.07.2022

Province Baden-Württemberg

Angelika Maria Heim	Riedholz, Bayern	1930	1959	14.12.2022
Antonia Regina Karotsch	Kürzell	1947	1973	29.11.2022
Augusta Riedesser	Hummertsried	1929	1952	23.12.2022

Christina Maria Martin	Sonthofen, Bayern	1938	1968	27.10.2022
Daniela Maria Reichert	Renchen	1940	1963	20.04.2022
Emerentia Menges	Karlsruhe	1938	1963	24.02.2022
Eugenia Wehrle	Zell a. H.	1925	1954	06.06.2022
Margita Luise Burkart	Schwörstadt	1926	1955	06.07.2022
M. Albertis Schröter	Wormditt, Ostpr.	1936	1963	10.09.2022
M. Luitraud Rombach	Schonach	1926	1957	16.08.2022
M. Rogata Seifried	Göggingen	1926	1956	12.01.2022
M. Romedia Wiggerhauser	Hungersberg	1931	1955	23.03.2022
M. Suitbert Ludewig	Wuppertal NRW	1935	1960	25.12.2022
M. Tabitha Zeller	Pforen	1935	1963	10.08.2022
M. Virgilia Ruf	Hausen a. A.	1928	1951	18.06.2022
Rika Maria Steinhart	Titisee	1931	1953	21.08.2022

Province Slovakia

Alfonzina Červeňová	Dolná Lehota	1928	1971	23.01.2022
Sidónia Sinčáková	Malčice	1928	1976	21.12.2022
Ulrika Špišiaková	Chlebnice	1965	1988	23.05.2022

Province Italy

M. Goretti Canazzei	S. Martino Badia-Antem	1941	1962	08.03.2022
Nazzarena Manini	Cappella, Cantone	1923	1945	29.11.2022
Raffaella Invernizzi	Milano	1924	1948	04.08.2022
Roberta Maria Zoppelletto	Grumolo d. Abbad.	1934	1957	18.02.2022

Province India Central

Francisca Kujur	Noadih, Jharkhand	1939	1970	12.02.2022
Imelda Karamala	Chempilavu, Kerala	1941	1965	21.11.2022

Province India North East

Ajita Kujur	Noatoli, Jharkhand	1946	1973	25.11.2022
Anastasia D. Madathummuriyil	Kangazha, Kerala	1942	1967	04.09.2022
Rosella Cheruvil	Edamaruk, Kerala	1948	1975	04.01.2022
Theodosia Ettumanookaron	Muttuchira, Kerala	1932	1955	20.03.2022

Province Mid India

Monica Minj	Gholeng, Chhatt.	1937	1967	24.01.2022
Angela Maduckayil	Punnathura, Kerala	1937	1963	11.12.2022

Province India East

Manjula Barla	Pauta, Jharkhand	1948	1972	30.01.2022
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Province Europa Mitte

Adela Urschitz	Finkenstein, Ktn.	1927	1949	31.05.2022
Aretha Peutlberger	Marchtrenk, OÖ	1935	1963	09.01.2022
Dietlinda Meissner	Türmütz, Böhmen	1921	1942	05.08.2022
Dominika Mikič	Trnava, HR	1947	1971	08.10.2022
Elvira Lück	Oberhausen-Osterfeld	1941	1969	03.11.2022
Eugenia Maria Mayer	Götzis, Vbg.	1936	1959	10.07.2022
Eva Maria Haberstroh	Kapfenberg, Stmk.	1933	1955	23.07.2022
Fridolinda Moosbrugger	Schoppernau, Vbg.	1934	1960	04.03.2022
Friederike Scharmer	Mieming, T	1925	1948	09.03.2022
Genoveva Klammer	Untertilliach, T	1938	1958	31.12.2022
Helga Maria Herrlein	Zellingen a.Main Bay	1934	1967	17.06.2022
Hilda Marent	Bregenz, Vbg.	1931	1956	02.03.2022
Irmentrud Weinzinger	Aschach/Donau OÖ	1941	1962	26.06.2022
Karin Pospišil	Wien	1932	1957	01.10.2022
Katarina Šalamun	Biš, Slowenien	1946	1980	20.02.2022
Leonis Maurer	Wolfurt, Vbg.	1942	1969	08.10.2022
Ludwiga Hanner	St. Stephan/Wald OÖ	1937	1958	16.12.2022
Magda Schmalz	Schönau/Brend, Bay.	1936	1963	16.06.2022
Maria Magdalena Scherl	Imst, T	1936	1961	19.10.2022
Maria Zita Kollnig	Dölsach, T	1927	1960	15.09.2022
M. Justina Kneidinger	Oberneukirchen OÖ	1927	1955	02.12.2022
Meinharda Wögerbauer	Rohrbach.OÖ	1936	1958	24.06.2022
Pascalis Ritsch	Kurtatsch b.Bozen I	1927	1949	15.06.2022
Ursula Falk	Ehenfeld, Bay.	1941	1962	16.09.2022
Valentina Malin	Satteins, Vbg.	1919	1940	22.06.2022

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